

Itinerant Kings

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Abstract

Rather than govern from a fixed capital, medieval European kings were itinerant. I argue that itinerant kingship was a rational coalition-building strategy employed by relatively weak rulers in the face of potentially violent elites. To empirically explore itinerant kingship, I introduce data on the daily location of the English king from 1199 to 1327. Utilizing genealogical data for feudal barons, I show that the king's itinerary targeted "key players" within the elite network to maintain political support. When the Early Modern "military revolution" increased the military power of the king vis-à-vis the elites, European kings adopted stationary governments.

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It is therefore, on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to the most free and most popular.

David Hume, *Of the First Principles of Government*, (1777/1994)

1 Introduction

The modern nation-state came into existence in Europe in the 16th and 17th century, and has proven to be an incredibly successful form of political organization. Today, the vast majority of the global population is a citizen of a nation-state. Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson (2005a) and Dincecco (2015) argue that the rise of the nation-state played an important role in facilitating the first era of sustained economic growth in Europe, and state capacity has been shown to be positively correlated with economic growth (Besley and Persson, 2011). Given the significance the nation-state plays in the modern world, it is important to understand its historical uniqueness and the factors that contributed to its emergence. Only upon doing so can we begin to parse whether its association with economic growth is correlation or potentially causal.

Prior to the development of the nation-state, military power and political authority was largely decentralized in the hands of elites (North, Wallis, and Weingast, 2009). Far from being atomized individuals, elites were tied together by strong network ties, often via kinship, which fostered mutual solidarity and created blocs of military and political power (Padgett and Ansell, 1993, Slez, 2024, Desierto et al., 2023).¹ Rulers had to work with and through this network of powerful elites to effectively govern the kingdom (Blaydes and Chaney, 2013, Chaney, 2013, Angelucci et al., 2022, 2024). Without their support and assistance, royal edicts would go unheeded, the army needed to defend the realm from invasion would go

¹Benzell and Cooke (2021) and Becker et al. (2025), in different historical contexts, study how changing familial ties between elites alter alliances and thus the frequency and duration of warfare.

unraised, and revolts would go unquashed. The ruler’s political survival, and often his literal survival, required him to maintain the support of a “winning coalition” among the elites (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2005). The king’s reliance on the power and authority of the local elites, however, placed him in a delicate and often perilous position, and was arguably the single largest inhibitor to state-centralization in the premodern world.

One hallmark of the nation-state is its stationary, capital-based government. Many pre-modern rulers, however, were itinerant. The emperors of the Achaemenian and Seleucid empires, those vast empires of the ancient Near East, adopted an itinerant lifestyle. The Qin (221 - 207 BCE) and Han dynasties (206 BCE - 220 CE) in China, as well as the weak 17th century Qing dynasty, practiced what Chang (2020) called “imperial touring.” Itinerant kingship has also been well-documented in numerous 12th and 13th century Asian empires, 14th century Java, the Incan Empire in South America, and medieval African kingdoms governing what is now Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, and Morocco. Every king of England from the Anglo-Saxons through Henry VII, the main characters of this paper, were itinerant as well. So too were their continental counterparts in the Holy Roman Empire, France, the Iberian kingdoms of Aragon and Castile, Sweden, Flanders, Hungary, and numerous other European polities.²

Itinerant kingship was not merely the occasional journey to escape the capital city for better hunting grounds, but a consciously adopted method of government that involved constant travel (Bernhardt, 2002, 2013). Those who traveled with the ruler numbered in the hundreds, and included the core bureaucratic departments of the royal government. At the height of his reign, England’s King John, of Magna Carta fame, packed up and moved the royal government down the road an average of 220 times per year. His government was truly

²References documenting itinerant kingship in the above mentioned medieval polities are as follows: Achaemenian and Seleucid empires (Bernhardt, 2002); the Incan empire (Ramírez, 2013); Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, and Morocco (Bernhardt, 2002, Horvath, 1969) ; Java (Geertz, 1977); Asian empires (Atwood, 2015); the Holy Roman Empire (McKitterick, 2011, Wilson, 2016), France (Knecht, 2008, Hallam and West, 2019), Castile (Arias Guillén, 2013), Sweden (Strömberg, 2008), and Flanders (Vanderputten, 2011).

“a government of the roads and the roadsides” (Jolliffe, 1963, 140).

Itinerant rulers stand in contrast to stationary, capital-based rulers observed in historical settings where elites were comparatively weaker and authority was more centralized. Chinese emperors during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) remained stationary in the imperial palace in Peking (Dabringhaus, 2011). The medieval pope oversaw and governed the Roman Catholic Church, Europe’s most sophisticated medieval bureaucracy, while seated in Rome. And in the 16th and 17th century, the itinerant kings of Europe abandoned their age old practice in favor of stationary governments and a more impersonal bureaucracy.

Given the widespread adoption of itinerant kingship across diverse institutional and cultural contexts, the rationale behind the practice must lie in a shared, and perhaps fundamental, feature of their political economy. In this paper, I argue that itinerant kingship is primarily a result of the king’s efforts to build and maintain a political coalition among the self-interested, and often licentious and rebellious, elites. In theory, the king is indifferent on the matter of adopting an itinerant court versus a stationary court as both allow him to interact with the elites of the kingdom. By hosting a stationary court, the king lowers his cost of monitoring and interacting with the elites, but at the expense of lowering their coordination costs of a large-scale revolt. When the king only has a relative military advantage over the elites, actions that lower his coordination costs make the king worse off because, even if he can monitor elites at a lower cost, he cannot enforce his will if they coordinate their actions. Thus, when elites are sufficiently strong, adopting a largely stationary court poses a real danger to the king and his optimal coalition-building strategy is to adopt an itinerant court.

To derive predictions about the spatial pattern of the king’s journeys, I model potential resistance towards the king and his policies in a network setting. Resistance is a continuous variable, and can be thought of as opportunistic behavior against the interests of the principal (the king) on the part of the agent (the baron). It can range from the selective

enforcement of royal edicts all the way to killing the king with a fire iron. A baron’s equilibrium level of resistance is proportional to his Katz-Bonacich centrality within the elite network. I contend that medieval kings adopted a “key player policy” when visiting their barons. That is, a resource-constrained king concerned with mitigating potential resistance will focus his efforts on barons who would generate the greatest increase in total baronial resistance if they so choose. Ballester et al. (2006, 2010) show that by targeting actors with high “intercentrality,” a measure of network centrality that captures influence or prestige rather than mere connectedness, solves the ruler’s optimization problem when executing the “key player policy”.

To empirically explore itinerant kingship, I introduce newly collected and geo-referenced travel itineraries of every English monarch from 1199 to 1327. The royal itineraries track the daily location of the king, which enables studying the fine-grained spatial contours of the king’s travels. To test whether the king executed a “key player policy” with respect to the potentially violent nobleman, I collect genealogical network data for the secular elite from the same time period. The temporal aspect of the network data allows me to leverage changes that occur more-distantly in elite network as shocks to the baron that alter his position within the elite network. I demonstrate that changes in a feudal baron’s intercentrality within the larger elite network are positively associated with the length of time the king spends with the baron at his territorial barony. A one standard deviation increase in a baron’s network centrality is associated with the king spending nearly 72% longer at a baron’s main manor.

My findings are supported by concurrent work on itinerant kingship in the Holy Roman Empire by Müller-Crepon et al. (2026). A ruler’s family members, particularly his brothers and uncles, powerful and well-connected nobles in their own right, often posed a threat to the ruler’s political survival. In a hereditary monarchy, the incentive for familial resistance is dampened by the fact that the ruler’s son is the only noble with a legitimate claim to the crown upon his father’s death. But in an elected monarchy, all family members are,

theoretically, potential successors. The title of “Emperor of the Romans” was an elected position, but in times of stability and royal strength, the electors would often favor the Emperor’s son as a sign of divine grace. After the deposition of Frederick II (r. 1220 - 1250) by Pope Innocent IV in 1245, however, the Holy Roman Empire went through a period of instability and contestation over the crown. The so-called “Great Interregnum” permanently weakened the authority of the emperor, largely brought an end to the practice of naming a co-king, and introduced an instability to the throne that would not be remedied until the time of the Habsburgs. Using the itineraries of the Emperors, Müller-Crepon et al. (2026) empirically demonstrate that after 1250 emperors visited their relatives more often compared to their pre-Interregnum counterparts as they became more likely to resist the emperor. Their findings point to the same logic at work in my setting: when politically central nobles become credible rivals, rulers respond by directing more of their scarce time toward them.³

I am, of course, not the first to connect itinerant kingship to the political necessities of the king. Church (2007), echoing Jolliffe (1963), writes that “the royal itinerary was a rational business entered into by a king determined ... to maintain relationships with the county communities of the land” (31), and Thomas (2020) describes itinerant kingship as a method of “enhanc[ing] the ruler’s soft power” (172). Chang (2020) quotes Qin Huitian, a Qing dynasty government official writing in 1761, saying that “the ancient kings used this [touring] to check on the rule of various vassals, ..., and thus to maintain ultimate authority over the realm” (36). My theory takes inspiration from the above, but differs by explicitly focusing on coalition-building as the essence of politics and the primary motivation behind itinerant kingship. I further the historical literature, first, by elaborating explicit testable

³The similar rationale underlying the itinerant lifestyle of the hereditary King of England and the elected Emperor of the Romans also suggests the two methods of royal succession are more alike than is often appreciated. Without the approval of at least a subset of the elite, the king, hereditary or elected, would be unable to maintain his crown.

hypotheses concerning itinerant kingship, and second, by subjecting the royal itineraries to quantitative, hypothesis-focused analysis.

More broadly, recent theoretical treatments of premodern politics have put coalition-building front and center (Leon, 2020, Desierto and Koyama, 2025), and others have looked to the premodern era to better understand the black box of political legitimacy (Johnson and Koyama, 2019, Greif and Rubin, 2022, 2024). Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2005) argues that the desire to stay in office “shapes the selection of political institutions” and “influences the very evolution of political life” (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2005, 8-9). Also, travel is a well-recognized strategy of charismatic political and cultural leaders trying to influence others into supporting their particular cause (Becker et al., 2020, 2026, Buggle and Vlachos, 2023, Assouad, 2023).

The main growth-inhibiting characteristic of the premodern state, and the medieval European state in particular, has traditionally been identified as the lack of binding constraints on the ruler (North and Weingast, 1989, Acemoglu et al., 2005a,b). Royal expropriation and the arbitrary re-defining of property rights is often discussed as a product of royal strength. But the king’s inability to credibly commit to respecting the property rights of his subjects is properly understood as a product of his comparative weakness (Epstein, 2000, O’Brien, 2011). The core problem of the medieval state, and its main growth-inhibiting characteristic, was that the king was much too weak and the other elites were much too strong. The excessive strength of the elites and the dangers of hosting a stationary court forced the king to build a political coalition via travel, which in turn limited his ability to credibly commit to uphold his promises and rule through a more regularized government. When the “military revolution” bolstered the power of the king at the expense of the other elites, it not only led to the expansion of the state in terms of tax revenue (Gennaioli and Voth, 2015), but fundamentally altered its organization, structure, and internal politics. With respect to England’s story, this paper complements Greif and Rubin (2024) by adding further quantitative

evidence to the long argued idea that the Tudor dynasty was a watershed period in English constitutional history (Bacon, 1622/1998, Hume, 1777/1994).

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides historical background on politics and government in medieval Europe. Section 3 elaborates a political economy theory of itinerant kingship. Section 4 details the main data from AD 1199 to 1327 used in the paper. Section 5 provides empirical evidence for a political theory of itinerant kingship. Section 6 concludes.

2 Anatomy of the Medieval Polity

2.1 The Military-Political Environment

The medieval polity was a network of patron-client relationships that culminated with the king. The king was the most powerful political actor in the kingdom. He nominally owned all the land within the kingdom, which he distributed out to the elites below him. The king's authority was backed up by the fact that he was the single largest land and castle holder. Royal succession in England was formally based on the rules of primogeniture.

Directly below the king were the barons. There were over 250 barons of varying wealth and political authority within England. Each baron formally held his land as the king's feudal vassal, and in exchange for land, he owed the king feudal dues and military support. Barons in turn had tenants that held land of them. In exchange for agricultural labor and military service, barons provided public goods, such as protection and justice, to their tenants and those that lived on their manors. Like the king, baronial succession was hereditary, passing from father to son.

Despite the formal hierarchy of the feudal system, the king lacked actionable authority and sovereignty over his more powerful subjects. Each baron possessed potential for violence

in varying magnitudes, and was accompanied by his own personal military retinue and retainers. Brown (1959) lists 327 active castles in England at any time between 1154 to 1216. In 1154, baronial-owned castles outnumbered royal-owned castles 5 to 1, and even after the great demolition and confiscation campaign of the Angevin monarchs, the number of baronial-owned castles was still double that of royal-owned castles. During times of external war, the king would invoke his right as the feudal overlord and require the barons to supply fighting men and weapons in support of his cause. But it was often in barons' interest to turn their weapons on their fellow elites as well as their subjects.

Economic and military resources were endowed unequally among the baronage. Painter (1943) and Gray (1934) provide income estimates for a sample of barons in c. 1200 and 1436 respectively.⁴ In 1200, the ratio of the maximum income to the average was 4:1. By 1436, it had increased to 5:1. A baron's influence on other elites within the network, as measured by his intercentrality, was also highly unequal with a ratio of the maximum intercentrality to the average of 16:1.

The dominant military technology of the day, the fortified castle, often gave the local baron a military advantage over the king (Rogers, 1993, 74). Prior to the perfection of the gunpowder cannon in the late 15th century, cracking its walls would have been nearly impossible, which made besieging a castle a costly and time-consuming affair.⁵ A siege involved cutting off the castle's supply lines for food and military reinforcements and waiting for surrender. The military advantage of defense, in addition to high transport costs, resulted in the decentralized governance structure (Batchelder and Freudenberger, 1983). Local barons were able to command great authority over their barony, and, for the most part, act with sovereign-like control. Although the king, or even a mighty baron, may have

⁴Turchin and Nefedov (2009) discusses the inequality of the medieval European elite in detail.

⁵Catapults and trebuchets were likely cost-prohibitive as a regular siege weapon. The trebuchet that King Edward I used to force Stirling Castle to surrender, Warwolf, required five master carpenters and 50 laborers three months to build (Prestwich, 1997, 502). Edward bore the cost, not because he needed it to secure the castle, but to send a message.

desired greater sovereign authority over a larger territory, the military technology of the day made it prohibitively costly.

Familial connections among the elite class played a pivotal role in medieval politics (Bartlett, 2020). They served as ready-made alliances among barons that could be called upon for military and political support. Nine times out of ten, it is reasonable to infer a political connection from a familial connection (Holt, 1961). The corollary is that when the familial network changes, so too does the political landscape. The king understood the importance of familial ties, and often grew suspicious of barons whose family members were in rebellion (Painter, 1961). The king was right to be suspicious — Desierto, Hall, and Koyama (2023) show that the resources available to a baron via his kin network influenced his decision to rebel against King John in 1215.

Given the strength and political authority of the barons, the king could not rule as an autocrat. He had to rely on a coalition of supporters to effectively govern the kingdom and remain on the throne. Challenging the king would likely have spelled doom for an individual baron acting alone, but a coalition of barons could pose serious trouble. Frank Barlow aptly summarizes the crux of being a medieval king: “Each ruler competed with others to construct a superior network of alliances” (2000, 7). The difference between a “strong” king and a “weak” king was his ability to maintain his political coalition.

2.2 The King’s Traveling Government

Medieval Government revolved around the king and his household. As the medievalist Thomas Tout said, “The whole state and realm of England were the appurtenances of the king’s household” (Prestwich, 2016, 134-5). That was as true in the 15th century just as much as it was in the 13th (Warren, 1973, Ross, 2011). By the time of Henry I, the household had clear departmental divisions, a recognized hierarchy, and specialization of duties (Barlow, 2000). At the most basic level, it served the king’s domestic needs: his food and

drink, his clothes, his shelter, and his ceremonial duties. The household was also the center of English government and “the political hub of the realm” (Given-Wilson, 1986). From the household sprung the king’s orders to local authorities and the proto-bureaucracy that governed England.

