

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL**

**The Key to the Kingdoms: The Role of the North of England during the  
First War of Scottish Independence**

Being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Master of Research History in the  
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By

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## Introduction

The death of Alexander III of Scotland in 1286 brought about a series of events which would form one of the defining periods of English, Scottish and British history. The death of the Scottish king, and then his infant granddaughter, Margaret of Norway, led to the fateful decision of the Scottish nobles to seek the arbitration of the king of England, Edward I. Fresh from attempts to resolve the Sicilian Vespers crisis in mainland Europe, the English king must have seemed an ideal option for the Scots to resolve their own succession crisis, however the involvement of the English king sparked decades of bitter conflict which would come to be known as the First War of Scottish independence.

Edward's arbitration in what would come to be known as 'The Great Cause' saw him rigorously analyse the claims of magnates both Scottish and foreign (including his own potential claim), eventually settling on John Balliol as the rightful heir to the throne. However, this was not the end of the matter. As part of this arbitration, Edward had required that all of the claimants recognise him as formal overlord of Scotland, under the premise that only then would he have the right to pass judgement on the crown of Scotland. By requiring all of the magnates to recognise this claim, Edward ensured that whoever was selected would have formally recognised Edward's rights as overlord of Scotland. When the matter was resolved, Scotland was treated in the same manner as any fief granted of the English crown. This situation came to a head in 1296 when Edward invaded Scotland, after John Balliol had refused to answer Edward's call for him to present himself after the Scottish negotiated an alliance with the French, whom Edward was at the time at war with.<sup>1</sup> Deeming John to be in violation of his office, Edward marched North intending to dethrone the Scottish king, although by this time Balliol's authority over his own vassals was almost non-existent. Thus began what would come to be known as the First War of Scottish Independence, a conflict which would last not

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<sup>1</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (London: Yale University Press, 1997), 469

only the rest of Edward I's own reign, but also span the entirety of his son Edward II's, and extend briefly into the reign of his grandson Edward III.

This dissertation will aim to provide a detailed examination of the role of the North of England during the First Scottish War of Independence and the immediately preceding years, taking the period from Alexander III's death in 1286 to the signing of the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton in 1328. Although the time period stipulated here ensures there will of course be some mention of the early days of Edward III's reign, the work will largely focus on the late reign of Edward I and the reign of his perhaps less capable son Edward II. For the purposes of this study, the North of England will be considered to be from Yorkshire and Lancashire inclusive, to the English border with Scotland. However, areas which now lie in England but were either disputed or firmly Scottish during this period will be considered as part of this study, in part to enable an examination of Berwick Upon Tweed. Although intended as Edward I's capital of Scotland, the city was for significant parts of this conflict in English hands and despite officially being viewed by the king as a Scottish capital, was essentially the centre of English administration in the North, and was to all intents and purposes a new English town after its rebuilding<sup>2</sup>. The fact that this town became English and, despite changing hands several more times, remains so to this day also makes it seem arbitrary and somewhat of an oversight to ignore its vital role.

Historians such as Michael Prestwich and most recently Marc Morris have built on the work of earlier historians such as L.F. Salzman in their detailed studies of Edward I's reign. Although works such as Prestwich's *Edward I* and Morris's *A great and terrible king* are excellent and deal with an important topic, by their nature they focus on the entire reign of Edward I, and as such are only able to deal with the First War of Scottish Independence as a whole relatively briefly, leaving little opportunity to directly address the north. Similarly, the reign of Edward II has also been dealt with biographically by historians such as Kathryn Warner

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 474

and Seymour Phillips. Although the conflict ran throughout the younger Edward's reign, biographical accounts also tend to focus on Edward's unstable administration, and his turbulent relationship with his vassals, situating the wars in this context. Again, despite the fact that the war may be addressed, there is little chance to focus on the role of the North as a distinct theme. Similarly, works on the Wars of Scottish independence such as Michael Brown's *The Wars of Scotland* understandably tend to deal with the conflict by examining its effect on developing a Scottish national identity, and the formation of a cohesive Kingdom of Scotland. Again, these works might give some credence to the role of the North of England, but there is naturally no room for any focus on the region in these works.

