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A TALE OF TWO CODICES: THE MEDIEVAL REGISTERS OF THE ORDER OF THE GARTER

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The purpose of this article is to examine and compare two early versions of the register of the Order of the Garter in order to determine which preserves more accurately the text of the original, lost medieval register, and thus how our understanding of the history of the Order in the late Middle Ages is affected by an examination of these two documents.¹ I will argue that, in fact, while one probably reflects the original register more fully, both extant versions should be taken into account by historians when attempting to reconstruct the history of the Order during this period.

The Most Noble Order of St. George of the Garter, the most prestigious British chivalric “order” still active today, was created by Edward III somewhere between 1344–1351.² The Order soon established itself as a symbol of the highest chivalric ideals of the English aristocracy. The fraternity initially included the king and twenty-five knights. Membership of the Companionship was intended as a mark of royal favor, a reward for loyalty to the sovereign for outstanding military service with committed allegiance. In the last decade, interest in the history of the Order of the Garter has ostensibly increased among scholars. In contrast to the nineteenth century, when historians were mostly concerned with the chronological events related to the Order,³

¹ I thank Dr. David E. Thornton and Dr. Paul Latimer for reading earlier drafts of this paper, and Eleanor Cracknell of St. George’s Chapel Archives and Chapter Library for her advice about the manuscripts. All errors are mine.

² For a detailed discussion of the date of the foundation of the order, see D’A. J. D. Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown. The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe, 1325–1520* (Woodbridge 1987) 96–166; Juliet Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and Its Context, 1270–1350* (Woodbridge 1982) 76–91; N. H. Nicolas, “Observations on the institution of the Most Noble Order of the Garter ... Accounts of the Great Wardrobe of King Edward III from the 29th of September 1344 to the 1st of August 1345; and again from the 21st of December 1345 to the 31st of January 1349,” *Archaeologia* 31 (1846) 1–163; Peter J. Begent and H. Chesshyre, *The Most Noble Order of the Garter 650 Years* (London 1999) 7–18.

³ George F. Beltz, *Memorials of the Order of the Garter from its Foundation to the Present Time* (London 1841); N. H. Nicolas, *History of the Orders of Knighthood of the British Empire*, 4 vols. (London 1842); A. B. Ferguson, *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry: Studies in the Decline and Transformation of Chivalric Idealism* (Durham, NC 1960); Y. Renouard, “L’ordre de la Jarretière et l’ordre de l’Étoile: Etude sur la genèse des ordres Laïcs de chevalerie et sur le développement progressif de leur caractère na-

recent scholarship has largely focused on more specific topics such as contemporary attitudes towards the Order, the diplomatic role of the Garter, and the politics behind the elections of the knights.⁴

It has been accepted by most historians that the most fundamental source for the history of the Order of the Garter, especially for the medieval period, is John Anstis's edition of the "Black Book of the Order," the *Liber Niger*.⁵ However, there exists another yet unpublished version of the Order's register, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1128, which is a copy of a now lost late medieval register of the Order made in the seventeenth century for Elias Ashmole. This French Register (so-called because it was mostly written in French), despite being a copy of an older text than the *Liber Niger*, has not received appropriate attention from scholars.⁶ The purpose of this article is to compare these two versions of the register for the reigns of Henry VI and Edward IV, 1422–1483. This comparison of these two versions of the Order's register indicates that there are significant numbers of differences, of various types, between the two texts. I will argue here that *Liber Niger* is ultimately based on the now-lost original "French Register."

tional," *Le Moyen Age* 4 (1949) 281–300; J. D. Milner, "The Order of the Garter in the Reign of Henry VI, 1422–1461" (M. A. diss., University of Manchester 1972); J. L. Gillespie, "Ladies of the Fraternity of Saint George and of the Society of the Garter," *Albion* 17 (1985) 259–278; "Richard II's Knights, Chivalry and Patronage," *Journal of Medieval History* 13.2 (1987) 143–159; Anne Payne and Lisa Jefferson, "Edward IV: The Garter and the Golden Fleece," *L'ordre de la Toison D'Or, de Philippe le Bon à Philippe le Beau (1430–1505), Idéal ou reflet d'une société?* ed. Pierre Cockshaw and Christine Van Den Bergenpantens (Turnhout 1996) 194–197.

⁴ Hugh E. L. Collins, *The Order of the Garter, 1348–1461: Chivalry and Politics in Late Medieval England* (Oxford and New York 2000); Ben Daw, "Elections to the Order of the Garter in the reign of Edward IV, 1461–1483," *Medieval Prosopography: History and Collective Biography* 19 (1998) 187–213; Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, "'Chevalerie ... in som partie is worthi forto be comendid, and in some part to ben amendid': Chivalry and the Yorkist Kings," *St. George's Chapel, Windsor in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Colin Richmond and Eileen Scarff (Windsor 2001) 107–133; Diana Dunn, "Margaret of Anjou, Chivalry and the Order of the Garter," *ibid.* 39–56.

⁵ John Anstis, *The Register of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, ... usually called the Black Book; with notes ... and an introduction prefixed by the editor*, 2 vols. (London 1724) (hereafter Anstis); Windsor, St. George's Chapel Archives and Chapter Library, MS G1.

⁶ 19th-c. scholars were aware of some differences between these two registers; see G. F. Beltz, *The Memorials of the Order of the Garter* (London 1841). The first study to use the French Register in detail (Diethard Schneider, *Der englische Hosenbandorden Beiträge zur Entstehung und Entwicklung des 'The Most Noble Order of the Garter' (1348–1702), mit einem Ausblick bis 1983*, 4 vols. [Bonn 1988]), appears to be unaware of the differences in the scrutines. The voting tables are constructed by only referring to the *Liber Niger* and they are erroneous: *ibid.* 348–349, 384–385.

Accordingly, MS Ashmole 1128 is far superior in many respects, but there are occasional additions in *Liber Niger*. Those conclusions are significant, not simply in terms of the textual history and relationship of the two manuscripts, but it clearly has implications also for the reconstruction and understanding of the history of the Order of the Garter. Therefore, both texts must be used by historians in any attempt at reconstructing the Order's history. Furthermore, the history of the Order is also part of the political history of the period and the discrepancies especially in the "scrutiny" lists between these two surviving versions is of great importance in establishing the correct network of "noble alliances" of the fifteenth-century English aristocracy. Until a new edition of the *Liber Niger* version of the register is published, Anstis's edition will remain the text to which scholars must continue to refer. Therefore, it is my intention to compare this Anstis's text with MS Ashmole 1128 in order to determine which preserves the superior reading.

In the light of the "French Register," important flaws of Anstis's edition of the *Liber Niger* can be convincingly demonstrated. Nevertheless, the former does not represent the authoritative copy: it has pitfalls too. It has various omissions, and significant number of discrepancies in the attendance lists, narrative records and the scrutiny lists exist between these two texts. Although some of the discrepancies may well be the result of scribal carelessness of either the medieval scribes or early modern transcribers, others cannot be explained so simply. Ashmole's copy is also important in that it provides substantial information not available in the *Liber Niger*. The stalls of the newly elected knights as well as their date of election and installation and the exact dates of some other specific events in Order's history are more complete in Ashmole's copy. Most of the deficiencies concerning attendance lists of the sessions in the *Liber Niger* some of which were noted by Anstis himself, can be resolved with reference to information provided by the "French Register." Additionally, Anstis was completely unaware of the differences of names in the scrutinies.