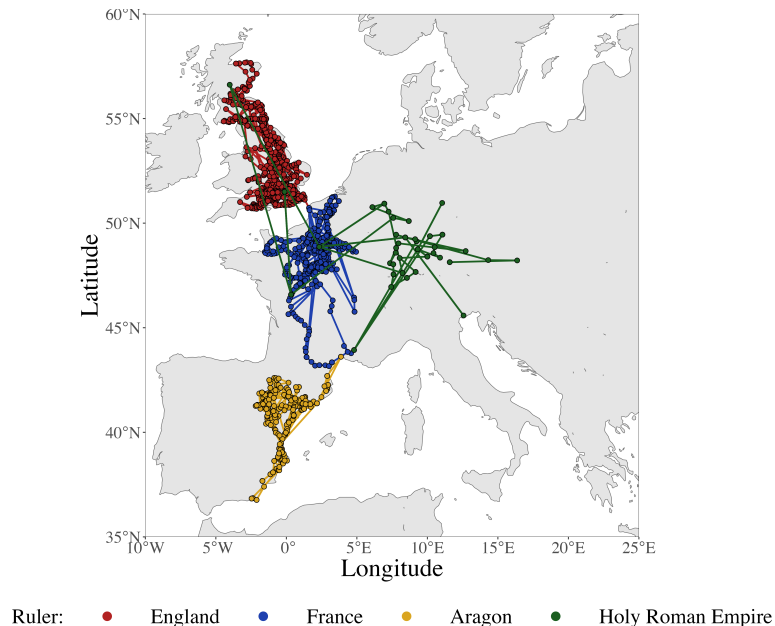
The proto-bureaucracies that oversaw royal taxation and royal justice developed out of the itinerant households of the Norman kings. But all of them came to reside in Westminster fairly early in the Middle Ages. The royal exchequer, whose primary role it was to collect the king’s revenue, always sat in Westminster. The chancery — “a home office, a foreign office and a ministry of justice” rolled into one — moved “out of court” perhaps as early as 1280 (Pollock and Maitland, 1898). The Court of Common Pleas, a common law court which handled “common pleas” that did not concern the king too sat in Westminster for its entire existence. The Court of the King’s Bench, which was concerned with cases that pertained to the king and where he was the plaintiff, officially settled in Westminster in 1318, but the king’s presence in it was irregular from the reign of Edward I (r. 1272-1307) (Baker, 1979). Despite these proto-bureaucracies going out of court, the king remained itinerant.

At the center of the itinerant household was the *domus*, the permanent component of the household bureaucracy attached to the king. Beyond the *domus* was the *familia regis*, which had no fixed membership and was in constant flux. The *familia regis* included those in attendance at the king’s court for either social or business reasons. It is difficult to ascertain the number of people in each component of the household, but Given-Wilson (1986) calculates that the staff alone was 425 people. In addition to the *domus* and the *familia regis*, the king would have been accompanied by a group of lay and ecclesiastical guests, foreign emissaries, merchants, and hangers-on (Hollister, 1986, Church, 2007). Even at its least populous, the king’s entire entourage numbered no less than 500 (Carpenter, 2007, Crockford, 2016).

Transporting the royal household was a costly undertaking. Prestwich (1997) cites a

1285-6 household account that reports 12 carts in the possession and use of the household. Masschaele (1993) estimates transport cost over land to be 1.5 pence per ton-mile, and that a medieval cart could carry about three-quarters of a ton. If we assume the king could travel about 20 miles in a single day, his daily transport cost comes out to £1, 2s, & 6p, which was the equivalent of paying a day's wage to 112 skilled tradesmen.

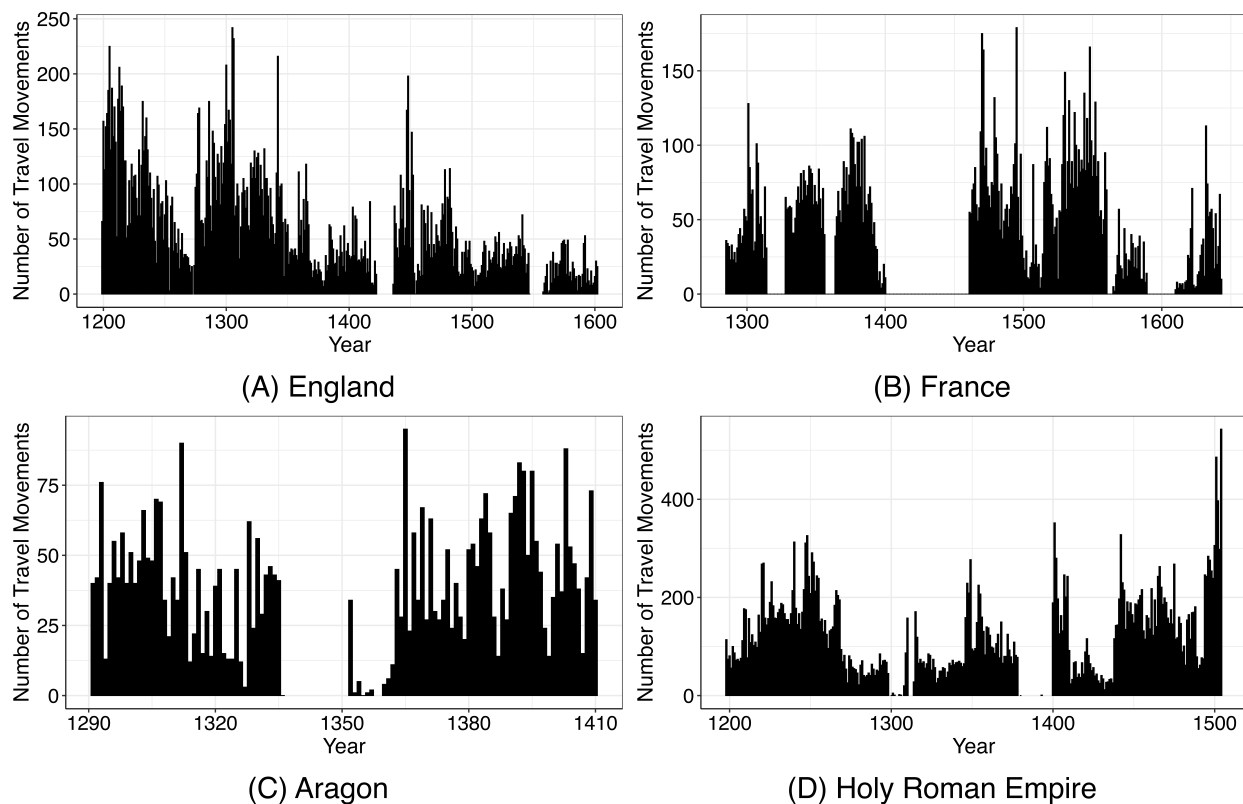
Figure 1: Itinerant Kingship in Medieval Europe



Note: The figure plots the itineraries of four major rulers of Europe from 1300 to 1310.

To provide a sense of the scope of royal travel, Figure 1 plots the extensive travels of the major rulers of Europe in the 1310s. The king would find lodging wherever he could, including his own manors, castles, and hunting lodges, but most of the time he stayed at monasteries, the residences of his subjects, or a camp along the road (Prestwich, 2016). The king's movements may have been planned in stages a few weeks in advance to provide the people who wished to visit the court a sense of where it could be found (Given-Wilson, 1986, Church, 2007). But unplanned stops were the norm. The king would have to be flexible to respond to the changing political winds.

Figure 2: Number of Royal Travel Movements for England, France, Aragon, and the Holy Roman Empire



Note: Number of annual royal movements for England, France, Aragon, and the Holy Roman Empire. Zeros represent lack of data.

To provide a sense of the frequency of royal travel, Figure 2 plots the number of travel movements of the ruler of England, France, Aragon, and the Holy Roman Empire. At the height of his reign, King John (r.1199-1216) moved about 220 times per year, which translates roughly to him changing his location every 1.5 days. His successors, although rarely matching him, traveled at an equally impressive rate. On average, the English king moved locations within England 62 times per year. In England, itinerant kingship came to an end in the 16th century. The sharp decline in the number of movements beginning with the reign of Henry VIII (r.1509-1547) is visibly apparent in Figure 2. Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, and her Stuart successors were not itinerant like their medieval predecessors. Although

they occasionally toured the kingdom on “progress” during summer months, the apparatus of government became firmly lodged in Westminster. The kings of France would lag behind, remaining itinerant until the Bourbon dynasty in the 17th century.

One way that England stands apart from the continent is its more robust history of parliamentary activity. Even then, the king summoned parliament relatively infrequently. Prior to the reign of Henry VIII, the English parliament met for an average of 47 days out of the year.⁶ In the 214 years between 1295 to 1509, parliament did not meet at all in 69 of those years. Also, the number of days the English parliament was in session declines dramatically as a king gets further into his reign (Van Zanden, Buringh, and Bosker, 2012) - the higher activity in the early years being a function of the fact that king’s were often granted the right to a particular tax levy for life, necessitating renegotiation at the beginning of the successor’s reign.⁷ Continental parliaments were institutionalized even later, met less frequently, and were “less vital to the government of the state” (Maddicott, 2010, 394). Boucoyannis (2021) and Young (2022) provide additional evidence that more politically secure kings were more likely to call parliaments. Although it is difficult to psychoanalyze individuals who lived 700 years ago, the pattern demonstrates the king’s reluctance to summon the elites to parliament too frequently.

When parliaments did occur, there is evidence that the king took steps to mitigate the potential costs of calling the militarized elites all to one location. Henriques and Palma (2023) show, for 1385 to 1600, that the taxes refused by Parliament as a percentage of taxes demanded of them was 0% for England, 2.4% for Castile, and 7.3% for Portugal. This strongly suggests, without definitely proving, that medieval kings were quite shrewd in knowing when to call parliament and how to stock it with supporters. Also, in the case of England, despite the pool of potential secular and religious elites being evenly sized,

⁶Author’s calculation based on the data of Van Zanden et al. (2012).

⁷In contrast, as shown in Figure A.1, royal itineracy is consistent throughout a king’s reign.

religious elites consistently outnumber secular elites by wide margins in terms of who is called to parliament (see Figure A.2).⁸

Further evidence for the king’s wariness about baronial gatherings is reflected in their policies regulating tournaments. As a gathering ground of armed barons, tournaments posed a serious danger to the king as “they could be used to sound political opinion and formulate political or even military opposition” (Barker, 1986, 47). The barons who rebelled against John used tournaments as a guise to plan the rebellion and to assemble their army, a tactic mirrored by the opponents of Edward II when they drafted the eleven grievances against the king in 1309 and later made their move to kill Piers Gaveston, the royal favorite, in 1312. As early as 1194, the royal government took actions to regulate tournaments in order to mitigate their potential as seeds of baronial resistance. Richard I required a royal license to hold a tournament, required royal officials to be in attendance, and restricted tournament locations to only five pre-approved places. Edward I would extend these regulations in 1292 to restrict the rules of the competitions themselves. On numerous occasions, the king would prohibit particular individuals from attending tournaments, and in times of particular political trouble, prohibited them outright.

3 Itinerant Kingship as a Coalition-building Strategy

3.1 Baronial Resistance in a Network Setting

Armed rebellion and civil wars are often the first things we imagine when thinking about the tumultuous relationship between the king and his barons. But such acts of coordinated violence are a long time in the making, and represent only the tip of the iceberg that is baronial discontent and resistance. Baronial resistance is a continuous variable which

⁸Pike (1894, 165) says that the number of Lords Temporal and Lords Spiritual that were eligible to be called to parliament were roughly equal since the days of Henry III, meaning it is appropriate to use raw counts (see also Greif and Rubin (2024)).

captures all baronial behavior that works against the king's objectives. Resistance ranges from partial compliance with royal edicts to evading scutage and, at the extreme, attempting to seize the crown.

Following Ballester et al. (2006, 2010) and Zenou (2016), I model resistance against the king in a network setting with strategic complementarities in effort.⁹ The goal here is not to model all aspects of resistance in a network setting (for that, see Naidu et al. (2021)), but to fix ideas about the network characteristics of potential rebels.

Consider a game where $N = \{1, \dots, n\}$ is a set of barons in network $\mathbf{g}$. We can represent network connections by a graph $\mathbf{g}$, where $g_{ij} = 1$ if baron i is directly connected to baron j , otherwise $g_{ij} = 0$.¹⁰ We denote by $\mathbf{G}$ the $n \times n$ adjacency matrix with entry g_{ij} , which orders all direct connections. Barons i and j share their knowledge and resources if and only if $g_{ij} = 1$. Each baron i must decide how much effort to exert in resistance against the king, denoted by y_i . The utility of each baron providing effort y_i in network $\mathbf{g}$ is:

$$u_i(\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{g}) = \alpha_i y_i - \frac{1}{2} y_i^2 + \phi \sum_{j=1}^n g_{ij} y_i y_j, \quad (1)$$

where ϕ is the intensity of connections and $\mathbf{y}$ is an n -dimensional vector of resistance efforts.

A baron's utility as defined by equation (1) has an individual component, $\alpha_i y_i - \frac{1}{2} y_i^2$, and a network component, $\phi \sum_{j=1}^n g_{ij} y_i y_j$. The marginal benefit of engaging in resistance is given by $\alpha_i y_i$, which is increasing in own effort. α_i is the exogenous heterogeneity of baron i that captures such things as his age, his personal fighting ability, the productivity of his barony, etc. The second part is the local-aggregate effect of his peers. Because there are strategic complements, the greater the number of connections baron i has, the greater the

⁹In what follows, I adopt the notation of Zenou (2016).

¹⁰Network connections are assumed to be symmetrical: $g_{ij} = g_{ji}$.

marginal utility of providing his own resistance effort will be.¹¹

In equilibrium, each baron maximizes his utility, and the best-reply function for each baron is given by:

$$y_i = \alpha_i + \phi \sum_{j=1}^n g_{ij} y_j, \quad (2)$$

Ballester et al. (2006) show (Theorem 1 and Remark 1) that an agent's Nash-equilibrium level of effort is equivalent to their weighted Katz-Bonacich centrality, a measure of the baron's centrality within the network:

$$\mathbf{y}^*(\mathbf{g}) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \phi^k \sum_{j=1}^n \mathbf{G}_{ij}^k \quad (3)$$

In network terminology, a “walk” is a sequence of edges and vertices in a network that can start and end at any vertex and can repeat vertices and edges. The Katz-Bonacich centrality counts the number of all walks of length k in G starting from i , where the walks of length k are weighted by the decay factor ϕ^k . Thus, we can decompose Katz-Bonacich centrality into the sum of all walks from i to i (loops) and of all the outer walks from i to every other node $j \neq i$:

$$b_i(G, \phi) = m_{ii}(g, \phi) + \sum_{j \neq i} m_{ij}(g, \phi) \quad (4)$$

In common parlance, Katz-Bonacich centrality “captures the influence an agent has not only on her friends, but on their connections, and so forth, with decreasing weight as one moves further away from the agent” (Jackson et al., 2017, 77). Katz-Bonacich centrality and intercentrality (discussed below) stand apart from the other simpler measures of network centrality (degree centrality, closeness centrality, and betweenness centrality) because they capture a node's prestige rather than mere connectedness. The core idea underlying these prestige-oriented measures is that the centrality or importance of a node is determined by

¹¹This is a game of strategic complements because $\frac{\partial^2 u_i(\mathbf{y}, \mathbf{g})}{\partial y_i \partial y_j} = \phi g_{ij} \geq 0$.

the centrality or importance of its neighbors. More technically, they estimate centrality of a node by accounting for its connectivity to other nodes as well as its proximity to other well-connected nodes.

The theoretical relationship between an agent’s equilibrium level of effort and his Katz-Bonacich centrality has been shown to hold empirically in a number of political settings (Cruz et al., 2017, Battaglini and Patacchini, 2018, Naidu et al., 2021).¹² In our setting, it is perhaps best to think of this equilibrium condition in terms of potential resistance, akin to potential energy, which, particularly at high levels, requires some trigger to be actualized.

3.2 Adopting an Itinerant Court

Before considering who the king might target to mitigate baronial resistance, we need to first consider the dominant mode he might adopt in his interactions with barons. Maintaining a winning coalition involves meeting with coalition members. To do that, the king has two options between which he will, in theory, be indifferent. The first option is to call barons to a stationary court in the capital city. By stationary court, I mean an entity akin to Louis XIV of France’s Court at Versailles or the Chinese Emperor’s palace in Peking. The second is to visit barons independently in their own territories. Both allow the king to meet with the barons personally to monitor them and maintain good rapport.