Of course there are also a number of works that focus on the North of England as a region by notable historians such as Keith Stringer. Although useful, many of the works on the North as a region tend to take a longer view in order to show the development and longer term history of the North, for example Norman McCord and Richard Thompson's book *The Northern Counties from AD 1000* focuses on the regions of interest to this study, but takes a period of almost one thousand years into account in doing so, and as such lacks the detail and focus of a work focused on a single period and series of events. Similarly, there are many works that have focused on the dynamics and politics of medieval England, but again these take a broad view. Works such as Keith Stringer and Alexander Grant's *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History* have given some focus to borderlands such as the north, paying particular heed to the frontiers of the island's kingdoms. Whilst this allows for an examination of regions such as the north, it does not lend itself to the more in-depth examination that a study focusing on a single period of the region's complex history does. Some works have focused on the North during this period, but often from a Scottish perspective, focusing on what the North meant to the Scots, and its significance to figures such as Robert Bruce. One example of this can be found in an article written for *The English Historical Review* on 'Robert I and the North of England'. Although, as the title suggests, this article does go into detail about Scottish activities in the North of England, it is still an incomplete representation of the region

during this period. Whilst the activities of Robert the Bruce will certainly be addressed with some detail here, and are certainly an important aspect of any investigation into the North in this period, it is by no means enough alone to provide a comprehensive assessment. Works such as this fail to adequately address the fractious political nature of the North of England, and of course the North's contribution to English assaults. This is of course partially due to the focus on Scotland and Scottish forces implied in the title, but also due to the fact that any work that focuses on Robert Bruce alone, even if it focuses on his activities in the North, is simply unable to address in adequate detail the years preceding Bruce's kingship, which are of course crucial in understanding the region during this conflict.

In order to adequately assess the role of the North, some context is required not only of Edward I's recent involvement in the Kingdom's affairs, but also of the general political situation in the two Kingdoms and the reigns of Edward I and Edward II in general. During this period, the issue of homage and lordship had reared its head regularly, and Edward I had been particularly keen to reaffirm royal rights and privileges throughout his reign. In fact, Edward was still ordering inquests into trespasses upon his rights in the North on the eve of the war during his arbitration, as can be seen in his orders to carry out an inquest into this in Holderness.<sup>3</sup> Edward had spent the better part of his reign in conflict with Llywellyn ap Gruffudd, Prince of Wales, grappling with the Welsh ruler over his right to call Llywellyn his vassal before eventually absorbing Llywellyn's principality into the Kingdom of England. It is also worth noting that there had previously been some minor attempts to claim overlordship over Scotland, based on the fact that Alexander III held lands in England of the English crown. The claim, therefore, was that Alexander had paid homage not only for his English lands, but also for the Kingdom of Scotland. This was of course rejected outright by the Scots, and was never really seriously pressed. The notion of cross-border land holding was not unusual during

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<sup>3</sup> *Inquisition ad quod damnum concerning a grant of the Serjeanty of Holderness, (1291)* [Chancery Record]. Inquisitions in Chancery, 19 Edward I., U DCC\2\27, Hull University Archives, Hull History Centre.

this period. For example, the Earl of Angus and the Earl of March, two Scottish lords, both held large estates in Northumberland of the English crown, in addition to their lands in Scotland.<sup>4</sup> In the years immediately preceding the advent of hostilities, Edward himself had been engaged in a costly and embarrassing fiasco with the French King over his Lordship of Gascony, a fief held by the English king of the French crown.

Edward I's warring with Scotland would come to earn him his famous moniker, 'Malleous Scottorum', or 'Hammer of the Scots', although this does seem to have been a more recent addition to his tomb. This clearly demonstrates the position in which the formidable king left the war effort when he died en route to further campaigning in the summer of 1307. Despite some errors and no clear victory immediately in sight, Edward had left his kingdom in a relatively strong position. Under the watch of his son this did not last long. In a reign often dominated, at least in the modern public consciousness, by a close relationship with Piers Gaveston and a general failure to live up to his father's prowess, the war with Scotland was nevertheless a defining and long-running theme. Edward II's reign saw the war turn in favour of the Scots and active conflict not only in Ireland, but also as far south as Yorkshire, with resurgent Scottish armies raiding south of the border under Robert Bruce, by now proclaimed as King of Scots. This eventually forced a settlement in the infancy of Edward III's reign. Although he would prove a figure more akin to his grandfather's prowess, and would inflict later punishments on Scotland, Edward III was nevertheless faced with a kingdom internally weakened and in no state to continue the lengthy and costly conflict with its northern neighbour immediately.