Before comparing these two surviving versions of the register, it is worthy discussing the two manuscripts in a little more detail. The first version is MS Ashmole 1128: as stated above, it is a seventeenth-century copy of the earliest known register of the Order, the so-called French Register (hereafter FR), which Ashmole described as "an old Paper Book written in *French*, call'd *Registrum Chartaceum*, hitherto

fortunately preserv'd in the Paper Office at *White-Hall*, which probably was begun by John Coringham."⁷ Ashmole borrowed the original manuscript in 1660, though it was missing by 1724 when Anstis published his edition of the *Liber Niger*.⁸ The text was written in French and includes the Statutes of the Order in Latin as well.⁹ The text of MS Ashmole 1128 has been edited, but not published, by Dr. Lisa Jefferson.¹⁰ It begins with the events of 1418 and ends in 1537. Little of scholarly substance has been said about this version of the register in print. According to Ashmole's marginal notes in MS 1128, there was a lacuna in the old paper manuscript from 1438 (when the first scribe's hand finishes) until 1445 (at which point a different scribe took up writing the manuscript). It is highly probable that the first scribe was John Coringham, registrar of the Order, who became Canon of Windsor on 11 June 1416¹¹ and that, after his death in 1445, another registrar succeeded him and continued the manuscript.¹² This second scribe continued to write until 1458 and thereafter a number of different hands occur, sometimes for a single chapter meeting.¹³ The register also contains three more lacunae between 1467–1470, 1489–1492 and 1495–1499. Ashmole suggested that the changes of hand reflect the advent of new registrars. The end of the manuscript is also significant. From 1524, when Richard Sydnor was appointed the registrar of the Order, the lost register was apparently written by a single hand until 1534, which was the year when Sydnor died and Robert Aldrich was appointed as registrar.¹⁴ After this date the register was written in "an old

⁷ Elias Ashmole, *The History of the Most Noble Order of the Garter. Wherein is set for the an account of the town, castle chapel and college of Windsor; ...To which is prefixed a discourse of knighthood in general* (London 1715) 198.

⁸ Anstis iii; Begent, *The Most Noble Order of the Garter* (n. 2 above) 77; Grace Holmes, *The Order of the Garter: its knights and stall plates 1348 to 1984* (Windsor 1984) 5; Nicolas, *History of the Orders of Knighthood* (n. 3 above) app. 3.

⁹ Lisa Jefferson, "MS Arundel 48 and the Earliest Statutes of the Order of the Garter," *English Historical Review* 109 (1994) 356–385, at 358.

¹⁰ *The Register of the Order of the Garter: contained in MS Ashmole 1128*, ed. Lisa Jefferson (Bodleian Library, Oxford, call number M92.B00045).

¹¹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls* (hereafter *CPR*), 1416–1422, p. 30.

¹² *CPR*, 1441–1446, p. 322.

¹³ In 1459, "the original is written in a small set hand," and again in 1461, "the original alters to a looser and bigger hand"; various changes occur in, for example, 1464, 1465, 1467, 1473, 1474, 1477, 1478, 1483: FR fols. 63r, 75r, 76r, 76v, 79v, 80r, 81r, 82r, (two different hands) 85r, 86r (two different hands), 86v, 90r, 90v.

¹⁴ Robert Aldrich was sworn as registrar of the Order, replacing Richard Sydnor, on 23 April 1534: *Calendar of Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, vol. VII, pt. 1, p. 214; Anstis 2.24, 393 (= LN 265). According to Ashmole, Sydnor wrote his

set Roman” hand until its end in 1537, in which year Aldrich was appointed to the bishopric of Carlisle.¹⁵ Again, changes in hand appear to correspond to changes in registrar.

The second version of the Register is the so-called Black Book of the Order, the *Liber Niger* (hereafter LN). It is a large vellum codex written in Latin, now in the Aerary, St. George Chapel, Windsor, and was published in 1724 by John Anstis, then Garter King of Arms, with an English translation, his own preface and additional comments. The text starts with an essay upon orders of knighthood, institutions and a brief history of the Order. In contrast to FR, this Latin text gives some further information, which is not directly related to the Order’s history but may ease the fixing of the dates of sessions. The book was written by two scribes. The first scribe wrote until 1537 and then, after a one-year gap, a different hand continues from 1539 until 1552 where the book ends.¹⁶ It seems likely that the book was first compiled between 1534–1537 by Robert Aldrich, registrar of the Order and Canon of Windsor during those years.¹⁷ The second scribe begins in 1539 and was probably William Franklyn who was appointed dean of Windsor in 1536 and subsequently the registrar of the Order. LN ends in 1552 when apparently Franklyn’s health was in decline and impeding his work as one of Edward VI’s commissioners; and he died in January 1556.¹⁸

Before LN was compiled, we know of the existence of a volume called the *Niger Libellus*, from a decree requiring it “renewal” recorded in the session note for the year 1507.¹⁹ A possible “renewal” of the register may survive in the form of a (now) mutilated manuscript now preserved in St. George’s Chapter archives on long-term loan from the Royal Library of Windsor.²⁰ Presently it covers the period 1481–1533 with some folios missing, but it must have originally started much ear-

name on the bottom of each leaf: *Institution, Laws and Ceremonies of the Most Noble Order of the Garter* (London 1672) 199.

¹⁵ Ibid. 199.

¹⁶ Here Ashmole is incorrect in claiming that the hand change occurred between 1539–1540/41: Ashmole, *Institution, Laws and Ceremonies* (n. 14 above) 199. In fact the change of scribe occurred between 1537–1539/40: Anstis 410–411 (= LN 278–279).

¹⁷ Begent, *The Most Noble Order of the Garter* (n. 2 above) 79; Ashmole, *Institution, Laws and Ceremonies* (n. 14 above) 199.

¹⁸ C. S. Knighton, “William Franklyn,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford 2004–2005).

¹⁹ Anstis 254 (= *Liber Niger* call number G 1, p. 180).

²⁰ *The Minute Book of the Chapters of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, 1481–1529*: call number: I.B.3b.

lier because the initial 108 folios covering the period before 1481 are now lost. This “register” was written in English, French, and Latin.

A stronger case, however, can be made for regarding LN as the renewed register. LN contains the same lacuna between 1438–1445 as FR, indicated by the phrase *ab hoc Anno usque ad vicesimum Secundum nihil extat*.²¹ As we have seen, this lacuna in FR also corresponds to a change in hand. LN also agrees with other three lacunae in FR between 1467–1470, 1489–1492, and 1495–1499. Therefore, the occurrence of the same lacunae in both manuscripts suggests that LN is ultimately derived from the lost “old paper manuscript,” perhaps fulfilling the earlier decree of 1507. 1537 is the common date for both of the versions, as FR ends there and the first ink of LN ceases at this point the style of painting in the initial letters changed. Therefore, there is a probability that the subsequent registrars ceased to record the events of the Order in the original French Register since a new register was already available. However, as will hopefully be shown below, although LN is ultimately based on FR, Aldrich and/or other registrars must have also used one or more other sources when compiling the *Liber Niger*. Although Anstis did not have access to either the original FR nor MS Ashmole 1128, he did have additional information provided by Elias Ashmole, in the form of individual notes inserted into the manuscript of *Liber Niger*. Anstis thus discussed some of the discrepancies and identified some of the errors of the *Liber Niger* both in the preface of his edition of *Liber Niger* and in footnotes related to individual sessions of the Order.²² Most, if not all, of his claims relating to the individual session notes can be shown to be correct in this study; some of his erroneous claims can be corrected in the light of additional information provided in FR.