There are, of course, other potential alternatives, but they suffer from key shortcomings. One alternative might involve a stationary court that summons barons individually. But in doing so, the king raises the cost of remaining loyal by forcing barons to bear the travel cost without providing the king with on-the-ground information about the baron and his barony. A second alternative might be a stationary king communicating with barons through local intermediaries. Although the king certainly used intermediaries at times, given the

¹²In the case of rebellions, revolution, and coups, this theoretical and empirical result largely aligns with the ideas put forth by Tullock (1971).

importance of personal connections, relying solely on them seems unsustainable for long-term coalition building.

The two key variables the king needs to balance are his cost of monitoring the barons and the barons' coordination costs of rebellion. By traveling to each elite independently, the king raises the coordination costs of would-be rebels at the expense of having to bear higher monitoring costs himself. Inversely, adopting a stationary court lowers the king's monitoring costs but also lowers the elites' coordination costs.¹³ Thus, the king faces a trade-off between taking actions that lower his monitoring costs and actions that keep the coordination costs of rebellion sufficiently high.

When the king only has a relative military advantage over the barons, actions that lower their coordination costs make the king, on the margin, worse off. Even if he can monitor barons at a lower cost, he cannot enforce his will if they coordinate their actions. But when the king has an absolute military advantage over the barons, the ultimate benefit of keeping barons' coordination costs high is lower because a rebellion can be easily quashed. Thus the king's optimal coalition-building strategy depends on his military strength vis-à-vis the elites. When the king's military advantage is relative, itinerancy is the king's optimal strategy for coalition-building. But when the king's military advantage is absolute, a stationary court is the king's optimal strategy.

Parliaments, admittedly, despite not being as frequent as is often thought, do add a slight wrinkle to my proposed theory. But there are many reasons a king would call parliament beyond coalition-building (ie. to get legal approval on a line of tax revenue). The theory suggests, however, that the king will be wary of calling parliament and will only do so when the benefits of the meeting, such as a new tax, outweigh the costs of potential revolt resulting from the meeting. The king can mitigate the costs of calling a parliament by strategically

¹³The days leading up to the Revolution of 1258 against England's Henry III is a good example of barons using parliament to coordinate rebellion (Carpenter, 2020, 679-698).

calling particular barons and leaving out others. The king will prefer to call barons who, if they used parliament as a launching pad for revolt, would be relatively easy to force back into line. Thus, as was the case, we should expect a majority of those who are called to parliament to be lower-ranked barons and the more militarily weak spiritual lords (e.g. bishops, abbots).

As I explore further in Appendix C.4, when the “military revolution” in the 16th and 17th century gave the king an absolute military advantage over the elites (Bean, 1973, Gennaioli and Voth, 2015), the benefit of keeping elites’ coordination costs high was lower because a rebellion could be more easily quashed. Partly due to differing geography, the rate of state centralization and baronial pacification was slower in France than in England (Johnson and Koyama, 2014). While the English state centralized and attained a monopoly on force with the Tudor dynasty in the 16th century, France remained fragmented and dominated by powerful nobles until the 17th century. In congruence with my theory, the English king adopted a stationary court in the 1510s, while the French king remained itinerant until the 1640s.

3.3 The King’s Key Player Policy

Given the king adopts an itinerant lifestyle, and given scarce time and resources, he needs to choose which barons he will target in his efforts to ensure their support and loyalty. The king’s problem is to reduce the total level of potential resistance by optimally visiting and spending time with the right elite actors. We can denote the total equilibrium level of baronial resistance in network g by:

$$Y^*(g) = \sum_{i=1}^n y_i^* \tag{5}$$

Thus, the king needs to solve:

$$\max\{Y^*(\mathbf{g}) - Y^*(\mathbf{g}^{[-i]}) | i = 1, \dots, n\} \quad (6)$$

The king’s optimal coalition-building strategy is what Ballester et al. (2006, 2010) call the “key player policy”. In the face of potential resistance and scarce resources, the rational king targets the “key player” within the baronial network — the baron “who once removed from the network generates the highest decrease in total activity” (Zenou, 2016, 245). Ballester et al. (2006) show (Theorem 3 and Lemma 1) that the key player i^* who solves Equation (6) is the agent in the network with the highest intercentrality, a nonlinear transformation of the prestige-oriented Katz-Bonacich centrality. Intercentrality is the ratio of the square of the number of walks leaving agent i (the Katz-Bonacich centrality) to the number of walks returning to i :

$$c_i(g, \phi) = \frac{b_i(G, \phi)^2}{m_{ii}(g, \phi)} \quad (7)$$

Intercentrality, being a transformation of Katz-Bonacich centrality, is prestige-oriented and estimates the centrality of a node by accounting for both its connectivity to other nodes as well as its proximity to other well-connected nodes. But, unlike Katz-Bonacich centrality, it goes one step further by incorporating how much the node contributes to the centrality of others within the network. In other words, intercentrality internalizes all of the network externalities barons exert on each other, which is helpful when thinking about the targeting of specific nodes in order to influence others within the network. Thus:

Prediction: The king’s itinerary will privilege visiting “key barons” over lesser barons, as measured by their intercentrality.

One caveat is required. When bringing this prediction to the data, a baron’s network position is difficult to properly separate from other baronial attributes. To the extent a

baron’s measured intercentrality is correlated with baronial wealth and productivity, an empirical relationship between intercentrality and royal visitation should be read as strongly consistent with, rather than dispositive proof of, the coalition-maintenance mechanism laid out here.

4 Data

4.1 Itineraries of Medieval English Kings

The royal itineraries provide daily data on the location of the English king from 1199 to 1603. The itineraries were assembled by a number of independent academic historians, each subject-matter experts on the reigns of individual monarchs.¹⁴ Table A.1 provides the sources of the itineraries for every English monarch from 1199 to 1603, spanning the reigns of John to Elizabeth I.¹⁵ For a few of the kings I have multiple sources. I default to using the most recent publication, and only use earlier sources when more recent scholarship contains a gap in coverage. For example, Edward I’s itinerary compiled by Kanter (2011b) contains a large gap in the middle of his reign.¹⁶ I thus supplement it with Safford (1974), which Kanter (2011b) uses as one of her sources in her version of Edward I’s itinerary. Figure 3 plots the location of every royal visitation from 1199 to 1547.

England provides a particularly useful test case for understanding the rationale behind itinerant kingship because concerns about outside international issues that might drive royal

¹⁴The main primary source underlying the itineraries is often the English Chancery rolls. When a king issued a writ, a copy would be created and eventually stored in one of the Chancery’s many rolls. Importantly, the document would include the date of its issuance and the location where the king issued it. Other primary sources often include the accounts of the household wardrobe, the privy seal, and the secret seal.

¹⁵The itineraries for English kings prior to John do exist, but they are too sparse for the analysis in this paper. For the interested reader, the itineraries of the early Norman kings are: William I (Bates, 1998), William Rufus (Barlow, 2000), Henry I (Christlelow, 1996), Stephen (Cronne and Davis, 1968, Helmricks, 1995), Henry II (Vincent, 2021), and Richard I (Landon, 1935).

¹⁶The reason for this will be familiar to us all — the scarcity of time. Julie Crockford (née Kanter) writes in her doctoral dissertation: “Given restraints of time, it has not been possible to analyse every year in the reigns of John, Henry III and Edward I” (Kanter, 2011a, 70)

Figure 3: Locations Visited by the King, 1199–1547



Note: See text for source.

travel are smaller compared to kingdoms in continental Europe. England’s island geography made the distinction between “domestic” and “international” politics more salient than it was on the continent. In contrast to medieval France, with a few exceptions, the official authority of the royal government ran throughout England. With due account of Scotland and Wales, it is easier to assume that royal travel within England reflects domestic concerns rather than “international” ones. Also, medieval England’s major conflicts with continental powers mostly occur on the continent, which makes it comparatively easier to track the difference between peaceful itineration and military movements.

The itineraries vary in their coverage of the king’s daily location, ranging from 366 known days in 1520 to 20 known days in 1380. Most years however are relatively comprehensive. Between 1199 and 1603, the mean number of days where the king can be located is 267 and the median is 304.¹⁷ From 1199 to 1327, the years that comprises the main econometric

¹⁷There is no itinerary for 1273, as Edward I was on Crusade in the Holy Land. Also, there are no itineraries for 1423-1435 during the early years of Henry VI’s minority. He would have been ages 1 to 14.

analysis in Section 5, the mean number of days where the king can be located is 302 and the median is 315. See Figure A.3 for the annual number of days the king can be located using the itineraries.

4.2 The English Feudal Barons and their Baronies

4.2.1 Barons and barony locations

Sanders (1960) provides a compendium of the owners of 208 English feudal baronies from 1066 to 1327, yielding a total of 2714 baron-barony dyads during the entire period.¹⁸ Given the fact that the English royal itineraries begin in 1199, I limit the list of barons to those alive and in control of their barony at some point between 1199 to 1327.

Matthew Paris, a 13th century English chronicler, reports that in 1257 Henry III knew the names (and thus presumably, the locations) of 250 English baronies (Carpenter, 2023). Paris' report is assuring for two reasons. First, it shows that the king was likely up to speed on the baronies within his kingdom. It is not a large leap to reason that he also knew the details of their owners, the baronial elite. Second, the sample of baronies known to us today comprises slightly over 80% of the total known to the king. The left panel of Figure 4 maps the sample of baronies with no obvious spatial clustering or holes.

The main variable of interest is the number of days the king spends at a given baron's territorial barony. Because the territorial extent of the baronies is lost to history, I rely on the location of the barony *caput*, the barony's main manor, provided by Sanders (1960). Using the royal itineraries, I calculate the number of days in a given five-year period that the king is within 8 km ($\approx$ 5 miles) of a given barony *caput*. Such a restrictive definition of a visit allows me to know that it was the barony *caput* the king intended to visit rather than some other nearby attraction.

¹⁸To the best of my knowledge, equivalent data on barons and the *exact* location of their baronies for other time periods or European countries does not exist.

Figure 4: English Feudal barony *Caputs* and the Network of English Elites



Note: The left panel shows English feudal barony *caputs* from Sanders (1960). The right panel shows the network of English elites in 1251-1255, with barons in black and non-barons in grey; non-barons are suppressed to highlight the shape of the network.

4.2.2 Baronial network data

The Sanders (1960) barons were matched manually to their respective entries on the on-line, genealogical repository Wikitree.com.¹⁹ I rely on the “Early English Feudal Baronies” category, which is based on Sanders (1960). The underlying geneological data is similarly sourced to that used by Cummins (2017) and Becker et al. (2025), and is based on Sanders (1960), Keats-Rohan (2002), Cokayne (2000), and Burke (1881). The “Early English Feudal Baronies” Wikitree project is largely spearheaded by Andrew Lancaster, a historian of medieval genealogy (2007, 2009, 2010, 2019, 2020).

Using the data from Wikitree, I construct England’s entire elite network for the years 1199 to 1327, divided into five-year intervals. Five-year time periods are used to avoid the problem of birth and death year heaping in Sanders (1960) or the Wikitree.com entries.

¹⁹For an example, see the entry for William Marshal (1146-1219): www.wikitree.com/wiki/Marshal-4.

Importantly, the nodes in the constructed network are not only the feudal barons, but other non-baronial elites (baron’s mothers, sisters, younger brothers, third sons, etc.), which allows accurate mapping of the nuanced contours of the kinship network.²⁰ As an example, the right panel of Figure 4 depicts the elite network that existed from 1251 to 1255.

For each five-year time period, I calculate each baron’s intercentrality. To estimate intercentrality, we need a plausible estimate of the decay parameter ϕ . I follow Naidu et al. (2021), at the suggestion of Bonacich (1987), in limiting ϕ in the range of $(0, \frac{1}{\lambda})$, where λ is the largest eigenvalue of adjacency matrix $\mathbf{G}$. Because of the temporal dimension exploited, I calculate the largest eigenvalue for each time period’s network, and choose the smallest one to ensure each time period’s centrality estimates are compliant with the above mentioned rule. That eigenvalue is 18, thus allowing for a range of ϕ of $(0, 0.05)$. For a baseline estimate of ϕ , I use data on the 1215 rebellion against King John from Desierto, Hall, and Koyama (2023), estimating the effect of a baron’s position in the network vis-à-vis the rebels and his participation in the rebellion.²¹ I estimate ϕ in 1215 to be 0.022, as shown in Table A.2, well within the required range. All specifications below relying on intercentrality assume ϕ equals 0.022, but results are robust to other magnitudes of ϕ .

To make the intercentrality measure concrete, and to distinguish it from other measures of centrality or mere wealth, consider the example of William de la Zouche (c. 1277–1352), whose claim to fame was his role in the murder of Edward II’s favorite. When averaging over his lifetime, Zouche’s intercentrality score is 3.86, placing him within the top 10 of well-connected elites (excluding the king and his immediate family) over the 1199–1327 period. His intercentrality varied over his life from 1.28 in the 1270s to 4.82 in the late 1310s. His central position in the network is the product of his Cantilupe descent, his marriage into the

²⁰I was able to extract network information for 7365 elites who were alive at some point between 1199 and 1327.

²¹Naidu et al. (2021) employ this same strategy in determining their baseline estimate of the decay parameter.

Lovell family, and the subsequent marriages of his fairly large family. Notably, Zouche’s high rank within the baronial network is not reflected in simpler measures of network position: he ranks 93rd in betweenness centrality and 95th in closeness centrality. Despite his high intercentrality, Zouche and his descendants “remained among the second rank of the nobility” in terms of land and wealth (Acheson, 2004).

4.3 Additional Data

Royal charter witness lists. — Due to their roles in royal government, administrative or personal, many barons traveled with the king. Regular proximity to the king offered minor barons a path to advancement (Jolliffe, 1963, 175). If most of the king’s companions were less well-connected barons, the king would need to visit only the higher-ranked, better-connected ones, mechanically biasing the results toward key players. Allowing a baron to travel with the king provided another way to incorporate him into the royal coalition. To address these concerns, I use the royal charter witness lists to estimate how often a baron traveled with the king.

When a royal charter was issued, it was witnessed by several barons and bishops in the king’s vicinity. The witness lists therefore allow us to track which barons were near the king over time (Maitland, 1893). Because of how a baron came to appear on a witness list, repeated appearances serve as a proxy for the time he spent traveling with the king. The lists record the witnesses, not the recipient, and a recipient could not witness his own charter. When the king visited a baron, that baron was more likely to appear as the charter’s recipient than as a witness. A baron’s presence on the witness list is more likely when he traveled with the king rather than when the king visited him at home. Thus, I use the number of unique days a baron appears on the witness lists as proxy for how often he traveled with the king in a given period.

This link between witness-list appearances and traveling with the king holds only when

the chancery moved with the royal court. Hamilton (2001) argues that the connection weakens near the end of Edward I's reign, around the turn of the 14th century. For this reason, I rely on royal charter witness lists only for 1216 to 1307 (Morris, 2001, Huscroft, 2000).

Baron-level productivity and markets. — To control for alternative reasons the king may visit a barony, I collect data on markets and fairs from Letters et al. (2003). Markets and fairs are matched to their respective barony using a buffer of 20km radius around the barony *caput*, which corresponds to the area the king could legally purvey goods for his household consumption (Given-Wilson, 1986). Additionally, I construct a time-varying estimate of the value of historical agricultural output at the barony level. Historical grain yields at the manor level from Campbell (2007) are spatially interpolated and values of each are extracted at the barony level because the medieval manors used by Campbell (2007) differ from the Sanders (1960) barony *caputs*. The individual crop yields are indexed using the crop share weights from Broadberry et al. (2015) and multiplied by grain prices from Clark (2004).

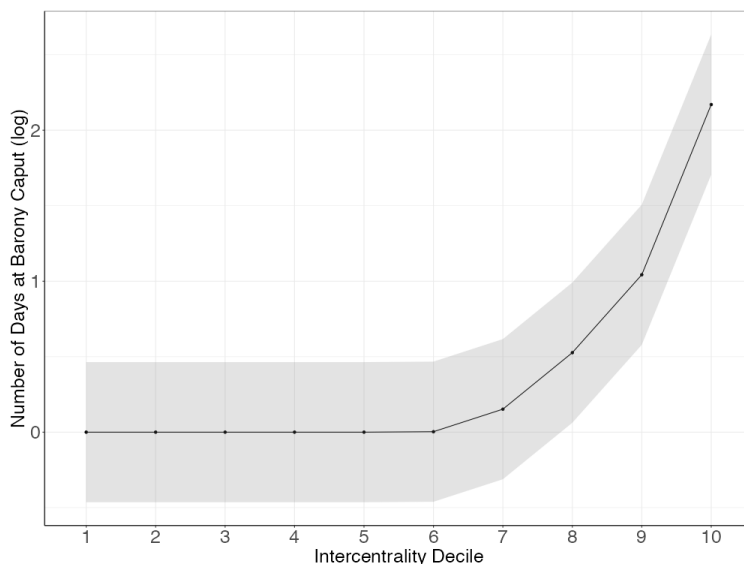
Locations associated with the royal government. — Royal boroughs were boroughs (towns with a market) that were under the direct administration of the king. If royal itineration is about routine governance and the administration of royal lands, the king should visit regions where there are more royal boroughs more often. The location and administrative status of English boroughs comes from (Angelucci et al., 2022). For each five-year period, I calculate the number of royal boroughs within a 20km radius of each barony.