One constant throughout this drawn out and changeable series of events is the importance of the North of England to the English war effort in Scotland. The North of England had long been a contested region between England and Scotland in the centuries preceding the reign of Edward I, although prior to the beginning of the period in question there had been

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<sup>4</sup> A King & C. Ety, *England and Scotland, 1286-1603*. (London: Palgrave, 2015), 25

a period of relatively amicable relations and peace during the reign of Alexander III of Scotland. In the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the importance of the North was perhaps still more apparent to the Scottish than the English, with a claim to the North of England forming an important part of Scottish royal policy during the reigns of King Stephen of England and David I of Scotland.<sup>5</sup> It is the region's role in the forty-two year period now known as the First War of Scottish independence that this dissertation will seek to address, through examining a number of key themes and aspects of the region's contribution and functions, throughout the course of the war and during the years immediately preceding it.

The first of these focuses will be political function and importance of the region. In order to examine this, I will examine the numerous Parliaments held in the North of England, particularly in York, making the region the de facto centre of power and authority in the kingdom. The importance of the region can be seen throughout from the Parliament at Norham in 1291 on the English side of the River Tweed, to the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton in 1328 which brought an end, albeit relatively brief, to hostilities between the two Kingdoms. This is clearly interlinked with the North's administrative functions during this period, which will be treated alongside the political functions of the region. The region took on not only political responsibility and functions, but also became a hub of supply and distribution. For example, Edward I's paymaster was based at Berwick Upon Tweed between 1298 and 1304, with John de Weston running the king's own personal finances from the town.<sup>6</sup> A second point of examination will be the actual supplies provided by the North. Whilst the English forces drew from various areas of the Kingdom, for example Hobelars from Ireland, the North was the closest source of both men and supplies. Events such as the granting of a royal charter to Hull in 1299 are clear examples of northern towns being earmarked as key to

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<sup>5</sup> A. Young, 'The North and Anglo-Scottish Relations in the Thirteenth Century' in J.C. Appleby & P. Dalton (eds.) *Government, religion and society in northern England: 1000-1700* (Stroud: Stroud Publishing LTD, 1997), 77

<sup>6</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 512

the supply of the campaign in Scotland. The strategic importance of the North, particularly towns possessing fortifications such as Newcastle Upon Tyne and of course the bitterly contested Berwick Upon Tweed, is immediately clear. This is also reflected in the loss of control of the North by Edward II, during the period in which Scottish forces were able to raid far south of the border and into Yorkshire. This in part begins to answer another key question running through this research, the assessment of whether a 'two tiered' north developed, with the active zones of conflict in the far northern regions such as Northumberland obviously taking on a different role to regions further south such as Yorkshire, which were often far enough from the fighting to be free from risk of any aggression. This of course changed with the course of the war, even Yorkshire was no longer safe from active warfare and raiding by the 1320s, as demonstrated by the routing of English forces at Old Byland in 1322.<sup>7</sup>

As might be expected for a contested border region, the sources available to this study come from a variety of perspectives. The main conflicting perspectives are of course those of the English and those of the Scottish, the most obvious example of this perhaps being the fact that when Robert the Bruce was crowned as the King of Scots, Edward I did not view the uprising as a war between two independent kingdoms, but instead merely considered that he was putting down a rebellion in Scotland.<sup>8</sup> With this justification, Edward dealt with his opponents with unusual savagery, disregarding many of the accepted conventions of medieval warfare.<sup>9</sup> The sheer savagery of the English response must, therefore, be taken into account not only when viewing English sources, but also when dealing the Scottish view, as it seems unlikely that the outrage at Edward's treatment of prisoners of war in particular would not have spread to Scottish writings. The difference in perspective, intent and genre among these sources is challenging to any historian investigating the period, but when taken together it is possible to provide a very well-rounded view of the region during this period. Had the study

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<sup>7</sup> M. Brown, *The wars of Scotland: 1214-1371*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 221

<sup>8</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 509

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*

relied solely on English record sources, ignoring the local colour and additional details provided by chroniclers and political poems, the resulting analysis would be far less rich and would certainly suffer. Accounts such as that of the Chronicle of Lanercost, written at a monastery in Cumberland that on occasion became directly involved in Scottish raiding, add even more detail to this examination, and allow an insight into the feeling of those regions unlucky enough to become directly caught up in the war. A record of an attack in a chronicle such as that of Lanercost, for example, allows a much greater and more well-rounded account than the same attack being mentioned in passing in the footnotes of an English record source. Although there are of course a number of sources from a Scottish perspective, the nature of this study's focus on the North of England naturally ensures that the majority of chronicle sources utilised come from a northern or wider English perspective, particularly when looking at the raiding of locations such as Lanercost.