There has been some confusion among Garter historians regarding these two versions of the Order’s registers. For instance, Hugh Collins states that “for much of the Garter’s early history, we are dependent upon the surviving version of the original register of the society the ‘Registrum Ordinis Chartaceum,’ published by John Anstis in the eighteenth century as the *Black Book of Windsor*.”²³ First, the Black Book is not “the surviving version.” Second, it is not “the original reg-

²¹ Anstis 119 (= LN 93–94).

²² Anstis iii–xi. He then cites and discusses some further historical impossibilities (not necessarily related to lack of information in the Register): *ibid.* xi–xxx.

²³ Collins, *The Order of the Garter* (n. 4 above) 3–4.

ister of the society” but a later compilation. Moreover, Ben Daw argued that “details of the chapters and elections ... recorded by the registrar of the Order in the so-called Black Book ... are an unrivalled source concerning affairs of the Garter.”²⁴ The Black Book is by no means unrivalled; on the contrary, as this study will hopefully demonstrate, in most cases, the authority of the *Liber Niger* is strongly questionable. Furthermore, Collins also claimed, “Although the ‘Registrum Ordinis Chartaceum’ has been lost, two copies have survived. The first version was incorporated into the ‘Black Book of Windsor’ in ca. 1534 by the Order’s current Registrar, Robert Aldrich; this was later published by Anstis. The second version, which has survived in the Bodleian Library as Ashmole 1128, is based upon a copy of the original text made for Elias Ashmole in 1660.”²⁵ The *Liber Niger* and the French Register are not two copies of the *Registrum Ordinis Chartaceum*. The French Register is allegedly called *Registrum Ordinis Chartaceum*, because Ashmole’s scribes when copying from the now lost late medieval register wrote on top of their own copy this title in order to distinguish it from the vellum register of the Order, *Liber Niger*. Thus, John Anstis did not publish *Registrum Ordinis Chartaceum* but the Black Book. Additionally, MS Ashmole 1128 was not a copy based on an earlier copy of the original text, but is itself a copy of the “original.”²⁶

The registers contain three broad categories of information: the formal attendance lists of companions for the chapter meetings (sometimes with additional remarks); records of irregular happenings; and the lists of scrutines. There are separate entries for each routine note of each session meeting. The information for the records of each annual meeting usually starts with the regnal year of the session. Then the names of the companions are listed as well as those of the prelates of the Order, indicating whether they were present or absent. If they were absent, the reason for absence is briefly explained and sometimes the fines according to the statutes are noted. The registers then describe the decisions taken (if any) during those sessions and quote any new statutes. They also name any newly elected knight(s), and the stalls to which they are installed, as well as empty stalls due to the death of a knight-companion, and special envoys sent to the stranger knights. Sometimes particular messages of the kings are also added. The scruti-

²⁴ Daw (n. 4 above) 190–191.

²⁵ Collins, *The Order of the Garter* (n. 4 above) 4 n. 11.

²⁶ Lisa Jefferson, *English Historical Review* 115 (2000) 1279–1280.

nies are the lists of the votes of each knight companion to be submitted to the king. Whenever a new knight had to be elected to the fraternity, the registrar of the Order recorded in the register the scrutinies for each individual knight companion who had participated in the election session.

When he published his edition of the Black Book, Anstis was aware of certain differences between his text and that of the (by then lost) French Register:

Since the printing of this Register, the editor received notice that Mr. Ashmole had made some citations in the margin of his copy [of LN] lodged in the museum in Oxford, and the learned keeper if it, upon his application was very kindly pleased to communicate the following extracts. In them are contained the names of several companions of this order which Mr. Ashmole found mentioned in the *Registrum Chartaceum* that the compiler of this black book through haste per inadvertency totally omitted, which French Register being now lost or mislaid, these additions are here published under the proper years of the Sovereigns to which they relate and with reference to the pages of this edition wherein these years are contained.²⁷

He then cited some thirty points in which LN either lacks information or there was a discrepancy (considering Ashmole's insertions) in the information contained between these two registers. This is, however, merely the tip of the iceberg. Even for the reigns of Henry VI and Edward IV only, I would estimate at least a hundred textual differences between FR and LN. Throughout the footnotes in his edition Anstis also corrected some further inconsistencies and omissions in the *Liber Niger* with the actual historical facts. Most of his claims can be re-evaluated with the information available in the FR. Some of his guesses can be shown to be correct; some of the points concerning which there is no information in the LN are filled with the new information the FR provides.

Members of the Order were expected to meet together each year on St. George's Day. Those annual gatherings were formally centered upon the fulfillment of the formal religious activities: attending vespers and attending a requiem mass for the souls of the deceased companions. Those meetings and the accompanying religious ceremonies were the core elements for bolstering the Order's inner solidarity. The members' participation was thus regarded as very important. Accordingly,

²⁷ Anstis iii.

attendance lists of each individual meeting were routinely recorded in the registers. Nevertheless, there are great many differences between the versions in LN and MS Ashmole 1128. They merely result from the lack or addition of information in one of the registers. MS Ashmole 1128 is usually fuller in the information it provides in a way that supports the argument that LN is ultimately based on the original, lost French Register: its attendances lists are more complete, and related additional information about those absent (the reason of their absence, the result and statutory fine) is usually provided with additional remarks.

For example, as Anstis noted in LN for a chapter, which took place in the 22 April 1427, there must have been four additions in the list to complete the total number of companions. In FR, those additions are clearly available: three stranger knights “L’empereur d’Almayne,” “Le Roy de Portugall,” and “Le Roye de Danemarke” were noted to be absent and one other companion the earl of Huntington is mentioned as present with a special additional explanatory note: “ne pas a le Chapetre l’eure de tierce, mez a le fest et excusez de la faute.”²⁸ Similarly, for the chapter meeting note of 1428, Anstis “adventured” to claim that four more names had to be added to the list. FR supports Anstis’s claims entirely: according to FR, the earl of Suffolk is stated to be “en France”; Lord Willoughby was “en France—en lez guerres du Roy Honourablement occupiez”;²⁹ Le Sire de Boucher, Chamberleyne de Roy, Le sire de Hungerforde Tresorer d’Engleterre, and Messire Johan Robessart are included in the list of those present. There are many other instances where Anstis was aware that LN is deficient as confirmed by FR.³⁰ Sometimes, although both of the versions may give incomplete lists, FR is still fuller: for 1431, again, LN only names twenty-one companions, while FR has twenty-four: the additions are John, lord Talbot; Sir John Robessart; and Sir Hartung van Clux. Ac-

²⁸ Anstis 99–100n. (= LN 83); FR fol. 56v.

²⁹ The earl of Suffolk was promoted to marquess in 1444 and duke in 1448: A. J. Pollard, *Late Medieval England, 1399–1509* (Harlow and New York 2000) 124. His son, although not a political figure, was also elected to the Order, for his career see J. A. F. Thomson, “John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk,” *Speculum* 54.3 (1979) 528–542; Anstis iii, 101–102 (= LN 84–85); FR fols. 57r–v.