Battles and potential war paths — To control for travel near baronies that were on the king's way towards battles with the Welsh, Scottish, or French, I calculate the least cost travel path from London to each battle in a given time period. Battles occurring in England, Scotland, Wales, or France are from Kitamura (2021).

5 Empirical Strategy and Results

5.1 Empirical Strategy

Figure 5: Royal Visitation by Deciles of Intercentrality



In this section, I test the main prediction: The king’s itinerary will privilege visiting “key barons” over lesser barons, as measured by their intercentrality. Figure 5 plots royal visits by intercentrality decile, showing that the king favors barons in higher deciles, that is, barons more central within the network. As additional context, Appendix C quantitatively shows that political factors drive high-level patterns in royal travel: illegitimate kings travel more in the early years of their reigns compared to more legitimate kings, child kings increase travel after reaching adulthood, and kings who are later deposed travel more in their final years.

In feudal Europe, political power often went hand-in-hand with economic power (North, Wallis, and Weingast, 2009). Although the wealth of individual barons is difficult to estimate, it is reasonable to assume that barons with higher intercentrality were also likely to be

wealthier as well as have a greater number of knights and tenants under their authority. The goal of the empirical exercise below is to explore whether the correlation presented in Figure 5 holds up to the inclusion of various controls for other social, political, and economic characteristics of barons that may draw the king to their barony.

To explore the relationship between royal visitation and a baron’s intercentrality more thoroughly, I estimate the following specification on a baron-barony-time panel:

$$\text{Days at Barony}_{i,k,t} = \theta_{i,k} + \gamma_t + \beta_1 \text{Intercentrality}_{i,k,t} + \eta \mathbf{I}_{i,t} + \gamma \mathbf{K}_{k,t} + \varepsilon_{i,k,t} \quad (8)$$

Days at Barony is the number of days the king is within 8 kilometers ($\approx$ 5 miles) of baron i ’s barony *caput* k in a given time period t . As discussed above, the main explanatory variable is the network intercentrality of baron i . $\mathbf{I}_{i,t}$ is a vector of time-varying baron-level controls, and $\mathbf{K}_{k,t}$ is a vector of time-varying barony-level controls. In all specifications, I also include baron-barony dyad fixed effects, θ_{ik} , to account for time-invariant unobservables unique to each baron-barony dyad as well as time-period (5 years) fixed effects, γ_t , to account for time-varying shocks common to all.

When using baron–barony dyad and time-period fixed effects, we exploit deviations in a baron’s intercentrality relative to his own long-run average. Thus, β_1 estimates how changes over time in a baron’s intercentrality, relative to his long-run average, are associated with changes in royal visitations at that same barony, relative to its long-run average, net of time-invariant dyad characteristics and common period shocks. Intuitively, we ask whether the king spends more time near a baron’s barony *caput* in periods when that baron becomes more central in the elite network than he usually is.

An individual baron’s intercentrality varies over time for two reasons. First, there is variation in the number of his direct connections (his nuclear family), which is within his direct control. Importantly, the network data used here does not track the timing of a

baron’s marriage, so marriage is not a source of variation in a baron’s intercentrality. Second, variation is a product of changes more-distant in the network as a result of birth and death. Whenever a member of the elite dies, the shape of the network is slightly altered, and thus so too is an individual baron’s position within it. When accounting for the first type of variation by controlling for a baron’s family size, estimates of the impact of changes in a baron’s intercentrality are driven by more-distant changes in the elite network. The empirical strategy here is identical to Donaldson and Hornbeck (2016) in their work on the American transport network, and in the spirit of Benzell and Cooke (2021) in their analysis of elite kinship ties and Early Modern European conflict.

All observed changes in an individual’s intercentrality between time period t and $t + 1$ are a product of multiple births and deaths within the network. Using a Shapley value decomposition technique, we can attribute each individual’s change in intercentrality to the marginal contribution of births and deaths. On average, almost 60 percent of the observed change in intercentrality is attributable to deaths in the network. A baron is, on average, 9 connections away from a death and 10 connections away from a birth, implying that changes in intercentrality typically arise from distant demographic shocks rather than local ones. Given the rules of medieval English land law, inheriting the land and wealth of an elite a mere two connections away laterally (i.e. an uncle or a nephew), let alone three away (i.e. a cousin), would have been a very rare occurrence (Simpson, 1986).

In network settings, clustering standard errors at the subgraph level of the network is most appropriate. This is akin to clustering standard errors using a spatial unit, but translated to the network setting. I follow Naidu et al. (2021) in implementing a fast-greedy community detection algorithm to identify natural network clusters or “communities.” In all relevant specifications, I report standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level.

5.2 Baseline Results

Poisson estimates of Equation 8 are reported in Table 1. It reports the estimated relationship between a baron’s intercentrality and royal visitation to a baron’s barony *caput* with and without controls from AD 1199 to 1327. The results are consistent with the theory that the king uses his travel to maintain his political coalition and execute a key player policy. Column 1 shows results for the most parsimonious specification, controlling only for the baron’s family size. Columns 2-4 add baron and barony-level, time-varying controls sequentially. The choice of control variables reflects other potential salient personal, economic, and political reasons the king may be thought to visit a barony. All columns include baron-barony dyad and time period fixed effects. The results are statistically significant at the 1% level, and the magnitudes are stable across different specifications.

In the specification with the full vector of control variables, column 4, a one standard deviation increase in a baron’s intercentrality is associated with a 72 percent increase in expected days visited. By comparison, baronies located on the least cost travel path from London to a battle fought in the given time period experience about an 187 percent increase in visitation. Thus, the effect of a one standard deviation increase in a baron’s intercentrality is about 40 percent as large as the almost mechanically induced increase in visitation resulting from the campaigns to Scotland, Wales, and France.

Controlling for the number of markets and fairs, a proxy for economic activity and productivity near the barony, does little to change the estimated relationship between intercentrality and royal visitation. Hosting a market or fair, however, requires a charter from the king, blurring the line between economic productivity and royal favoritism. In Table B.1, I control for the estimated value of the barony’s grain yield instead, a variable with admittedly more measurement error, and find similar results. To provide further evidence that a barony’s economic productivity is not a major confounder, Table B.2 reports a near-zero correlation

between a baron’s intercentrality and his barony’s economic productivity.²² Nevertheless, given the difficulty of measuring shocks to economic productivity that both induce the king to stay longer at a given barony and make the baron more attractive as a future connection in the network, we can not fully rule out the importance of economic productivity in favor of a *pure* political theory.²³

One potential concern is that the king’s travelling court was better attended by less-connected barons, meaning the king would be forced to visit the more well-connected barons in order to interact with them. In an attempt to mitigate that issue, Table B.3 presents estimates of Equation 8 on a restricted sample period, AD 1216 to 1307, where we can control for the number of days a baron appeared on the royal charter witness list, a proxy for the amount of days a baron may have travelled with the king’s court.²⁴ The positive relationship between intercentrality and royal visitation holds in the smaller sample period, and controlling for the number of days a baron was on the witness list does little to alter the baseline estimate.

By selectively varying the use of fixed effects, we alter the relative comparison groups and gain additional insight into the king’s travel strategy. Table B.4 displays estimates of Equation 8 while varying the use of the baron-barony dyad and time period fixed effects. By only including baron-barony dyad fixed effects, we compare a baron to himself in other time periods without accounting for time-varying shocks common to all. When doing so, we find an association between royal visitation and a baron’s intercentrality that is almost 10% larger than our baseline result. This suggests that some periods experience kingdom-wide shocks

²²Pei et al. (2019) argue that when we only have a measurement-error prone proxy for what we truly want to capture, we should use it as a dependent variable where measurement error poses less of an issue.

²³A theory revolving around purely economic productivity, however, is not defensible on historical grounds. Carpenter (2020) argues that the king and his entourage did not have to move from town to town in order to feed the royal court and that they could “could perfectly well be supplied wherever they were for as long as they wished to stay”.

²⁴Properly speaking, this is a post-treatment control, and thus, in the language of Cinelli et al. (2024), a “bad control”. Nevertheless, it is illuminating.

that make a baron's intercentrality more important to the king. A leave one time-period out exercise reveals that this difference is driven largely by the 1266 to 1270 time period, the era of the Second Baron's War (See Figure B.1). If we only include time period fixed effects, we exploit cross-sectional variation across barons in the same time period. When doing so, I find a statistically significant but small in magnitude positive relationship between royal visitation and a baron's intercentrality. This suggests that the king is more interested in whether a baron is trending towards being more or less central rather than merely his static position relative to others in a given time period.

Table 1: Baron's Intercentrality and Royal Visitation

Dependent Variable: Model:	Days Spent at Barony				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Intercentrality	0.2559*** (0.0555)	0.2676*** (0.0486)	0.2558*** (0.0472)	0.2691*** (0.0464)	0.2489*** (0.0464)
Family Size	-0.2620*** (0.0950)	-0.2242*** (0.0865)	-0.2256*** (0.0854)	-0.2302*** (0.0848)	-0.1808*** (0.0837)
Near Death		0.2695* (0.1632)	0.2625 (0.1613)	0.2886* (0.1574)	0.2860* (0.1509)
Near Birth		-0.7096*** (0.2061)	-0.7233*** (0.2035)	-0.7009*** (0.2025)	-0.7006*** (0.2057)
Number of Markets & Fairs			0.0560** (0.0282)	0.0558** (0.0265)	0.0485* (0.0286)
Barony on Battle Path				1.048*** (0.2963)	1.053*** (0.3007)
Network Distance to King					0.0705 (0.0550)
Number of Nearby Royal Boroughs					0.3221 (0.2783)
Barony-Barony Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time Period FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,367	1,367	1,367	1,367	1,367
Pseudo R ²	0.66033	0.66741	0.66890	0.67308	0.67433

Note: Poisson estimates of the effect of a baron's intercentrality on royal visitation, as measured by the number of days the king spent within 8km of the baron's barony *caput*. Each column includes baron-barony dyad and time period fixed effects. The sample period is the years between 1199 to 1327. The baron or barony time-variant control variables include: the baron's family size, the number of markets and fairs within 20km of the barony, whether the barony was on the travel path from London to a historical battle, the network distance between the baron and the king, the number of royal boroughs within 20km of the barony, and two separate controls for whether there was a birth or death within 2 connections of him. Robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level are reported in parentheses. *Signif. Codes: ***; 0.01, **; 0.05, *; 0.1*

5.3 Further Exploration and Robustness

To explore whether particular sources of variation in intercentrality are driving the baseline results, I construct various counterfactual networks where one source of variation is held constant for one period. “No births” and “no deaths” networks isolate death and birth respectively as the sole source of period-over-period variation. To further address concerns about picking up marriage-timing variation through back channels, I also construct “no spouses” and “no first born” counterfactual networks. Across all four counterfactual networks, the estimates are quantitatively similar to baseline (Table B.5), suggesting the result is not merely a product of any one source.

Sample restrictions ensure variation reflects more distant changes in the network. Restricting to barons who experience births or deaths beyond two connections away yields estimates similar to the baseline (Table B.6). Using Shapley value decompositions to retain only observations where births or deaths account for more than 0.5 or 0.8 of the change in intercentrality, the relationship remains positive: the death-focused sample is similar in magnitude to baseline, while the birth-focused estimates are positive but smaller and less precise, likely due to the low number of observations (Table B.7).

A lead-lag specification further examines timing (Table B.8). The coefficient on intercentrality at time t is positive and statistically significant, while all lead and lag coefficients are indistinguishable from zero. This is consistent with the king responding to contemporaneous shifts in a baron’s network position rather than to slower-moving correlates of centrality, but given the small sample size, this result should be interpreted with caution and be seen only as suggestive. Repeating this with the counterfactual measures yields similar results and comes with similar caveats.

The relationship between baronial intercentrality and royal visitation remains significant under more inclusive definitions of a royal visit (4, 16, and 32 km), with effect size predictably

declining as the buffers grow and the idea of a “visit” loses meaning (Table B.9). Moving toward the intensive margin, although intercentrality has no detectable effect on crossing a cumulative one-day threshold, it is strongly associated with higher thresholds: at both ten and fifteen days, a one standard deviation increase raises the probability of extended royal residence by roughly 5–6 percentage points, which in the fifteen-day case is nearly a fourfold increase (Table B.10). Among simpler centrality measures, degree, closeness, eigenvector, and Katz-Bonacich centrality are positively correlated with royal visitation, while betweenness (traditionally used to capture information flows) is not (Table B.11). Results are also broadly robust to varying the weighting parameter ϕ (Figure B.4).

Leave-one-out exercises that drop a time period or county highlight the heightened importance of baronial intercentrality during the Second Baron’s War (Figures B.2 and B.3). Dropping the period from 1266 to 1270, the height of the rebellion, decreases the estimated relationship between baronial intercentrality and royal visitation by 33% compared to baseline. Dropping Warwickshire, home to almost all the major supporters of the baronial rebellion (Carpenter, 2023), decreases the estimate by 31%. No other time period or county has such an effect.

6 Conclusion

All medieval European kings were itinerant. I argue that itinerancy as a governance strategy was adopted to build and maintain a winning political coalition. Without that coalition, the king would be unable to effectively govern the kingdom and would be vulnerable to rebellion. To test this coalition-building theory of itinerant kingship, I introduce novel data on the daily location of the English king, and pair it with individual level data on medieval England’s elites. Relying on changes in the baronial network, I show that a one-standard-deviation in a baron’s intercentrality is associated with an approximately 72% increase in

the number of days the king spends at the baron's main manor.

It is often imagined that non-elected rulers throughout history lacked meaningful political restraints. In reality, they were comparatively weak and greatly relied on the support of other powerful authorities. In exploring itinerant kingship, we gain a better understanding of how non-elected rulers target individuals within the larger elite network to build and maintain a winning coalition. We also improve our understanding of the premodern European state, as well as the reasons behind the rise of the centralized nation-state that goes beyond international warfare, taxation, and expenditures.