## Chapter One – The Military Role and the War in the North

Perhaps the most immediately obvious aspect of the North's involvement in the First Scottish War of Independence is the actual military role it played. This includes not only the supply of men and arms, but also the raiding done into the North by the Scots, and the battles that took place in the region. From the very beginning of the war, and indeed from the point that hostilities became likely, the North was catapulted into a prominent military role, largely due to its geographical proximity. The location of the border is the obvious reason for this, but it is also worth reminding oneself of the contested nature of the region in the centuries before and the perhaps unclear loyalties of its lords. Although these two aspects will be dealt with in the second chapter, they naturally acted as a catalyst for military activity and conflict in the area, and as such should also be kept in mind when focusing purely on the military aspect. The North, particularly Cumberland, was also the geographical midpoint between the English kings' Lordship of Ireland and the Scottish front, and as such the region saw a number of military supplies and Irish soldiers travelling through it or mustering there. This chapter will also highlight the dynamic of a 'two norths' that developed during this period. That is, the 'far north' containing the border counties such as Cumberland and Northumberland, and the more southerly northern counties such as Yorkshire and Lancashire. For much of this period there is a distinct difference between the two sub-regions in their experiences of the war, although this is eroded somewhat as the conflict enters its later years.

From the very beginnings of the war, the North predictably provided the mustering point for English armies intended for Scotland, with Carlisle in particular proving a vital stronghold in the west, whilst Newcastle provided a similar role in the east. Berwick also on occasion played a similar role in after its capture by the English. The initial mustering for the expected Scottish campaign in 1296 took place at Newcastle. A message from Edward I to the Vice-Treasurer and Barons of the Exchequer at London commands them 'to come to Newcastle-upon-Tyne from the 1<sup>st</sup> March onwards, 1000/ each week, as is aforesaid for 1000

men at arms and 60,000 foot soldiers..."<sup>10</sup> Of course it is likely that these numbers are greatly exaggerated, which is a common trait of medieval record sources of this period, and Michael Prestwich's estimate that the force mustered probably did not exceed 30,000 seems much more likely.<sup>11</sup> Regardless of the actual size of the force, it is safe to assume that the army being assembled was a significant force, of at least 20,000-30,000 men, demonstrating the strategic importance of strongholds close to the border such as Newcastle. The fact that this order to muster came before hostilities had formally begun demonstrates that from the very beginning of tactical planning for the war, northern strongholds were crucial. This is also corroborated, albeit with less detail, in chronicle accounts. The Chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft records in its entry for 1296 that 'The king has called up [an army], and taken in his expedition, Against the king of Scotland and his mad barons, Who have withdrawn their homage from king Edward... To Newcastle-on-Tyne...' <sup>12</sup> In the west, the castle town of Carlisle in Cumberland was often utilised as a mustering point. This can be seen in the Song of Caerlaverock, which describes the force that mustered at Carlisle in 1300. The song states that 'Edward held a great Court at Carlisle, and commanded that in a short time all his men should prepare, to go together with him against his enemies the Scots. On the appointed day the whole host was ready, and the good King with his household, then set forward against the Scots, not in coats and surcoats, but on powerful and costly chargers; and that they might not be taken by surprise, well and securely armed.'<sup>13</sup> The song continues to make reference to the splendour and magnificence of the English force, and although one must of course be aware of the poetic licence taken with a work of this nature, it certainly seems to suggest that the force was substantial and well equipped, despite being smaller than the force assembled in 1298.<sup>14</sup> The song goes on to make

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<sup>10</sup> '1296. Jan 23. – Message on the affairs of Scotland, sent by King Edward to the Vice-Treasurer and Barons of the Exchequer at London' in J. Stevenson (ed.), *Documents illustrative of the: history of Scotland: from the death of King Alexander the third to the accession of Robert Bruce* (H.M. Treasury: Edinburgh, 1870), 20

<sup>11</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 470

<sup>12</sup> T. Wright (ed.) *The chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft: In French verse from the earliest period to the death of King Edward I. vol 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 231

<sup>13</sup> N.H. Nicolas (ed.), *The siege of Carlaverock* (London: J.B. Nicholas and Son, 1828), 3