³⁰ For example, Anstis 124, in note s (= LN 94, = FR fols. 63r–v); 137 in notes (= LN 102, = FR fol. 67r); 147–149 (= LN 108–109, = FR fols. 70v–71r); 155 in notes (= LN 113–114, = FR fol. 73v); 162 (= LN 117–118, = FR fol. 75r).

cording to FR, Le Sire de Talbote was prisoner, and Sir John Robessart and Her Tayke Clux were mentioned as absent.³¹

Furthermore, there are other cases where information is lacking in LN but Anstis did not notice or record it. For example, in 1482, LN lists ten companions who were excused from the session by the king's letter, while FR has eleven names "excusez par le roy," adding the marquis of Dorset.³² In 1455, in the list of those present, there are five names (including the king) in LN, but FR records six, including the duke of Somerset.³³ For the session held on 8 May 1476, one name, le Duc de Burgoyne, is again added to the list of stranger knights who were regularly absent.³⁴ For the session held in 23 April 1482, the chancellor of the Order is noted as present in FR, but no information about him neither his name is available in LN at all.³⁵

In some instances, although both versions agree that one companion was absent, FR is usually more accurate in providing further individual explanations concerning the specific cases of the absent knights. In 1422, for example, it is clearly stated in FR that the duke of Exeter was absent because he was ill and excused by the king, that the earl of Westmorland was excused "a cause d'empotence," and that the earl Marshall although absent was not excused. LN only gives the name of the earl of Westmorland among these three companions but its explanatory notice about the cause of his absence is ambiguous: "Comes Westmerlandiae probabilem causam absentiae misit ad concilium."³⁶ Again in 1455, according to FR, the abbot of St Mary's Graces, London ("Tower Hill"), was excused by the king because he was ill, but the prior of Medmenham was not excused. According to LN, on the other hand, both were absent and not excused.³⁷

The only striking exception to this pattern, where it is LN which records a fuller list of companions, occurs for the record of 1437. In FR only the names of those present are noted but the long list of absentees are lacking. Whereas LN lists those absents by name, and states the reasons for their absence. While one explanation may be that Aldrich used another source, the other more convincing explanation is that there

³¹ Anstis 107–108 (= LN 87–88); FR fols. 59r–v.

³² Anstis 210 (= LN 147–148); FR fol. 90r.

³³ Anstis 153 (= LN 112); FR fol. 72v.

³⁴ Anstis 189 (= LN 134); FR fol. 83r.

³⁵ Anstis 208–209 (= LN 146–147); FR fols. 89r–v.

³⁶ FR fol. 49r; Anstis 84–86 (= LN 74–75).

³⁷ Anstis 155 (= LN 113–114); FR fol. 73r.

was a separate folio (which LN might have taken the names of those absent) which was already missing in FR before Ashmole's scribes copied it. According to Ashmole's notes, the hand ends just at the end of this folio, and another scribe's hand starts with the beginning of the next folio which records the upcoming meeting of the Order.³⁸

The second group of discrepancies between these two versions are more "narrative" in their nature, some of which may provide information about the Order otherwise unattested. They belong to the category of particular records of the register mostly related to the installation and election of new knights, the dates of sessions, the introduction of new statutes, and other textual variations related to specific but otherwise important details. The particular information regarding the places of installations of the newly chosen knights and their exact dates of installation are again more complete in FR. There are a number of examples where FR specifies the session in which a knight is chosen or installed and particularly notes the place of installation of a new knight with additional comment. Were there no information provided by FR, some of them would only be acquired by deducing from the available data in LN or by referring to the Windsor Tables compiled during the reign of Edward IV.³⁹ FR also supplies the dates of some specific events while LN omits them. Sometimes the two versions provide different dates for a specific event though both of them may be wrong. Each version of the register also contains specific documents which are lacking in the other. It is again the additions in FR which give valuable information, though those of LN's must be evaluated with care. In some other instances the two versions provide inconsistent textual information.

FR is fuller in the information it provides for the (particular) dates of elections and installations of new companions especially during the reign of Henry VI. For example, Anstis was confused after encountering the name of the earl of Arundel in the session note for 1432 for the first time in the Order's records without any additional information as

³⁸ The king was absent at Westminster and with him were the earl of Warwick, Lord Willoughby, Lord Fanhope, Sir William Phelip, Sir John Robessart, and Sir John Radcliffe. The emperor, the king of Portugal, the king of Denmark, the duke of Coimbro, and Sir Hartung van Clux were all absent in their kingdoms; and Lord Talbot, Lord Scales, and Sir John Fastolf were in Normandy. Lastly, Sir Robert Umfraville was excused due to a disability. Anstis 118 (= LN 93); FR fol. 62r.

³⁹ Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown* (n. 2 above) 130; Ashmole, *Institution, Laws and Ceremonies* (n. 14 above) 754–757.

to when and to which stall he was chosen and installed.⁴⁰ On the other hand, FR is very clear: the earl of Arundel was chosen during *this* same session to the stall made vacant by the death of Louis Lord Bouchier, the king's chamberlain, while Arundel himself was in the war with France with the duke of Bedford.⁴¹ In 1436, FR clearly stated that the earl of Morteyn was installed in the vacant stall of the earl of Arundel, and in the same session Sir John Grey of Ruthin in that of John, duke of Bedford. LN is silent about these events, and Anstis refers to Windsor Tables in order to complete those omissions. He successfully deduced that the earl of Arundel had been installed in the eighth stall on the Prince's side, but an explanation for the place of the installation of Sir John Grey of Ruthin was still lacking.⁴² In another instance, both LN and FR state that John Lord Foix, viscount Castillon and lord Grailly, was elected to the Order in the session of 1446, but again LN does not indicate to whose stall he was elected. Anstis noted that the only empty stall must have been that of Sir Hartung van Clux, and his guess is explicitly confirmed by FR: "Messire Johan de Foix, Vicounte de Chastelon, Sire de Greyley, est esluz en lieu de Messire Her Tank Clux."⁴³

Again, in the chapter meeting note for 1429, FR gives substantially more information related to the installations of two newly elected knights and another knight to be installed at *this* particular session: LN simply mentions John Radcliffe to be present without further notice though in FR it is present and "enstallez en sa persone au temps de la feste."⁴⁴ Furthermore in the notes of this same session FR states that there were two stalls made void by the deaths of Thomas, earl of Salisbury, and Sir Thomas Erpingham. The earl of Stafford was chosen to Erpingham's stall, and John Radcliffe to that of the earl of Salisbury. The equivalent passage in LN only gives the names of the newly elected knights as well as the deceased ones but their exact place of installation is not recorded.⁴⁵ Similarly, in the chapter meeting note of 1428, FR clearly stated that the duke of Coimbra was installed "en

⁴⁰ Anstis 110 (= LN 89)

⁴¹ FR fol. 61r.

⁴² FR fol. 62r; Anstis 117n. (= LN 92).

⁴³ Anstis 126 (= LN 95); FR fol. 64v.

⁴⁴ FR fol. 57v; Anstis 101–102 (= LN 84–85).