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Online Appendix

Itinerant Kings

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A Additional Figures

Figure A.1: Royal Movements and Royal Tenure, 1199-1547

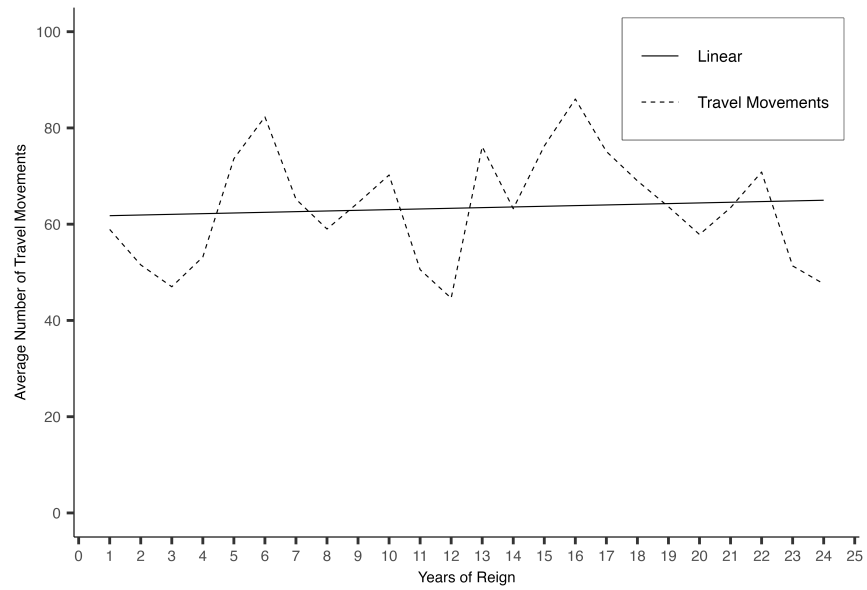
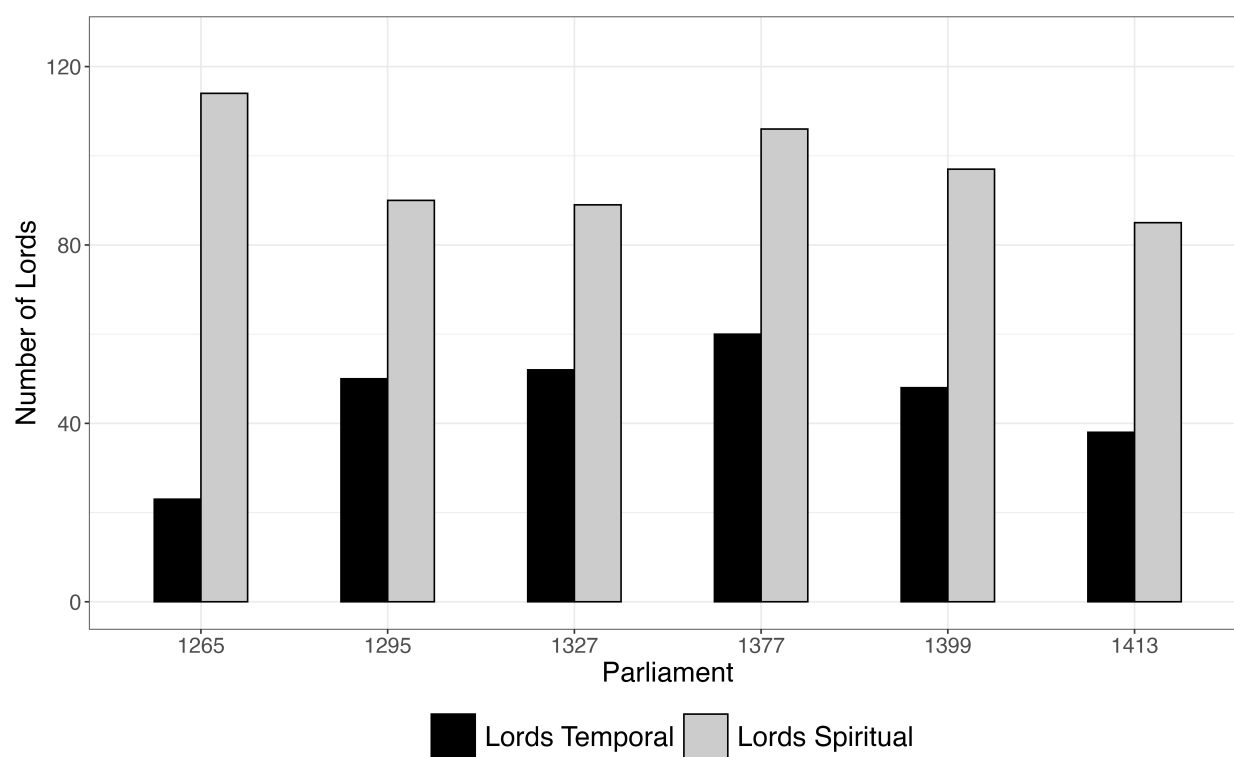


Figure A.2: Composition of Lords Called to Parliament, 1265-1413



Sources: Pike (1894, 96) and Roskell et al. (1993)

Table A.1: Sources for the Royal Itineraries

King	Reign	Source
John	1199-1216	Kanter (2011)
Henry III	1216-1272	Kanter (2011), Craib et al. (2013)
Edward I	1272-1307	Kanter (2011), Safford (1974), Trabut-Cussac (1952)
Edward II	1307-1327	Hallam (1984), Hartshorne (1862)
Edward III	1327-1377	Ormrod (2012)
Richard II	1377-1399	Saul (1997)
Henry IV	1399-1413	Given-Wilson (2016)
Henry V	1413-1422	Mowat (1919)
Henry VI	1422-1461, 1470-1471	Wolffe (2001)
Edward IV	1461-1470, 1471-1483	Ashdown-Hill (2016, 2017)
Richard III	1483-1485	Edwards (1983)
Henry VII	1485-1509	Temperley (1914), Powell (2018)
Henry VIII	1509-1547	Samman (1989), TNA OBS 1/1419
Elizabeth I	1558-1603	Cole (1999)

Note: Where multiple citations are listed, the first listed citation serves as the main source of the individual's itinerary and the following citations are used to fill gaps. Due to gaps in the historical record, the years contained in the itinerary do not always include all years of the individual's reign.

Figure A.3: Number of days the king can be located, 1199-1603

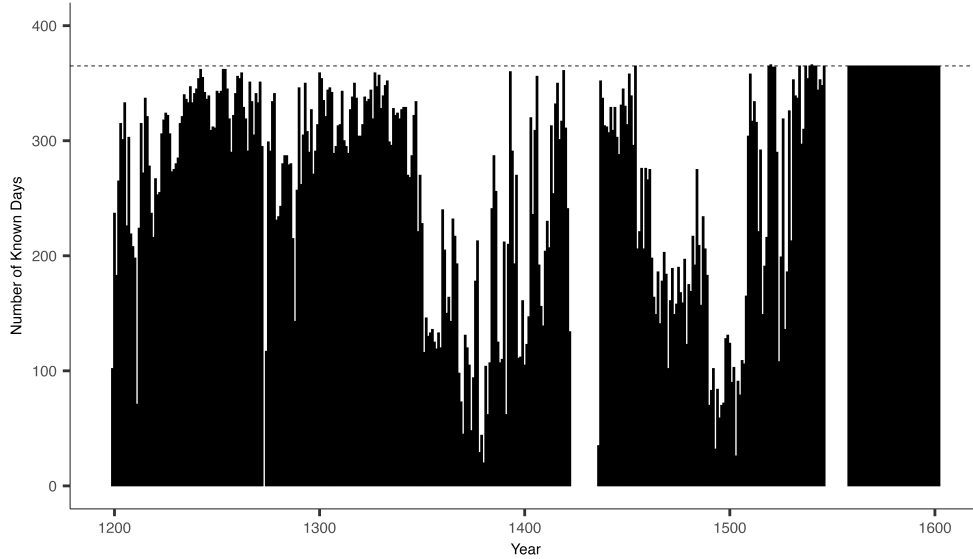


Table A.2: Centrality in the Network of 1215 Rebels

Dependent Variable:	Rebelled in 1215
Model:	(1)
Network Distance to Rebel	-0.022*** (0.003)
Baron-level Controls	Yes
Observations	109
Adjusted R ²	0.465

Note: Estimates of a baron's participation in the 1215 rebellion against King John as a function of his position in the elite network relative to the rebels. The dependent variable equals one if the baron rebelled in 1215, and the model is estimated by OLS with baron-level controls. The magnitude of the coefficient on the baron's network distance to the rebels provides the baseline estimate of the network decay parameter used to construct intercentrality. The sample comprises barons active in 1215; data on participation in the 1215 rebellion are from Desierto, Hall, and Koyama (2023). Standard errors are reported in parentheses. *Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table A.3: Summary Statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Number of days king spends at baron (8km)	1,655	1.5	8.2	0	184
Baron's network distance to the king	1,655	9.5	5.2	0	20
Baron's Family Size (degree)	1,655	8.7	10.9	0	61
Baron's intercentrality ($\phi = 0.022$)	1,655	1.6	2.4	0.0	24.7
Barony on War Path	1,655	0.05	0.2	0	1
Number of markets & fairs near barony	1,655	24.7	14.6	0	71
Number of royal boroughs near barony	1,655	1.6	1.1	0	5
Baron's days on Witness List	1,655	3.4	14.9	0	314
More than one barony	1,655	0.2	0.4	0	1
Historical Grain Yield	1,494	5.5	3.1	1.5	20.1
Betweenness Centrality	1,655	28,263.1	53,732.8	0.0	475,275.4
Closeness Centrality	1,655	0.000	0.000	0.0	0.000
Degree Centrality	1,655	0.004	0.004	0.0	0.03
Eigenvector Centrality	1,655	0.03	0.2	0.0	1.0
Katz-Bonacich Centrality ($\phi = 0.022$)	1,655	1.0	1.6	0.0	11.0

B Robustness Checks

B.1 Controlling for Historical Grain Values

The main specification uses potential agricultural productivity to proxy for the in-kind taxable goods the king can extract from a barony. Even though the potential agricultural productivity reflects historical farming practices (rain-fed, low-input), the soil's suitability to modern crops may differ significantly from historical crops. To assuage concern that the GAEZ crop suitability data does not reflect historical agricultural productivity, I construct a time-varying estimate of the value of historical agricultural output at the barony level. Historical yields at the manor level for wheat, barley, rye, and oats from Campbell (2007) are spatially interpolated, and values of each are extracted at the barony level. The medieval manors in Campbell (2007) are not the same as the Sanders (1960) barony *caputs*. The individual crop yields are indexed using the crop share weights from Broadberry et al. (2015) and multiplied by grain prices from Clark (2004).

Table (B.1) provides estimates of Equation (8), adding historical grain value as a proxy for a barony's in-kind taxable goods. Column (1) use the full sample, and find the main result to be robust to the change in agricultural productivity. Column (2) limit the sample to only those baronies below 53° latitude, as that is where the data coverage in Campbell (2007) is best. The results remain largely unchanged despite the higher quality and more accurate (in theory) estimates of historical grain value. Across both columns, the barony's historical grain value has no measured effect on the number of days the king spends at the barony.

Table B.1: Baron's Intercentrality, Royal Visits, and Historical Grain Values, 1199-1327

Dependent Variable: Model:	Days Spent at barony	
	(1)	(2)
Intercentrality	0.2500*** (0.0476)	0.2271*** (0.0412)
Family Size	-0.1783** (0.0848)	-0.1193** (0.0587)
Number of Markets and Fairs	0.0524* (0.0297)	0.0498 (0.0308)
Historical Grain Value	0.0435 (0.0572)	0.1656 (0.1350)
Sample	Full	< 53° lat
Full Controls	Yes	Yes
Barony-Barony Dyad FE	Yes	Yes
Time Period FE	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,153	934
Pseudo R ²	0.69956	0.69532
BIC	6,139.8	4,848.8

Note: Estimates of the effect of a baron's intercentrality on royal visitation, as measured by the number of days the king spent within 8km of the baron's barony *caput*. Each column includes baron-barony dyad and time period fixed effects. The sample period is the years between 1199 to 1327. The baron or barony time-variant control variables include: the baron's family size, the number of days he appears on the charter witness lists, whether the barony was on the travel path from London to a historical battle, the historical value of the grain yield near the barony, the network distance between the baron and the king, the number of markets and fairs within 20km of the barony, whether the baron had more than one barony, the number of royal boroughs within 20km of the barony, and the (time-varying) historical grain yield of the barony. Robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level are reported in parentheses. *Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1 level.*

Table B.2: Economic Productivity and Intercentrality, Balance Table

Dependent Variables: Model:	GAEZ Soil Suitability (1)	Historical Grain Value (2)	Number of Markets & Fairs (4)
Intercentrality	3.16×10^{-15} (2.58×10^{-10})	0.0060* (0.0034)	0.0207*** (0.0037)
Sample	Full	Full	Full
Baron-Barony Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time Period FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,240	1,865	2,261
Pseudo R ²	0.48225	0.31690	0.69293

Note: Estimates of the effect of a baron's intercentrality on estimates of barony-level economic productivity(soil suitability, historical grain values, and the number of nearby markets and fairs). Each column includes baron-barony dyad and time period fixed effects. The sample period is the years between 1199 to 1327. Robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level are reported in parentheses. *Signif. Codes: ***; 0.01, **; 0.05, *; 0.1*

B.2 Controlling for Days on Royal Witness List

Table B.3: Baron’s Intercentrality, Royal Visitation, and the Royal Charter Witness Lists, 1216-1307

Dependent Variable: Model:	Days Spent at Barony		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Intercentrality	0.2452*** (0.0713)	0.2469*** (0.0732)	0.2559*** (0.0598)
Family Size	-0.2701** (0.1281)	-0.2780** (0.1362)	-0.1988* (0.1133)
Days on Royal Charter Witness List		0.0033 (0.0096)	0.0042 (0.0078)
Full Controls	No	No	Yes
Baron-Barony Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time Period FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	957	957	957
Pseudo R ²	0.69923	0.69933	0.71663

Note: Poisson estimates of the effect of a baron’s intercentrality on royal visitation, as measured by the number of days the king spent within 8km of the baron’s barony *caput*. Each column includes baron-barony dyad and time period fixed effects. The sample period is the years between 1216 to 1307. The baron or barony time-variant control variables include: the baron’s family size, the number of days the baron appeared on the royal charter witness list, the number of markets and fairs within 20km of the barony, whether the barony was on the travel path from London to a historical battle, the network distance between the baron and the king, the number of royal boroughs within 20km of the barony, and two separate controls for whether there was a birth or death within 2 connections of him. Robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level are reported in parentheses. *Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

B.3 Varying the Fixed Effects

Table B.4: Baron’s Intercentrality and Royal Visitation with Varying Fixed Effects

Dependent Variable: Model:	Days Spent at Barony		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Intercentrality	0.2489*** (0.0464)	0.3241*** (0.0681)	0.0827* (0.0459)
Family Size	-0.1808** (0.0837)	-0.2937** (0.1219)	0.0068 (0.0143)
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Barony-Barony Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	No
Time Period FE	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	1,367	1,367	2,268
Pseudo R ²	0.67433	0.63361	0.11261

Note: Poisson estimates of the effect of a baron’s intercentrality on royal visitation, as measured by the number of days the king spent within 8km of the baron’s barony *caput*. The sample period is the years between 1199 to 1327. The baron or barony time-variant control variables include: the baron’s family size, the number of days the baron appeared on the royal charter witness list, the number of markets and fairs within 20km of the barony, whether the barony was on the travel path from London to a historical battle, the network distance between the baron and the king, the number of royal boroughs within 20km of the barony, and two separate controls for whether there was a birth or death within 2 connections of him. Robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level are reported in parentheses. *Signif. Codes*: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1

B.4 Counterfactual and Alternative Networks

To explore whether particular sources of variation in intercentrality are driving the base-line results, I construct various counterfactual networks where one source of variation is held constant for one period, recalculate intercentrality scores, and re-estimate Equation 8. Results of this exercise are displayed in Table B.5.

The first two counterfactual networks assume that there are no births or deaths, respectively, between periods $t-1$ and t . In the “no births” network, all individuals who enter the

network in period t are removed as if they were never born, meaning all of the period over period variation is a product of death alone. In the “no deaths” network, all individuals who exit the network in period t are retained as if they never died, meaning all of the period over period variation is a product of birth alone.

Despite the timing of marriage not being an explicit source of variation in a baron’s intercentrality here, there may be potential concerns about picking up such sources of variation through back channels. To assuage such concerns, we also construct counterfactual networks that restrict specific forms of family formation. In a “no spouses” network, all marital ties are suppressed. In a more restrictive variant, we additionally remove firstborn children, a potential proxy for marriage timing.

Across these four counterfactual networks, the estimates of Equation (8) are all quantitatively similar to the baseline results, suggesting the baseline result is not merely a product of any one source of variation in intercentrality.

Table B.5: Counterfactual and Alternative Networks

Dependent Variable:	Days Spent at Barony			
Model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Intercentrality	0.2564*** (0.0532)	0.2068*** (0.0467)	0.2496*** (0.0599)	0.2749*** (0.0673)
Family Size	-0.1794** (0.0854)	-0.1725** (0.0869)	-0.1551** (0.0787)	-0.1553** (0.0790)
Alternative Network	No births	No deaths	No wives	No wives or firstborn
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baron-Barony FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time Period FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,367	1,367	1,367	1,367
Pseudo R ²	0.67316	0.67270	0.67075	0.67053

Note: Poisson estimates of the effect of a baron's intercentrality (based on various counterfactual and alternative networks) on royal visitation, as measured by the number of days the king spent within 8km of the baron's barony *caput*. Each column includes baron-barony dyad and time period fixed effects. The full sample period is the years between 1199 to 1327. The baron or barony time-variant control variables include: the baron's family size, the number of days he appears on the charter witness lists, the number of markets and fairs within 20km of the barony, whether the barony was on the travel path from London to a historical battle, the network distance between the baron and the king, and the number of royal boroughs within 20km of the barony. Robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level are reported in parentheses. *Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

B.5 Sample Restrictions

To ensure that variation is a product of more distant changes in the network, we can restrict the sample to those barons who only experience births or deaths beyond 2 connections away. That is, all barons who experience changes in the network related to their parents, siblings, children, aunts and uncles, and in-laws are removed from the sample. Table B.6 reports estimates of Equation 8 with the sample restricted first to those with distant deaths and then with distant births. In both restricted samples, the relationship between baronial intercentrality and royal visitation is quantitatively similar to the baseline estimates.