⁴⁵ FR fol. 58r; Anstis 103 (= LN 86).

place avaunte le Duc d'Excestre," while in LN his place of installation is lacking.⁴⁶

The two manuscripts occasionally disagree about the date of a session or of specific material connected to a session, again especially during the reign of Henry VI. Some of the discrepancies are certainly mere scribal errors: in 1430, for example, according to LN, the session was held on 22 May while in FR the date is 20 May.⁴⁷ Again for 1445, LN records 12 May, whereas FR has 7 May.⁴⁸ Presumably scribal error underlies these differences: in the first case, the addition or omission of "ii"; and, in the second, the incorrect reading of the Roman numerals "x" or "v." The date of the first surviving scrutiny is again problematic for the same reason, but here the two versions disagree both in terms of the day and year. According to LN, this session was held "anno vicesimo tertio Regis Henrici Sexti, duodecimo die Maii," that is, 12 May 1445; whereas in FR, the date is l'e vii jour de Maii, ... L'an du regne nostre Souverain Seigneur le Roy Henry vi apres le conquete xxiiii," that is 7 May 1446! Again a scribal confusion of the numerals "v" as "x" and the addition of "I" probably occurred here, though it is not clear which date is correct.⁴⁹

Alternatively, in other instances FR would appear to preserve the superior reading, as it is more accurate in providing the dates of separate events. For 1436, LN supplies no date for the chapter. Anstis estimated that it must have occurred between 13 September 1435 and 5 May 1436. FR gives the date as "a al journey le veile Seint George l'an nostre Sovereigne le Roy Henry le vime xiiiime,"⁵⁰ the eve of St. George's Day in the regnal year 14 Henry VI, namely, 22 April 1436. Anstis's estimation would therefore appear to be correct. In another instance, LN simply omits the separate date of a new statute concerning the payments of the marquesses, earls, and dukes for their appurtenances and helmets, and records it as if it were prorogued during the election meeting of 1445. FR, however, clearly states that this statute was prorogued on a different day, "Lundy le ix jour de Maii," Monday 9 May.⁵¹ Similarly, for the session which occurred on 23 April 1450,

⁴⁶ Anstis 102 (= LN 85); FR fol. 57v.

⁴⁷ FR fol. 58r; Anstis iii, 107 (= LN 87).

⁴⁸ FR fol. 64v; Anstis 126–128 (= LN 95–97).

⁴⁹ Anstis 126 (= LN 95); FR fol. 63v.

⁵⁰ Anstis 115n. (= LN 91); FR fol. 61v.

⁵¹ FR fol. 64v; Anstis 126–128 (= LN 95–97).

LN gives the scrutiny as if it belonged to the same session, and thus occurred on the same date.⁵² However, while both versions agree that the *session* took place on 23 April, FR gives the scrutiny under a different day: “le iiii jour August l’an de son regne xxviii.”⁵³ In one particular case in LN, the date and place of a whole scrutiny is completely missing but is supplied by FR: it occurred “xxviii Jour de May, L’an de son Regne xxix,” in the Westminster in the room of the King. Anstis was aware of this deficiency of LN and tried to offer an explanation: the word *subinde* in LN signified a distinct chapter, as some of the nominators were different from those of the previous scrutiny, which according to LN would appear to have taken place on the same day.⁵⁴

The Liber Niger and the French Register occasionally disagree about the specific dates of events or facts relating to an annual meeting. For example, there is a series of letters addressed to the companions concerning the deaths of Henry Lord Fitzhugh and Robert Umfraville and the election of new knights to the resulting vacancies. FR inserts these letters in the session dated 7 May 1424, whereas LN places them later in 1425/6. Henry, Lord Fitzhugh died on 11 January 1425, which suggests LN’s insertions of the letters may be correct, but Robert Umfraville died in January 1437!⁵⁵ Clearly there is some confusion, and at least the letters concerning Umfraville must have been inserted at the wrong point in both of the manuscripts, though LN may be correct for those concerning Henry Lord Fitzhugh.⁵⁶ Under the record for 1451, it is again incorrectly noted in LN that the duke of Exeter was deputed to the session. Anstis claimed that neither John Holland, duke of Exeter, nor his heir Henry could have been candidates, because John had died four years before and Henry was a minor. However, the difficulty is resolved in FR, as the deputy is said to have been a different companion—John, earl of Shrewsbury.⁵⁷

The two registers also contain records of some specific events relating to the Order. Sometimes information contained in those records are inconsistent: as one version omits part of the text or inserts additional

⁵² Anstis 141 (= LN 104–105); Ashmole, *Institution, Laws and Ceremonies* (n. 14 above) 368.

⁵³ Anstis 141 (= LN 104–105); FR fol. 68r.

⁵⁴ Anstis 75, 142–143 (= LN 105–106); FR fol. 68v.

⁵⁵ G. E. Cokayne, *Complete Peerage, of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom etc.*, rev. and ed. V. Gibbs et al. (London 1910–1959) 2.539.

⁵⁶ Anstis 95–98 (= LN 80–83); FR fols. 50r–51v.

⁵⁷ Anstis 145n. (= LN 107); FR fol. 69r.

information which in turn entirely changes the meaning of the text. Therefore, textual inconsistencies necessitate the consultation of both versions. For example, for the session of 1424, FR states:⁵⁸

Estrangers esteantz en leur pais qi ne poient bonment y venir et pur tant excusez: L'empereur de Rome, Sigemonde, Le Roy de Portugall, Le Roy de Danemarke, qi a cest fest primerment aviot suismise sez heaume tymbre et espé desuis son estall.

The equivalent entry in LN reads:⁵⁹

Sigismundus Imperator, quia convenienter e Regno suo venire non poverat, excusatus est: Rex Portugalie qui sub hanc festivitatem, Galeam, Gladium, Vexillum et Appendices primum supra sedem suam appendenda curarat similiter.

The king of Denmark is not mentioned in LN; instead, what is recorded for him in FR is noted here as if it were about the king of Portugal. Thus, according to FR, it was the king of Denmark, not of Portugal, who had first taken care to have his helmet, sword, banner, and appendages hang up over his stall. Considering the fact that these three stranger knights were regularly absent from the Order's gatherings, the information provided in FR is probably correct. The king of Denmark is simply omitted in LN in *this* particular session as a result of a simple scribal mistake, while he was consistently available in other sessions in both of the registers. The entry related to him is thus inserted for the king of Portugal. On the other hand, the additional explanation relation to the emperor Sigismund is lacking in FR.

Both FR and LN occasionally recoded an additional text not contained in the other. There is one instance in which a whole document is recorded in FR but completely omitted in LN. For the year 1447/8, FR contains the following memorandum:

Il est ordonné quil sera au plesir de chescun chivaler de l'ordre du temps de son installacion, si Jartier Roy d'Armes de l'ordre avera la Robe qu'il portera quant il sera installé ou de l'argent pour la Robe, de chescun selon

⁵⁸ FR fol. 50v.

⁵⁹ Anstis 88b (= LN 78). Due to a possible printing mistake in Anstis's edition, there are two different pages numbered 88 and 89 respectively: one refers to the events of the second year of Henry VI, the other to the third year of Henry VI. I use 88b and 89b for the second 88 and 89.

son estate: c'est a savoir d'ung Conte pour sa Robbe x marcs, d'ung Baron v livres, d'ung Baneret iiii livres, d'ung Bachelier iiii marcs.⁶⁰

Although this memorandum is completely omitted in LN, Ashmole partly translated it into English and included the translation in his book as follows:

That it was ordained to be at the pleasure of every Knight Companion at the Time of his installation, whether Garter [King of Arms] should have the Garment, which each knight did then wear, or a composition in Money according to estate.⁶¹

Anstis wrongly assigned this translation to Ashmole's *History*, whereas it is in fact given in his *Institution*.⁶² He was also confused due to his inability of access to the original material and claimed that "according to an ancient manuscript in the Custody of this Collector, there were several other Fees settled at the same Chapter." This ancient manuscript was probably none other than FR itself.