Table B.6: Baron's Intercentrality and Royal Visitation, Restricted Sample to Distant Births and Deaths

Dependent Variable: Model:	Days at Barony	
	(1)	(2)
Intercentrality	0.2172*** (0.0590)	0.2437*** (0.0763)
Family Size	-0.1214* (0.0728)	-0.2222 (0.1370)
Number of Markets and Fairs	0.0756** (0.0383)	0.0547* (0.0323)
Barony on Battle Path	0.9365*** (0.2946)	0.9141*** (0.3233)
Network Distance to King	0.0723 (0.0549)	0.0933 (0.0699)
Number of Nearby Royal Boroughs	0.1491 (0.2623)	0.1615 (0.2890)
Sample	Distant Deaths	Distant Births
Baron-Barony Dyad FE	Yes	Yes
Time Period FE	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,015	1,133
Pseudo R ²	0.64431	0.69460

Note: Poisson estimates of the effect of a baron's intercentrality on royal visitation, as measured by the number of days the king spent within 8km of the baron's barony *caput*. Each column includes baron-barony dyad and time period fixed effects. The sample period is the years between 1199 to 1327. The baron or barony time-variant control variables include: the baron's family size, the number of days the baron appeared on the royal charter witness list, the number of markets and fairs within 20km of the barony, whether the barony was on the travel path from London to a historical battle, the network distance between the baron and the king, the number of royal boroughs within 20km of the barony, and two separate controls for whether there was a birth or death within 2 connections of him. Column 1 restricts the sample to barons who experienced only distant deaths, and column 2 does the same for distant births. Robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level are reported in parentheses. *Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Another sample restriction focuses on the magnitude of the network shock induced by births and deaths. Using Shapley value decompositions, we restrict the sample to barons whose change in intercentrality is largely a function of either births or deaths. Specifically, we retain observations in which the Shapley contribution of births or deaths exceeds 0.5 or 0.8 of the total change in intercentrality. Table B.7 reports the corresponding estimates. The relationship between intercentrality and royal visitation remains positive. In the death-focused sample, the magnitude of the relationship is similar in size to the baseline estimates. In the birth-focused sample, the estimates are positive, but smaller and less precisely estimated, likely because of the fairly low number of observations. Overall, these results suggest the baseline relationship is driven by variation which stems from death rather than births.

Table B.7: Baron’s Intercentrality and Royal Visitation, Restricted Sample by Shapley Value Thresholds

Dependent Variable: Model:	Days Spent at Barony			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Intercentrality	0.1886* (0.0970)	0.1901 (0.2145)	0.2633*** (0.0747)	0.3370** (0.1389)
Shapley Sample Restriction	Birth, > 0.5	Birth, > 0.8	Death, > 0.5	Death, > 0.8
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baron-Barony Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time Period FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	292	193	563	437
Pseudo R ²	0.76729	0.76143	0.73715	0.71956

Note: Poisson estimates of the effect of a baron’s intercentrality on royal visitation, as measured by the number of days the king spent within 8km of the baron’s barony *caput*. Each column includes baron-barony dyad and time period fixed effects. The sample period is the years between 1199 to 1327. The baron or barony time-variant control variables include: the baron’s family size, the number of days the baron appeared on the royal charter witness list, the number of markets and fairs within 20km of the barony, whether the barony was on the travel path from London to a historical battle, the network distance between the baron and the king, the number of royal boroughs within 20km of the barony, and two separate controls for whether there was a birth or death within 2 connections of him. Robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level are reported in parentheses. *Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

B.6 Timing

To further examine timing, I estimate a lead-lag specification using two leads and lags of intercentrality. Results are displayed in Table B.8. The coefficient on intercentrality at time t is positive and statistically significant while all lead and lag coefficients are statistically indistinguishable from zero. The pattern here is consistent with the king responding to contemporaneous shifts in a baron's network position rather than to slower-moving correlates of centrality. I repeat this exercise using the counterfactual "no births" and "no deaths" intercentrality measures and find a similar pattern of results. These specification comes at the cost of a much smaller sample size, and should be interpreted with corresponding caution.

Table B.8: Baron’s Intercentrality and Royal Visitation, Lead-Lag Specification

Dependent Variable: Model:	Days Spent at Barony		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Intercentrality _{<i>t</i>−2}	0.2179 (0.1641)	0.2598* (0.1509)	0.1696 (0.1336)
Intercentrality _{<i>t</i>−1}	-0.2239 (0.1389)	-0.1357 (0.2151)	-0.1363 (0.1546)
Intercentrality _{<i>t</i>}	0.4429** (0.2018)	0.3522 (0.2369)	0.4746* (0.2692)
Intercentrality _{<i>t</i>+1}	-0.0725 (0.3247)	-0.1377 (0.3006)	-0.3085 (0.3358)
Intercentrality _{<i>t</i>+2}	-0.2013 (0.7233)	-1.050 (0.9649)	-0.1734 (0.6442)
Network	Full	No Deaths	No Births
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baron-Barony Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time Period FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	293	293	293
Pseudo R ²	0.68564	0.68830	0.68701

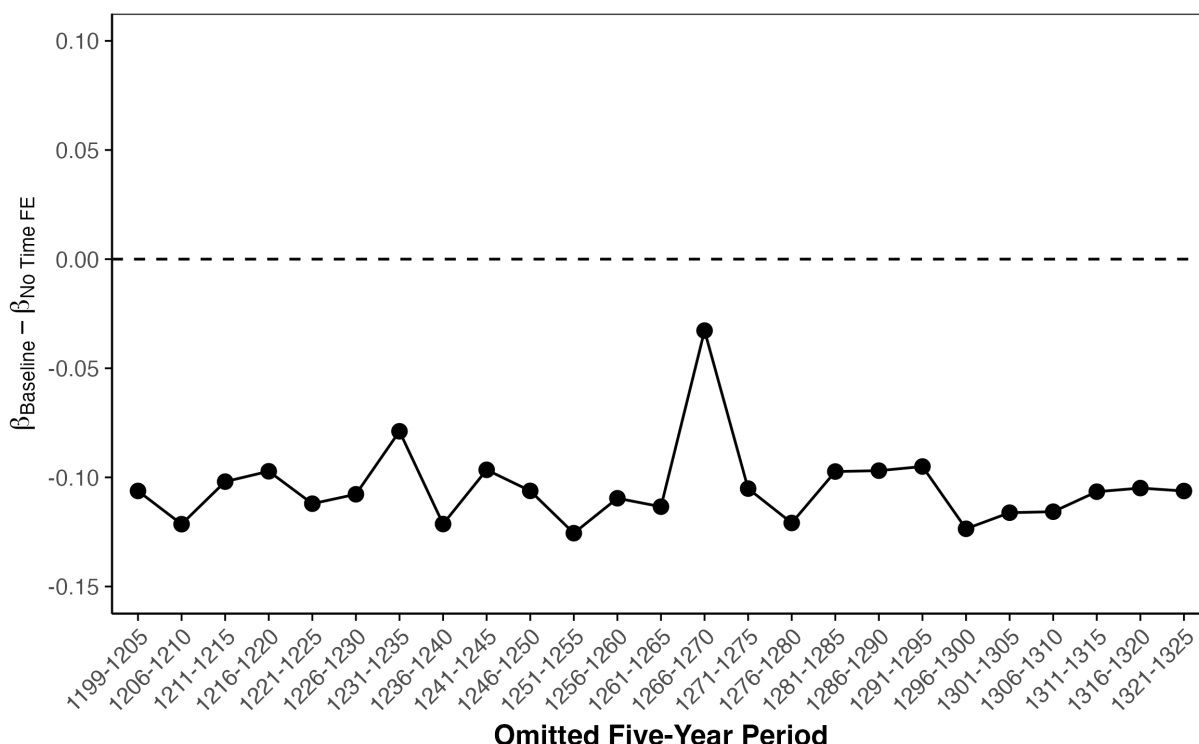
Note: Poisson estimates of the effect of a baron’s intercentrality on royal visitation, as measured by the number of days the king spent within 8km of the baron’s barony *caput*. Each column includes two leads and two lags of intercentrality. Column (1) uses the full intercentrality measure; column (2) uses a counterfactual measure constructed from a network in which no deaths occur; column (3) uses a counterfactual measure constructed from a network in which no births occur. Each column includes baron-barony dyad and time period fixed effects. The sample period is the years between 1199 to 1327. The baron or barony time-variant control variables include: the baron’s family size, the number of markets and fairs within 20km of the barony, whether the barony was on the travel path from London to a historical battle, the network distance between the baron and the king, the number of royal boroughs within 20km of the barony, and two separate controls for whether there was a birth or death within 2 connections of him. Robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level are reported in parentheses. *Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

B.7 Heterogeneous Effects

Given the nature of medieval politics, we might expect unobservable shocks to royal authority to make baronial intercentrality more salient in certain locations and time periods. To explore such heterogeneous effects, we conduct various leave-one-out exercises which re-

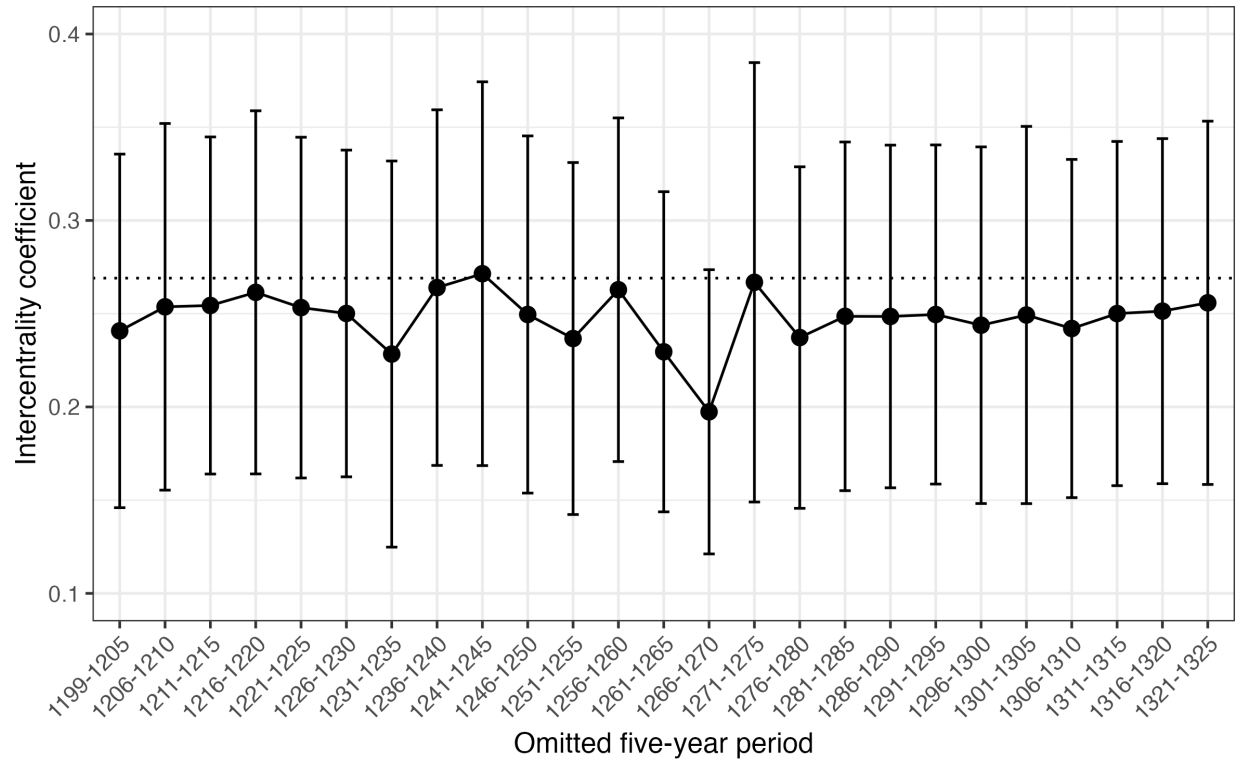
estimate Equation (8) while dropping a given time period or county. These exercises, the results of which are displayed in Figures B.2 and B.3, highlight the heightened importance of baronial intercentrality during the Second Baron's War. Dropping the time period which runs from 1266 to 1270, the height of the rebellion, decreases the estimated relationship between baronial intercentrality and royal visitation by 33% compared to the baseline estimates above. Dropping the county of Warwickshire, the home of almost all of the major supporters of the baronial rebellion during the Second Baron's War (Carpenter, 2023), decreases the estimate by 31%. No other time period or county has such an effect.

Figure B.1: Sensitivity of the Estimate to the Time Fixed Effects, Leave One Time Period Out Exercise



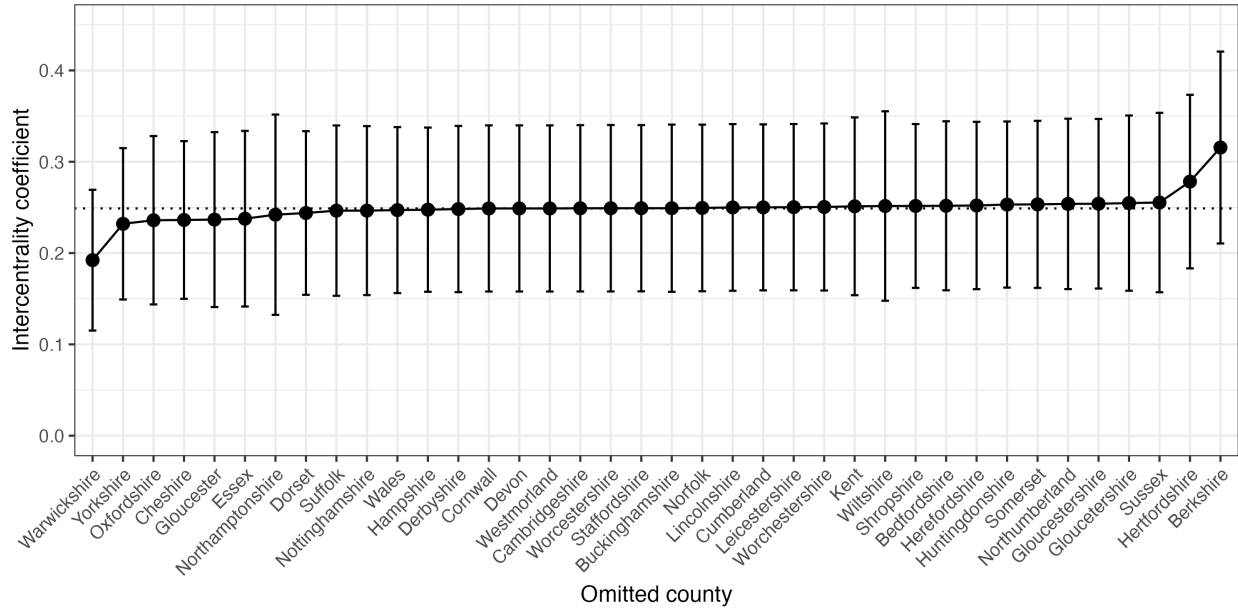
Note: This figure reports a leave-one-period-out exercise for the estimated effect of a baron's intercentrality on royal visitation, as measured by the number of days the king spent within 8km of the baron's barony *caput*. For each point, the sample is re-estimated after omitting the indicated five-year period, and the plotted value is the difference between the intercentrality coefficient from a specification with baron-barony dyad and time period fixed effects and the intercentrality coefficient from an otherwise similar specification with baron-barony dyad fixed effects but no time period fixed effects. Both specifications include all controls. The sample period spans 1199 to 1327.

Figure B.2: Stability of the Intercentrality Coefficient, Dropping Each Period, Leave One Time Period Out Exercise



Notes: The effect of a baron's intercentrality on the number of days the king spent within 8km of the baron's barony *caput* with full controls while omitting a five-year time period. Error bars represent robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level at the 95% confidence intervals.

Figure B.3: Leave One County Out Exercise



Notes: The effect of a baron’s intercentrality on the number of days the king spent within 8km of the baron’s barony *caput* with full controls while omitting an individual county. Error bars represent robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level at the 95% confidence intervals.

B.8 Various Barony Buffer Sizes

In the baseline results, a royal visit is defined by the king being within 8 kilometers (≈ 5 miles) of a barony *caput*. Table B.9 shows that the relationship between baronial intercentrality and royal visitation remains statistically significant when using more inclusive definitions of a royal visit (4, 16, and 32 kilometers). The effect size, predictably, declines as the buffers get larger and the idea of a “visit” begins to lose its meaning.

Table B.9: Baron’s Intercentrality and Royal Visitation, 1216-1307, Various Buffer Sizes

Dependent Variables: Model:	Days Spent at barony		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Intercentrality	0.1093** (0.0540)	0.0983*** (0.0287)	0.0616*** (0.0236)
Family Size	-0.0419 (0.0903)	-0.0227 (0.0250)	-0.0010 (0.0183)
Buffer Size	4 km	16km	32km
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baron-Barony Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time Period FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	666	2,026	2,268
Pseudo R ²	0.71398	0.85500	0.76438

Note: Estimates of the effect of a baron’s intercentrality on royal visitation, as measured by the number of days the king spent at the baron’s barony *caput*, defined by various buffer sizes. Each column includes baron-barony dyad and time period fixed effects. The sample period is the years between 1199 to 1327. The baron or barony time-variant control variables include: the baron’s family size, the number of days he appears on the charter witness lists, the number of markets and fairs within 20km of the barony, whether the barony was on the travel path from London to a historical battle, the network distance between the baron and the king, whether the baron had more than one barony, and the number of royal boroughs within 20km of the barony. Robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level are reported in parentheses. *Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

B.9 Binary Results

The baseline results focus on the extensive margin. Table B.10 moves closer to the intensive margin by examining whether a barony crosses increasingly demanding cumulative day thresholds; that is, whether the king spent at least 1, 5, 10, or 15 total days at a barony within a five-year period. Such cumulative royal presence is uncommon at higher cutoffs: 26% of observations meet the one-day threshold, but only 2% the fifteen-day threshold. Intercentrality has no detectable effect on merely crossing the one-day threshold, which is perhaps an artifact of the five-year periods, but it is strongly associated with exceeding higher cumulative day thresholds. At both the ten-day and fifteen-day thresholds, a one standard

deviation increase in a baron’s intercentrality raises the probability of extended royal residence by roughly 5–6 percentage points. In the fifteen-day specification, this corresponds to an increase from a baseline probability of about two percent to roughly 7.6 percent, nearly a fourfold increase in the likelihood of such extended royal presence.

Table B.10: Baron’s Intercentrality and Royal Visitation

Dependent Variables: Model:	Visit to Barony (Binary Outcome)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Intercentrality	0.0029 (0.0107)	0.0330*** (0.0068)	0.0269*** (0.0061)	0.0256*** (0.0073)
Family Size	0.0005 (0.0065)	-0.0052** (0.0023)	-0.0055*** (0.0016)	-0.0055*** (0.0017)
Binary Definition	1 Day	5 Days	10 Days	15 Days
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baron-Barony Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time Period FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,268	2,268	2,268	2,268
Pseudo R ²	0.61484	4.6591	-1.0891	-0.69167

Note: Estimates of the effect of a baron’s intercentrality on royal visitation, as measured various thresholds defining a binary visit to the baron barony’s *caput*. Each column includes baron-barony dyad and time period fixed effects. The sample period is the years between 1199 to 1327. The baron or barony time-variant control variables include: the baron’s family size, the number of days the baron appeared on the royal charter witness list, the number of markets and fairs within 20km of the barony, whether the barony was on the travel path from London to a historical battle, the network distance between the baron and the king, the number of royal boroughs within 20km of the barony, and two separate controls for whether there was a birth or death within 2 connections of him. Robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level are reported in parentheses. *Signif. Codes*: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1

B.10 Alternative Network Centrality Measures

In Section (3), I argued that intercentrality is the theoretically preferred measure of network centrality for studying potential baronial resistance. But, the modern analyst, with data and modern computational power, is better equipped to calculate a baron’s intercentral-

ity than a medieval king. Table B.11 reports equivalent tests for simpler measures of network centrality, all of which are, to some extent, correlated.²⁵ Degree centrality (how connected a baron is) and closeness centrality (how easily a baron can “reach” another baron) are positively correlated with royal visitation. But betweenness centrality (how important a baron is in terms of connecting other barons), which is traditionally used to capture information flows, is not correlated with royal visitation. Katz-Bonacich centrality and Eigenvector centrality, network centrality measures that, like intercentrality, incorporate the importance of a baron’s neighbors into the calculation, are also positively correlated with royal visitation.²⁶ Furthermore, I show in Figure B.4 that results are broadly robust to varying the size of the weighting parameter on close versus distant connections (ϕ) that defines the magnitude of intercentrality.

²⁵Intercentrality is correlated with other common measures of network position: the pairwise correlations are 0.872 with degree centrality, 0.720 with betweenness, 0.563 with closeness, 0.784 with eigenvector centrality, and 0.926 with Katz–Bonacich centrality.

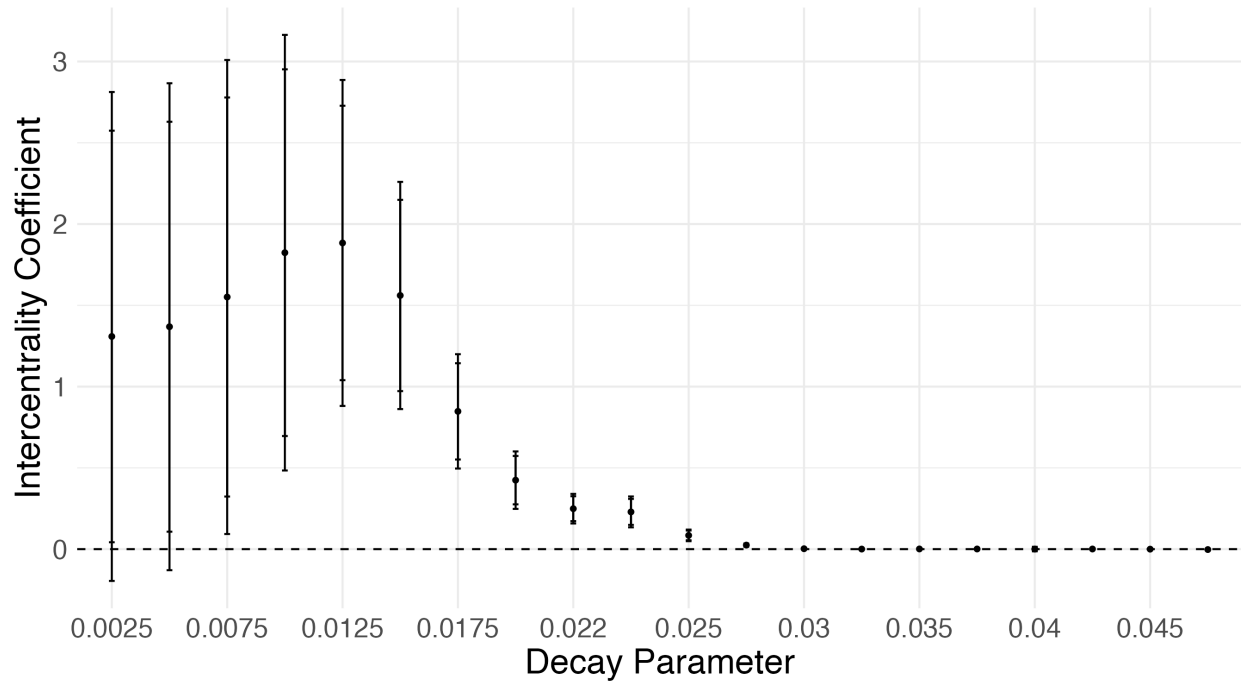
²⁶Intercentrality is a non-linear transformation of Katz-Bonacich centrality and eigenvector centrality is a special case of Katz-Bonacich centrality where ϕ is equal to 1.

Table B.11: Alternative Network Centrality Measures and Royal Visitation

Dependent Variable: Model:	Days Spent at Barony				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Degree Centrality	3.365*** (1.291)				
Betweenness Centrality		0.3800 (0.2676)			
Closeness Centrality			1.048** (0.4243)		
Katz-Bonacich Centrality				1.339*** (0.4103)	
Eigenvector Centrality					0.2848*** (0.1054)
Family Size	-0.3401*** (0.1285)	-0.0419 (0.0537)	-0.0372 (0.0526)	-0.2337** (0.0991)	-0.0463 (0.0512)
Full Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baron-Barony Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time Period FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,367	1,367	1,367	1,367	1,367
Pseudo R ²	0.66701	0.66550	0.66775	0.66865	0.66645

Note: Poisson estimates of the effect of various measures of network centrality on royal visitation, as measured by the number of days the king spent within 8km of the baron's barony *caput*. Each column includes baron-barony dyad and time period fixed effects. The sample period is the years between 1199 to 1327. The baron or barony time-variant control variables include: the baron's family size, the number of days the baron appeared on the royal charter witness list, the number of markets and fairs within 20km of the barony, whether the barony was on the travel path from London to a historical battle, the network distance between the baron and the king, the number of royal boroughs within 20km of the barony, and two separate controls for whether there was a birth or death within 2 connections of him. Robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level are reported in parentheses. *Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Figure B.4: Coefficients on intercentrality while varying the weight on close ties



Notes: The effect of a baron's intercentrality on the number of days the king spent within 8km of the baron's barony *caput* with various decay parameters which define the importance of close ties versus more distant ties when estimating intercentrality. Estimates are calculated using Equation (8) with full controls, as well as baron-barony and time fixed effects. Error bars represent robust standard errors clustered at the fast-greedy community level at the 95% and 90% confidence intervals.

C Further Historical Evidence

C.1 Illegitimate kings travel more in their early years

In the early years of their reign, kings cared about their legitimacy perhaps more than anything. The sources of a king's legitimacy can be roughly divided between endowed legitimacy and purchased legitimacy. In medieval England, a king is endowed with legitimacy if he takes the throne as an adult male heir of a previous king. A usurper thus has a lower level of endowed legitimacy, as does a child king. But as Greif and Rubin (2022, 2024) argue, legitimacy is partly an endogenous variable that the king can attempt to increase by appealing to and exchanging with powerful legitimating agents within the polity. So, in a sense, it is akin to building a political coalition.

Table (C.1) shows the number of movements for the first three years of a king's reign. Non-adult-heirs travelled about 17% more on average in their first three years than their adult-heir counterparts. The difference increases to 30% when only the king's adult rule is considered.

Table C.1: Endowed Legitimacy and Royal Travel: 1199-1547

King	Reign	Number of Movements (First 3 Years)	King	Reign	Number of Movements (First 3 Years)
<i>Adult Heirs</i>			<i>Non-Adult Heirs</i>		
John I	1199-1216	137	Henry III	1216-1272	292 [288]
Edward I	1272-1307	121	Edward III	1327-1377	271 [303]
Edward II	1307-1327	211	Richard II	1377-1399	29 [146]
Henry V	1413-1422	63	Henry IV	1399-1413	89
Henry VIII	1509-1547	101	Henry VI	1422-1461	[180]
			Edward IV	1461-1470	172
			Richard III	1483-1485	56
			Henry VII	1485-1509	143
Average		126.6	Average		150.3 [172.1]
Average (without Henry VIII)		133.0			

Note: Adult heirs are kings aged 17 or older at the time of their succession whose father was also a previous monarch. Movements recorded in brackets correspond to movements that occurred in the first three years of the king's adult rule. Data on the number of movements is lacking for the early years of Henry VI.

C.2 Child kings increase their travel upon becoming adults

Some kings acquired their title as children. In that event, a regency government would be formed until the child king came of age and could personally grasp the reins of government. When that time came, it benefited the newly adult king to explore the political landscape without the filter the regent provided. To do so, he often increased the number and breadth of his movements. Figure C.1 shows the number of movements of four of England's child kings. The king's number and breadth of movements visually increases around the time of his "coming of age" for three of the four. That indicates that the king's itinerary was responsive to the political situation and the king's estimation of his own legitimacy.

Henry III of England, a child during the First Baron's War against his father King John, succeeded to the throne in 1216 at the age of nine. His minority rule ended officially in 1227. In theory he was then able to issue charters, grant patronage, and govern the realm however he wished. But in practice he was under the watchful eye of his justiciar Hubert de

Burgh until 1232 and Peter des Roches until 1234 (Carpenter, 2020). During Henry’s trial period from 1228 to 1234, he spent 26% of his time in Westminster/London, compared to 44% during his minority, and increased his average yearly movements by 20%.

Instead of working under the tutelage of the regent, Edward III threw off his regents in spectacular fashion. In 1329 at the age of 17, Edward III spearheaded a coup d’état to overthrow his regent and *de facto* ruler of England, Roger Mortimer. Upon doing so, the number of movements and the breadth of the king’s travels increased. The kingdom was teetering on the edge, rocked by the political disruptions of the previous king and his deposition (Ormrod, 2012). Building legitimacy and smoothing over disputes was an absolute imperative. During his four years as a minor under Mortimer, Edward moved an average of 94 times per year. In the first four years of his personal reign, he increased his movements to an average of 116 per year, an increase of about 23%, paralleling Henry III’s increase.

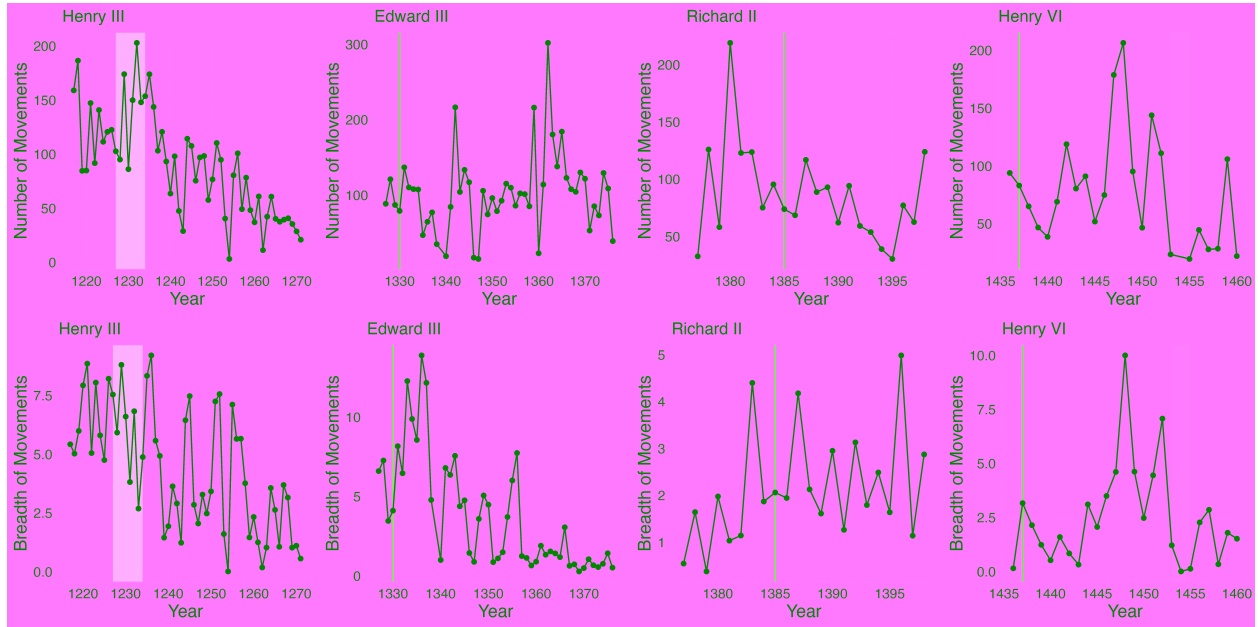


Figure C.1: Child Kings and the Mentally Ill, England

Note: Red vertical lines denote the end of the king’s minority regency. The red-shaded portions denote the time between coming of age and assuming personal control of government. The gray-shaded portions denote regencies that occur due to the king’s mental illness or catatonia.

Edward's early reign travels also increase greatly in breadth by about 80% relative to during his minority.

In 1377, Edward III of England died, passing the crown to his ten-year-old grandson Richard II. Richard is faced with the Peasant's Revolt in 1381 at the age of 14. Richard comes of age in 1385. In the same year, he launches an invasion of Scotland. Richard faced political trouble with powerful barons from 1386 to 1388, reflected in an increased number and breadth of his movements (Tuck, 2004). In 1389, he turned 21 and, having established peace, assumed full, personal control of the government unaided by formal advisors (Saul, 1997, p. 203). Unlike Henry III and Edward III before him, Richard II does not have a post-minority increase in travel activity. Richard II's lack of increased activity during the early years of his majority reign may be blamed on the great authority of his predecessor, Edward III. Unlike Henry III and Edward III, Richard II could ride the coattails of the last king, hoping his legitimacy would be easily transferred.