Apart from the scrutiny list belonging to Richard III's period, one narrative example that demonstrates Aldrich used other source(s) in compiling his edition is the following extract:

Anno quinto Comes Sarisburiae, Southfolciae, Dominus Talbotus, et Dominus Thomas Montague perstrenue se gesserunt in Gallia. At hic in Anglos fortuna reflavit, dum iste Thomas infortunio periit.⁶³

This statement has no equivalent in FR.⁶⁴ Neither is there a chance that a folio has been lost. Anstis gives a footnote here stating that one year before the names of these companions are stated but there is no Thomas Montagu who must be a different person from the earl of Salisbury. He also claims that "the character here given suits this earl, but he lived two years beyond this time." Thus, this sentence is probably an incorrect later addition.

A third category of information contained in these versions is the lists of scrutinies. The scrutinies are clearly an important source for the development of the membership of the Order, not only who was successful, but also who was not. They may also help historians to under-

⁶⁰ FR fol. 66r.

⁶¹ Ashmole, *Institution, Laws and Ceremonies* (n. 14 above) 461

⁶² Anstis 134.

⁶³ Anstis 99 (= LN 83).

⁶⁴ The equivalent folios in FR fos. 53r–v.

stand the political climax of the period by giving some clue about the possible political alliances between the noble factions of the late medieval England. The motives behind the members for their nominations of individual knights, *not* chosen by the kings have been only partly discussed in previous Garter studies.⁶⁵ One possible reason for this may lie in the fact that whereas identifying the knights chosen to the Order is relatively simple, the identities of those nominated by each individual member are not easy to determine due to the conflicting data in the extant primary sources. A study of the dynamics of the elections depends upon the respective data supplied by the various versions of the Order's register and, as I show here, these two manuscripts (and thus their data) were not always in agreement with one another. The most difficult section in determining the correct information between these two versions of the register is in the lists of scrutinies. Excluding a few particular instances, most instances of onomastic confusion appear to involve the recording in one of the versions of the names of individuals who were frequently nominated and were (perhaps) thus copied erroneously again by the scribe. There are also additional orthographic errors committed by either the medieval scribes or early modern transcribers.

It is highly probable that great importance was attached to the election procedures and the regular recording of the scrutinies for a perpetual memorial, though there is no direct evidence for it until Elizabeth I's time.⁶⁶ Article 19 of Statute Henry V for 1415 describes in detail how and in what manner an election should be made.⁶⁷ The election of a knight to the Order was made through the election chapter. At least six companions, excluding the king or his deputy, must be present in order for an election to take place. Each companion present had to nominate a total of nine candidates for the king's attention. The king alone chose a new knight to the fraternity but he could choose only from among those nominated. According to the same article, the structure of the scrutiny was divided into three separate parts equal in number according to the rank of the nominees. In the first rank, the companions were to nominate three names belonging to the highest peerage, although there were exceptions. In the second part, usually lords were

⁶⁵ Daw (n. 4 above) 190–192.

⁶⁶ Ashmole, *Institution, Laws and Ceremonies* (n. 14 above) 292.

⁶⁷ For an analysis of all the articles, see Lisa Jefferson, 'Statutes and Records: The Statutes of the Order,' in Begent, *The Most Noble Order of the Garter* (n. 2 above) 52–77.

nominated, and in the last rank there were knights banneret, knights, esquires, and gentlemen.

There are a number of cases where we know that an election with some sort of scrutiny took place but either the scrutiny lists did not survive or they were simply not recorded in the registers. For example, in 1423/4, the duke of Burgundy was nominated, but he declined due to a conflict between the duke of Gloucester and his uncle, the duke of Brabant.⁶⁸ In 1424, John Lord Talbot was chosen through nominations to the stall of John Lord Clifford.⁶⁹ In another instance, it is stated that in 1426 both Sir John Fastolf and Sir John Radcliffe received an equal number of votes but the king chose Fastolf to the stall of Henry Lord Fitzhugh.⁷⁰ Again, for 1427 the king of Portugal's son, the duke of Coimbra, was chosen to the stall of the prince, Thomas Beaufort, duke of Exeter.⁷¹ Further, in 1429, Humphrey, earl of Stafford, and Sir John Radcliffe were chosen to the stalls of Sir Thomas Montagu, earl of Salisbury, and Sir Thomas Erpingham.⁷² For all these cases, no scrutiny list is now extant.

There are cases where LN is silent about whether a scrutiny was taken or not, but FR is clear: in 1432 John Fitzalan, earl of Arundel,⁷³ and in 1436 Edmund Beaufort, the count of Mortain, and Sir John Grey were all elected through scrutinies.⁷⁴ There are also cases in which there is no direct reference to any scrutiny in either version of the register, but we know an election occurred: in 1435, the eldest son (by then king) of the king of Portugal to the stall of the king of Portugal. The "votes" were considered by the king but there is no direct reference to

⁶⁸ Anstis 89 (= LN 77); FR fol. 49v. In LN, the nomination of the duke of Burgundy took place in the second year of Henry VI. However, According to FR the nomination of the duke of Burgundy took place in the first session of the first year of King Henry VI. In this case, if the chapter meeting was held on its usual date, 23 April (FR does not give information) the date must be 1423. If the LN is correct, then the date must be 1424.

⁶⁹ Anstis 88b (= LN 78); FR fos. 50v–51r; Ashmole, *Institution, Laws and Ceremonies*, p. 282.

⁷⁰ Anstis 96 (= LN 81). However, Anstis in note b claims, referring to Ashmole, *Institution, Laws and Ceremonies* 282, that Sir John Fastolf must have been elected to earl of Wesmorland's stall. FR confirms that Sir John Fastolf was chosen to the stall of Ralph Neville, earl of Westmorland: FR fol. 53v.

⁷¹ Anstis 100 (= LN 84); FR fol. 57r.

⁷² Anstis 103 (= LN 86); FR fol. 58r.

⁷³ Anstis 110 (= LN 89); FR fol. 60r.

⁷⁴ Anstis 116–117 (= LN 92); FR fol. 61r; in FR there is a direct reference to a scrutiny: "j fuit faite un scrutine par le Registreur de l'ordre escrivant les denominacions des voices d' un chescun compaignon."

the word scrutiny.⁷⁵ In 1438, Albert, the duke of Austria, was chosen: both LN and FR state that an election took place but there is no direct reference to a scrutiny.⁷⁶ These cases aside, there are fourteen surviving scrutiny lists for the period covered in this study.

Surviving evidence suggests that the regulation of Article 19, relating to the necessary number of members for an election to occur was followed carefully. For instance, a number of election meetings were cancelled due to an insufficient number of members. In Henry VI's reign, in 1431, a stall was made vacant by the death of Sir Lewis Robessart but, as there was an insufficient number of companions present, the election was cancelled.⁷⁷ The same problem arose in the attempts of election in 1453, 1454, 1455 and 1456.⁷⁸ During Edward IV's reign on the other hand, there is only one case. In 1474, since there were only five companions, the king sent John Ascheley to supply the sixth place, but "the election did not come on immediately as far as we have any account."⁷⁹

Turning to the scrutiny lists in LN and FR, there are a few examples of spelling differences arising from genuine scribal error. It is usually Anstis's edition which gives the correct data. For example in Sir John Ascheley's nomination list for the year 1474, LN has "Dom. Awdley," while in the French Register it is "le Sire Daudeley."⁸⁰ Here the scribe of FR has probably added the preposition "De" before the name of Awdley. Similarly, in Lord Dudley's nomination list for the year 1474, LN reads "Dom. Rog. Towkots," while in the FR, the equivalent entry is "Messire Roger Tonkette."⁸¹

The following evidence may support the argument that Aldrich used other source(s) in compiling his manuscript. There are some cases in FR where the names of the nominees in the scrutinies are repeated twice and thus one name is lost, or names of the nominees are simply omitted. In Lord Dudley's nomination list for the year 1476, in FR the

⁷⁵ Anstis 114 (= LN 91); FR fols. 61r–v.

⁷⁶ Anstis 119 (= LN 93–94); FR fol. 62v.

⁷⁷ Anstis 108–109 (= LN 88–89).

⁷⁸ Anstis 147–149 (= LN 108–109; FR fol. 71r); 151–152 (= LN 111–112; FR fol. 72v); 153–155 (= LN 112–114; FR fol. 73r); 157 (= LN 114–115; FR fols. 73v–74r).

⁷⁹ Anstis 187 (= LN 132–133); FR fol. 82r.

⁸⁰ Anstis 191 (= LN 135–136); FR fol. 83v.

⁸¹ Sir Roger Tocketts of Bromham, Wilts., was the steward of the lands of George, duke of Clarence, in Hampshire, and was his follower in the duke of Clarence's 1470 rebellion: Charles Derek Ross, *Richard III* (London 1992) 108; Anstis 190 (= LN 134); FR fol. 83v.

“Le Roy d’Espagne” is repeated twice both in the first and second column, while the information in LN, agrees with FR for the first column, in the second column, there is “Dominum Stanley.” In this instance LN may be correct, since a king is never nominated in the second column. This column was spared for the lords, and the king’s place must be traditionally in the first column.⁸² In Viscount Bouchier’s nomination list for the year 1461, there are two different entries leading to three different names. In LN, we have “Dom. Joan. Nevyl,” “Dom. Tho. Haryngton,” and “Dom. Tho. Kiryell,” whereas in FR, there are only two names: “Sire Johan Wenlok” and “Sire Thomas Kiriell,” the latter given twice.⁸³ In other instances, FR leaves the spaces of the scrutiny lists of some of the companions simply empty: FR also lacks the name William Stanley in the duke of Suffolk’s nomination list for the year 1480.⁸⁴ In LN, the nomination lists of both the duke of York and the duke of Suffolk for the year 1476 are full of nine people, whereas in FR, their place is empty.⁸⁵ In one instance, the divergence in the traditional arrangement of the scrutinies may indicate how to determine the correct nominees. In Lord Dudley’s nomination list for the year 1482, in the second column in LN, there is “Dom. Denham,” while in FR the entry is “Messr Edward Wydevile.” Both of these men were politically close to the king⁸⁶ and thus repeatedly nominated, but it is interesting to note that Edward Woodville was never recorded in the second column but rather in the third column in LN. The mistake therefore appears to be FR’s.

In other instances, it is impossible to discern which manuscript preserves the correct reading. In the following examples, it is highly probable that the discrepancies are merely due to scribal errors. In two instances there are diagonal switches between the votes of two consecutive companions. In the duke of Gloucester’s nomination list for the year 1476, FR shows that Gloucester nominated Lord Dacres of the North, and that the Marquess of Dorset nominated Lord Stanley. On the

⁸² Anstis 199 (= LN 140–141); FR fol. 85v.

⁸³ There is a tendency to nominate important soldiers to the Order; Sir Thomas Kyriel was also awarded land grant from the king and this was probably correct for Umfravilles. See M. M. Postan, “Some Social Consequences of the Hundred Years’ Wars,” *Economic History Review* o.s. 12 (1942) 1–12, at 9–10; Anstis 166 (= LN 120); FR fol. 76v.

⁸⁴ Anstis 206 (= LN 144); FR fol. 88v.

⁸⁵ Anstis 195 (= LN 138–139); FR fols. 84v–85r.

⁸⁶ For John Lord Dinham, see Charles Derek Ross, *Edward IV* (London 1974) 79; Ross, *Richard III* (n. 81 above) 161; Anstis 212 (= LN 148–149); FR fol. 90v.

other hand in LN, Lord Dacres of the North is nominated by the marquess of Dorset, and Lord Stanley by the duke of Gloucester.⁸⁷ It is impossible to decide on the correct version. In the earl of Essex's nomination list for the year 1476, LN has "Ducem Britanniae," while in the FR, the entry is "le filz de la Royne Richard." The discrepancy may have arisen if a scribe had switched one individual entry between the votes of the earl of Essex and the "earl of Norfolk." The nomination lists of these two companions were written down in a row: in the nomination list of "le Compte de Norfolk," in LN, there is "D. Ri. filium Regi," whereas FR has "le Duc de Bretaignie," opposite from the case of the earl of Essex. In at least one instance in the same scrutiny list, the discrepancy can be explained in terms of collateral shift between the scrutiny lists of consecutive dates. In the duke of Gloucester's nomination list for the year 1476, LN has "Ducem Britanniae," while FR reads "Le Roy de Hungueris."⁸⁸ The insertion of the name of the king of Hungary may be a scribal error in FR, as the king was unanimously elected in the following election session on 10 February 1481, but is not otherwise nominated in this session at all.⁸⁹

Although FR has a number of scribal mistakes, all of the nominees in LN may not be correct either. In the earl of Shrewsbury's nomination list for the year 1450, it is FR that provides the name "le sire Clifford," only voted by Shrewsbury in this scrutiny. LN, on the other hand, has "Dom. Boneville," nominated by three more companions both in LN and FR.⁹⁰ Thus it is highly probable that Aldrich simply omitted the name of Lord Clifford by mistake, as it appeared only once, and inserted that of Lord Bonville, which was repeated.

Although there are not many, the differences in the first name do also create confusion in determining exactly which member of a particular family was nominated by a particular knight. There is one striking instance in the nomination list of the duke of Gloucester for the

⁸⁷ Anstis 196–198 (= LN 139–140); FR fol. 85v.

⁸⁸ Anstis 198n. (= LN 140); FR fol. 85v.

⁸⁹ Anstis 196 (= LN 139); FR fol. 85v; for records of the following session see FR fol. 88v.

⁹⁰ Thus Lord Bonville's alienation from the Lancastrian Court and his approach to Yorkist side was welcomed: S. J. Payling, "The Ampthill Dispute: a study in aristocratic lawlessness and the breakdown of Lancastrian Government," *English Historical Review*, 104 (1989) 881–907 at 881–882. Lord Clifford was enrolled in the Percy faction in the north: Ralph A. Griffiths, "Local Rivalries and National Politics: The Percies, the Nevilles, and the Duke of Exeter, 1452–55," *Speculum* 43 (1968) 589–632 at 631; Anstis 143 (= LN 106); FR fol. 68v.

year 1480. In LN, there is “Dom. Tho. Haryngton,” while in the FR, the equivalent entry is “Messire Jamys Haryngton.”⁹¹ The difference in the first name leads to confusion, because at this time there were members of the Harrington family bearing both names. Differences in surnames could lead to more complex confusion in instances in which it is not even possible to discern the correct family, let alone the particular member of that family. In Lord Beauchamp’s nomination list for the year 1453, in LN, there is “Dom. Ri. Hungerford,” while in the FR, there is “Messire Richard Haryngton.”⁹² Both the Hungerfords and Harringtons were influential families of the time whose members were nominated and elected to the Order.⁹³ The members of both of these families are nominated by other members of the Order, but it is impossible to discern the correct nominations.