Henry VI was endowed with "the full powers of personal kingship" in 1437 at the age of 16 (Wolffe, 2001). The early start is attributable to the unexpected death of his uncle and regent, the Duke of Bedford. Wolffe (2001) argues that there are "no grounds whatsoever" to believe that Henry's minority council attempted to hold on to *de facto* power while allowing Henry to be the public-facing image of the crown. The scarcity of recorded itineraries for Henry VI's early minority makes it difficult to determine if he increased his travel dramatically after the end of his minority. Working with what exists, it appears that, like Richard II, Henry VI does not increase his number of movements after stepping into the full role. He, however, doubles the breadth of his movements in 1437. It remains higher than the minority era until 1440, suggesting that he is more akin to Henry III and Edward III than he is to Richard II.

Henry VI provides a unique case where we can observe an adult king recede back into a child-like state. Around July of 1453, Henry VI fell into a catatonic stupor (Wolffe, 2001). Consequentially, his number of movements plummet from 103 in 1452 to zero in 1454 and

11 in 1455. In 1455 Henry VI recovered (at least some of) his wits, only increasing his travel activity leading up to his deposition.

C.3 Deposed kings increase their travel leading up to their death

Depositions do not come out of nowhere. Barons start grumbling years in advance, and the king makes attempts to appease them. Or, at the very least meets with them, hears them out, and makes up excuses in an effort to stall. In the years leading up to their deposition, the king does not know that his efforts will, in the end, prove unsuccessful. All he knows is that the glue that holds the polity together is loosening, the barons' discontent is growing, and loyalty is waning. In those years, the king's number of movements should increase each year as loyalty to him unravels.²⁷

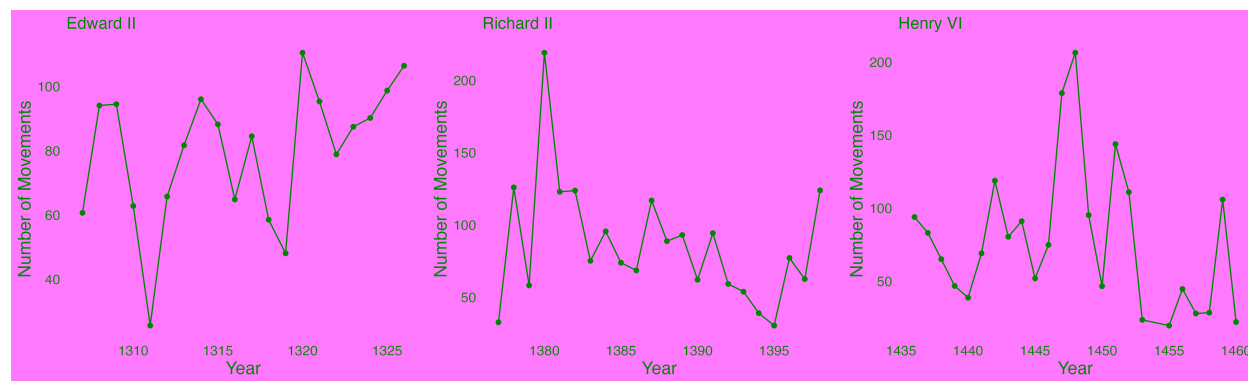


Figure C.2: England's Deposed Kings: Edward II, Richard II, and Henry VI

Note: The raw number of annual movements are adjusted for data quality by dividing it by the number of known days in the itinerary, and then multiplying by 365.

Figure (C.2) shows the annual movements of three of England's deposed kings: Edward II, Richard II, and Henry VI.²⁸ As predicted, the number of movements made by the king increases in the few years leading up to the deposition of Edward II and Richard II. Henry

²⁷Deposed kings, almost by definition, are kings who could not maintain their coalition. But we need not think they travelled sub-optimally (i.e. they met with the wrong people). The barons just did not like the proposal he was offering them.

²⁸Richard III (r.1483-1485) was also deposed. His short reign makes it difficult to analyze in the same way as the other deposed kings.

VI, with the exception of the spike of travel movements in 1459, seems to deviate from the others. That can perhaps be explained by his catatonic state in the 1450s and his known struggles with debilitating mental illness.

C.4 The End of Itinerant Kingship

I have argued that the king can be expected to abandon the itinerant lifestyle when the king gains an absolute military advantage over the elites. Itinerant kingship came to an end in England with the reign of Henry VIII (r.1509-1547) in the 16th century. The king of France, however, would maintain the itinerant lifestyle until well into the 17th century when Louis XIV (r.1643-1715) settled in Versailles. To provide evidence for Prediction (1), I discuss in comparative fashion the differential timing of state formation and elite pacification between England and France. The English elites diminish in power and disarm in the 16th century, while the French do so later in the 17th century.

Gunpowder in Europe dates to 1267, and the gunpowder cannon was introduced to Italy around 1300. But the cannon's use on the battlefield was delayed by its weight, its slow rate of fire, its inaccuracy, and for larger cannons, the high cost of artisan manufacturing (Downing, 1992). But the early decades of the 15th century saw improvements in cannons that allowed them to become larger (but not heavier), more accurate, more powerful, more reliable, and faster to reload, all while becoming cheaper to produce. Hoffman (2011) estimates total factor productivity growth for the production of artillery in England in the early years of the military revolution to be 1.4% per year and 0.6% per year in France, considerable figures for a pre-industrial economy.²⁹

²⁹An older generation of scholars (e.g. Oman (1895), Cruickshank (1966), Millar (1980)) cast Tudor England as lagging far behind the military developments of the European continent. But a newer generation of historians, summarized in James Raymond's book *Henry VIII's Military Revolution: The Armies of Sixteenth-Century Britain and Europe*, have challenged that image of England and have "demonstrate[d] that English military theory and practice was broadly in-line with that of its continental neighbours from the outset of the reign of Henry VIII" (2007).

The gunpowder cannon was the first stage in a series of innovations in military technology and tactics that transformed warfare that has come to be called the “military revolution” (Parker, 1976, 1996, Roberts, 1955). The military revolution introduced real economies of scale into military operations (North and Thomas, 1973, Batchelder and Freudenberger, 1983, Latzko, 1993), which increased both the cost of holding territory and the minimum effective scale of governance. As a result, the optimal number of players in the market for governance decreased, and the state began to centralize (North and Thomas, 1973, Gennaioli and Voth, 2015).

The innovations of the military revolution spread quickly throughout Europe given the immense tournament-like competition of conflict (Hoffman, 2012). But the centralization process and the demilitarization of the barons was a heterogeneous process. England centralized and the king attained a monopoly on force much earlier than France. This variation can be partially explained by the differing geography. The compact and fairly flat terrain of southern England, as well as its island geography, made earlier state centralization possible. France’s sheer size and ruggedness drew out the king’s military struggle for supremacy.

C.4.1 England

In the early years of the military revolution, England was rocked by the War of the Roses from 1455 to 1487. After clinching victory at the battle of Bosworth, Henry Tudor (Henry VII) inherited a thoroughly medieval government, one that Edward I (r.1272-1307) would have found familiar (Elton, 1955). The core apparatus of the government was, as it was throughout the Middle Ages, the royal household. And like every other medieval English monarch, Henry VII was itinerant.

But between 1485 and 1530, Henry VII and his son, Henry VIII, presided over a “conscious effort to liquidate the greatest of the old medieval baronage” (Stone, 1948, 2). In 1504, a statute was passed that outlawed retaining, the baronial practice of maintaining an

affinity of military men (Lockwood, 2017).³⁰ Henry VII possessed the only artillery train in all of England (Elton, 1955, Lockwood, 2017). In 1547, the royal stockpile of armaments contained 20,000 pikes and 6,500 handguns. The stockpiles of the Duke of Norfolk and the Duke of Northumberland were tiny in comparison. Northumberland had arms for 150 men, while Norfolk could outfit only about 70 men (Stone, 1965, 219).

The building of castles in England and Wales decreased dramatically from more than 250 in the 14th century to 150 in the 16th century. The 17th century saw nearly zero new castles erected in England and Wales. Of the inland castles that avoided the fate of demolition, many moved, often by force, into the crown's possession, where they sat unused and slowly dilapidated (Colvin, 1968). Instead, the demilitarized barons began to build more comfortable manor houses with no consideration for their defensive potential.

In the 1530s the remaining regions of the polity where the royal writ did not run were finally brought under the subjection of the king. In 1534, by an act of Parliament, the county palatine of Durham was brought under royal control. Also in 1534, royal officials were dispatched to the Welsh Marches to bring it to order, by force when necessary. Criminal trials for major crimes committed in the Marches were transferred to English border counties. In 1535, The Laws in Wales Act officially incorporated Wales into England. The statute dissolved the marcher lordships completely, and divided the territories amongst both old and new counties. The king's royal authority officially extended throughout England and Wales.

As the English government centralized authority around the king, the king's government became increasingly bureaucratized and less oriented around his household entourage and personal oversight. Henry VIII, aided by his chief minister, Thomas Cromwell, presided over

³⁰Similar statutes were attempted in 1390 under Richard II, in 1429 under Henry VI, and in 1468 under Edward IV. All of them failed to control the problem due to loopholes and the lack of enforcement. These attempts to rein in retaining, and thus the baronial military might, likely failed because the king was too weak to forcefully stand up to the barons that he relied on for support. But the Tudors succeeded where their predecessors had failed.

what Geoffrey Elton called the “Tudor Revolution in Government” (Elton, 1953).³¹ The heart of medieval governance, the royal household, was replaced by bureaucratic national departments. What made the Tudor revolution a *revolution* was not mere bureaucratization. Medieval government possessed considerable bureaucracy. The revolution was in decoupling the apparatus of government from the personal action and service of the king. The royal household became simply a “department of state concerned with specialized tasks about the king’s person” (Elton, 1953, 415). The chamber, once the sole office handling the daily payments of the government, declined to the status of just one of many parallel revenue courts. The privy seal, the center of medieval administration, was replaced by the principal secretary. As Elton writes: “The plain fact is that Henry VII ascended the throne of a mediocrally governed kingdom, while Elizabeth [I] handed to her successor a country administration on modern lines” (Elton, 1953, 3).

With the barons demilitarized and the authority firmly rested in the crown, itinerant kingship as a coalition-building strategy could be left behind. Henry VIII and all subsequent monarchs no longer depended on the baron’s personal loyalty and military support to stay in power. Henry VIII was a relatively stationary king compared to his predecessors. Elizabeth followed in her father’s footsteps. Both Henry VIII and Elizabeth’s travels were mostly circumscribed to the summer months and within earshot of Westminster. Henry VIII and Elizabeth traveled, as politicians still do today, but they were not properly itinerant.³²

As all monarchs do, the late Tudors and Stuart monarchs still required a winning coalition

³¹As all works that proclaim “revolution” do, Elton (1953) has its share of critics. Coleman and Starkey (1986) are the most comprehensive critics. Although they de-emphasize the role of Thomas Cromwell in the reforms, and talk of “evolution” and “readjustment,” they confirm that his general thesis holds true. As Norman Jones writes in his review of Coleman and Starkey (1986), “Evolution or revolution, English government in Elizabeth’s day was something very different from government in her grandfather’s day” (1987). See also Block (1987) and Davies (1987) for similar interpretations.

³²The language used by historians to describe the monarch’s travels changes as well. The Plantagenet, Yorkist, and Lancastrian kings are referred to as “itinerant” in much of the historiography, while Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, and the subsequent Stuart monarchs go on summer “progresses” (Musson and Cooper, 2022, Keenan, 2020, Archer et al., 2007).

to effectively govern and to legitimate their reign. But the political situation was considerably different from their medieval predecessors. Rather than travel the kingdom, the Tudors called the elites to them. With the barons demilitarized, the costs borne by the king of convening a parliament fell. During the reign of Henry VIII, the number of days Parliament was in session and its legislative activity increased significantly (Van Zanden et al., 2012, Greif and Rubin, 2024). In terms of the percentage of reign years Parliament was in session, Henry VIII had the highest to date for an English monarch at 39%. Elizabeth I would match him during her reign, and James I would best him at 41%.

C.4.2 France

Medieval France was a composite kingdom. In contrast to England, the royal writ did not run through most of the kingdom, rather it was contained to the royal domaine (Wolffe, 1971). Medieval and Renaissance France was more of a collection of large feudal holdings than it was a unified polity. A non-trivial amount of its population did not even speak French (Braudel, 1986). In fact, speaking of “France” prior to the 16th century borders on anachronism. The Duke of Burgundy, the Duke of Brittany, and the Duke of Bourbon (to name only a few) were legally vassals of the king of France, but could often rival him in military and territorial might.

By 1500, France was still largely a composite kingdom. The royal domaine did not yet span the whole kingdom, and large duchies still maintained their independence. But, the overall political trend was slowly moving toward centralization and royal territorial control. Francis I (r.1515-1547), a contemporary of England’s Henry VIII, is known for his efforts at state-building. Between 1523 and 1545, he overhauled the government’s financial system in important ways, introducing innovations in both revenue sources and administrative oversight (Collins, 1997). Francis’s son, Henry II (r.1547-1559) would further his father’s policy work by appointing secretaries of state that worked with the provinces on behalf of

the royal administration, created the office of the controller general, and laid the foundation for what would eventually become the intendants. Burgundy was annexed to the crown in 1477, Provence a few years later in 1486, and Brittany in 1532. But the king was often forced to concede power and privileges to these new acquisitions to maintain their loyalty. And in some regions, the nobility remained semi-autonomous, as they were during the High Middle Ages (Johnson and Koyama, 2014a,b).

Despite the state-building efforts of the late Valois kings, the king remained politically dependent on and responsible to the French nobility. The king still relied on the local nobility to govern the kingdom (Major, 1997). Francis I, and his successors, were “absolute in the sense of having no superior except the Almighty, but he could not do all that he wanted” (Knecht, 2007, 229). As a result, the Valois kings remained itinerant while the English Tudors stayed home.

The Protestant Reformation created deep religious and political cleavages in France. When Henry II died unexpectedly in 1559 it sparked a struggle for power, compounded by religious differences, between the aristocratic houses of Guise, Bourbon, Montmorency, and Conte. The French Wars of Religion, as they have come to be called, lasted from 1562 to 1598, and resulted in the overthrow of the Valois dynasty. Francis II and Charles IX, Henry II’s sons and successors to the throne, were itinerant (along with the queen mother, Catherine de’Medici) during their reigns. Their travels largely reflect the military necessities of their coalition and the battles that ensued between Protestants and Catholics.³³ The French Wars of Religion would claim the lives of two kings, Henry III in 1589 and Henry IV in 1610.

In the 1620s, King Louis XIII, with Cardinal Richelieu by his side, began what Tilly (1985) called “the great disarmament” (174). Louis clamped down on potential opposition

³³The young king Charles IX and the queen mother went on an extended journey throughout France from 1564 to 1566. Its dual aims were to solidify his authority now that he was of age and to ensure the enforcement of the edict of Amboise (Knecht, 2008).

by “controlling, weakening, and infiltrating,” rather than destroying and abolishing, local institutions (Moote, 1989, 231). Richelieu declared the royal monopoly of force as doctrine. Castles of both Protestant and Catholic great lords were systematically destroyed, and Louis was “quite capable of executing disobedient nobles” when necessary (Major, 1997, 372). The carrying of weapons and the maintenance of large private armies was condemned. Louis put into action a deliberate policy of increasing his authority and decreasing that of rival governing bodies in the provinces (Major, 1997, 212). He pressured and imposed his will upon the provincial estates of Guyenne, Languedoc, Brittany, and Burgundy. Disloyal provincial governors were replaced by persons loyal to the crown. To accomplish his mission, Louis XIII traveled the kingdom extensively. The king’s physical presence was a major component of his effort to increase his authority in the provinces as described above. By traveling, the king “reinforced local support, intimidated the disloyal, and undermined provincial autonomy” (Moote, 1989).

The state-building efforts of the early Bourbon kings were successful at increasing the authority of the king and weakening the nobility. With the great armed nobles largely neutered, Louis XIV had no need to maintain the itinerant lifestyle during peacetime. In the early days of his personal rule, the royal court bounced around during peacetime between Paris, Saint-Germaine, Fontainebleau, and Versailles (all of which are within the Île-de-France). From 1682, the king and his court spent increasing time at Versailles, where the king compelled the nobility to live with him.

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