In most of the discrepancies the whole (or part) of the person’s name is completely different. Unfortunately, it is often the case that both of the names are frequently repeated in a scrutiny lists, which makes the task of determining the correct version impossible. In the duke of Buckingham’s nomination list for the year 1474, LN gives “March. Ferrariensem,” whereas in FR the relevant entry is “le counte Northumberland.”⁹⁴ The title earl of Northumberland occurs four times in LN, and marquis of Ferrara is found three times in LN, thus either alternative may be correct. The same pattern repeats itself in the following examples: in the nomination list of Sir John Fastolf for the year 1447, LN has “Dom. Will. Bonevyle,” while in FR for the same entry there is “Messire William Ooldhalle.”⁹⁵ In Earl Rivers’s nomination list for the year 1480, in LN there is “Dom. Jac. Haryngton,” while FR

⁹¹ Anstis 206 (= LN 144); FR fol. 88v.

⁹² Anstis 150 (= LN 110); FR fol. 71v.

⁹³ Hungerfords rose to power by means of dynastic marriages: M. M. Postan, “The Costs of the Hundred Years’ War,” *Past and Present* 27 (1964) 34–53 at 52; also see M. A. Hicks, “Piety and Lineage in the Wars of the Roses: The Hungerford Experience,” *Kings and Nobles in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Ralph A. Griffiths and James Sherborne (Gloucester and New York 1986) 90–108 at 95. Sir Thomas Harrington was a duchy servant and one of Salisbury’s retainers: Griffiths, “Local Rivalries” (n. 90 above) 612. Sir Thomas is described as a “staunch Yorkist” in Patricia Jalland, “The Influence of the Aristocracy on Shire Elections in the North of England, 1450–70,” *Speculum* 47 (1972) 483–507 at 489.

⁹⁴ This occurrence is not unusual. For the earl of Northumberland’s political influence in the north, see Michael Weiss, “A Power in the North? The Percies in the Fifteenth Century,” *Historical Journal* 19.2 (1976) 501–519; Anstis 190 (= LN 135); FR fol. 83r.

⁹⁵ Anstis 133 (= LN 99); FR fol. 65v.

gives “Messire Thomas Burgh.”⁹⁶ In Sir Thomas Montgomery’s nomination list for the year 1482, LN has “D. Grey Codenore,” whereas FR has “Le Sr Welles.”⁹⁷

There is one peculiar case in which the difference is not in a nomination list of any companion but in the identity of the nominator. In the scrutiny for the year 1476, in LN it is the “Dux Buckyngamiae” who nominates, whereas in FR, the nominator is said to have been “le Duke de Clarence.”⁹⁸ They were both the members of the Order at this time, and the people whom they nominated are the same. Unfortunately what we know about this session is limited to scrutiny and the election, which took place after this scrutiny; there is no attendance or absentee list for the session. Thus it is impossible to determine who was actually absent.

Thus, the scrutiny lists represent the only element of the register in which FR does not invariably preserve the superior reading. Anstis’s edition of LN is clearly more complete in the names it provides. This may support the argument that Aldrich used other source(s) in compiling his edition. It is nevertheless also probable that those omissions in FR may simply denote errors on the part of the scribe of MS Ashmole 1128 rather than a lack of information in the original, lost fifteenth-century register. It is also usually difficult to discern the correct nominee when the testimony of these two versions conflicts. Since both names occur frequently in the same scrutiny list in most of the instances, it is usually impossible to decide the correct version. There are only two instances where a version provides a distinct name, one in LN and the other in FR, but it is still impossible to discern precisely the correct nominee even in those instances.

The differences between these two version of the Order’s register are important not merely as evidence of textual transmission and so forth, but bear directly upon our understanding of the history of the Order. As I argue elsewhere,⁹⁹ a careful examination of the scrutiny lists—who

⁹⁶ For the career of Sir Thomas Burgh, see D. A. L. Morgan, “The King’s affinity in the Polity of Yorkist England,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 23 (1973) 1–25, at 7 and 10; and R. L. Storey, “Lincolnshire in the Wars of the Roses,” *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 24 (1970) 64–83 at 71–72; Anstis 206 (= LN 145); FR fol. 88v.

⁹⁷ Anstis 212 (= LN 148–149); FR fol. 90v.

⁹⁸ Anstis 193 (= LN 136–137); FR fol. 84r.

⁹⁹ For instance, in my doctoral diss., working title “Nomination and Knighthood: Election to the Most Noble Order of the Garter in the Late Middle Ages.”

nominated whom—may reveal much about the political alliances and other networks in late medieval England. Thus, for instance, Ben Daw has suggested that parental closeness may have been one factor in determining a knight companion's nomination choices. On the basis of the *Liber Niger*, he gave the example of the earl of Essex's nomination of Sir Thomas Bourchier. Nevertheless, FR is not in agreement here: in the earl of Essex's nomination list for the year 1473, LN gives "Dom. Tho. Bourchyer," but the equivalent entry in FR is "Messire Johan Parre." On the other hand, LN's insertion may well be correct because Sir Thomas Bourchier appears to be a distinct name, nominated only once in this scrutiny (in LN, not at all in FR) and never nominated again in the Order's history.¹⁰⁰ Either way, any conclusion about broader nomination patterns and the political or other implications thereof would remain unclear without a thorough analysis of both versions of the register in all cases.

The task of reconstructing the history of the Order of the Garter during the late Middle Ages, especially during the fifteenth century, is indeed difficult due to the relatively few primary documents which survive. The register of the Order remains the most important source for historians. However, as I have shown in this article, the register itself is not a straightforward source: it is preserved in two versions which, although clearly derived from a common source (Ashmole's lost "paper manuscript"), do contain a great many textual differences rendering the task of reconstructing from their testimony somewhat problematic. In many respects, the early modern copy of the older French Register represents a superior text when compared with the *Liber Niger*. For example, as shown above, it regularly records the dates of the sessions, the names of those present and absent for the sessions, and the reasons for their absence; and it also identifies the stalls to which new knights were installed. In these and other respects, Ashmole 1128 would seem to represent a fuller version of the Order's register. On the other hand, the French Register creates more problems than it solves in the scrutinies. Some of its deficiencies can be ostensibly proven and it seldom helps in establishing the correct nominees in the scrutinies. If my explanations hold, the *Liber Niger* perhaps has fewer errors in those lists than the French Register in this respect. There are also a small number of cases when LN presents some miscellanea that are lacking in

¹⁰⁰ Daw (n. 4 above) 191; Anstis 187 (= LN 132–133); FR fol. 82v.

the French Register. Historians do not know from which source(s) Robert Aldrich compiled his edition, but since this happened some eighty years later than the events discussed in this article, it is highly probable that the information in the copy of an older source (FR) is more authentic, excluding those cases already discussed in the scrutinies. Although Robert Aldrich's compilation is flawed in many points of detail, it occasionally gives additional information not available in the FR. Therefore, I would argue that any attempt at reconstructing the history of the Order of the Garter in this period must take into account the evidence of *both* versions of the register, and should weigh their sometimes conflicting testimony very carefully.

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