<sup>14</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 487

further reference to the significant size of the force, describing how ‘valleys were every where covered with sumpter horses and waggons...’, and how when the army camped outside Caerlaverock Castle, ‘one might observe many a warrior there exercising his horse: and there appeared three thousand brave men at arms; then might be seen gold and silver, and the noblest and best of all rich colours, so as entirely to illuminate the valley...’.<sup>15</sup> The North was therefore the setting for the flower English chivalry to display its grandeur, and of course beneath the pomp, the military capabilities of the Kingdom of England. Carlisle was again used as a mustering point in 1306 following the uprising of Robert Bruce earlier that year. For this campaign the English forces had been split into two, led by Aymer de Valence in the east and Henry Percy in the west.<sup>16</sup> A smaller force also mustered at Carlisle before travelling to join de Valence’s army in the east.<sup>17</sup>

After its capture in 1296, the Scottish royal burgh of Berwick became an important strategic and military site. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the town’s status as a royal burgh and a trading port made it politically important, however the town’s formidable fortifications also made it an important strategic goal for both sides. As explained in the introduction, the town was to all intents and purposes English despite technically remaining part of the land of Scotland even when occupied by the English, and was the focus of the North’s strategic preparations. As such it will be considered an extension of northern England. The town’s formidable castle required a garrison of around 74 men.<sup>18</sup> The importance of the castle in particular is demonstrated in the attempts to recapture it during the Scottish resurgence of 1297 under William Wallace. The siege of 1297 saw the Scots capture the town, killing the English townsfolk who had not fled.<sup>19</sup> However, the Scots were unable to capture the castle, which remained in English hands during the Scottish occupation of the town, and as

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<sup>15</sup> N.H. Nicolas (ed.), *The siege of Carlaverock*, 3-5, 63

<sup>16</sup> M . Prestwich, *Edward I*, 506

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>18</sup> M. Prestwich, ‘Victualling Estimates for English Garrisons in Scotland during the Early Fourteenth Century’, *The English Historical Review*, 82, 324 (1967), 536

<sup>19</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost* (Glasgow: The Grimsay Press, 2010), 164

such the Scots were forced to abandon the siege.<sup>20</sup> Berwick would continue to be a target for Scottish armies until it was recaptured in 1318. Although the importance of these sites in the North as mustering grounds, and as crucial strongholds and fortified positions from which raids and campaigns into Scotland could be launched is clear, it also worth addressing their value as sites of refuge to which the English could retreat, when supplies began to run out or after a crushing defeat in Scotland such as that at Bannockburn in 1314. For example, in 1301 the future Edward II elected to move south to Carlisle before joining with his father's army in the winter.<sup>21</sup>

Shortly after the assembling of the force at Newcastle in 1296, the first skirmishes between English and Scottish forces occurred. These skirmishes demonstrated that from the very beginning of the war, the North and its lords would be a crucial factor in the English war effort. These early encounters also demonstrated the potential military unreliability of the North, with northern lord Robert de Ros siding with the Scots.<sup>22</sup> A small skirmish between de Ros' men and the English at Wark on Tweed ensued, and although this would be followed by a greater Scottish force a short while later, it seems that this was the opening hostile action of the war.<sup>23</sup> Remarkably, this shows that the North to some extent fought itself for the first engagement of the war, and this only serves to highlight the complex political situation at this point. This underlines its continued status as a frontier region, rather than a thoroughly 'English' territory, which will of course be addressed properly in the next chapter. The invasion of the larger army shortly afterwards caused some damage in the North East of England, and was certainly a greater threat to the North's settlements. The effects of this can be seen in a warrant for the allowance of expenses incurred during the invasion, which makes reference to

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 164-165

<sup>21</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 494

<sup>22</sup> This will be addressed at greater detail in the next chapter dealing with the politics of the North.

<sup>23</sup> H. Rothwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*. (London: Royal Historical Society, 1957), 271-3

the wages of around six squires and forty archers.<sup>24</sup> The North also supplied a significant number of troops in the 1298 campaign, with orders sent to Lancashire for 2000 men to be provided.<sup>25</sup> Although not all of the English writs were actually carried out, large numbers were still recruited with a force numbering around 14,800 in pay by the 20<sup>th</sup> of July, although this includes some Irish troops.<sup>26</sup>

From the very beginning of hostilities, the northernmost counties found themselves exposed to Scottish raiding. Amongst the first reported occasions of this occurring is in the supposed burning alive of 200 schoolboys in Northumberland, shortly after the English advance into Scotland in 1296. A document seemingly prepared to send to Phillip IV of France to dissuade him from an alliance with the Scots records that 'they burned about 200 little scholars... at Corbridge... having blocked up the doors and set fire to the building.'<sup>27</sup> This is also corroborated in the Chronicle of Lanercost, which records the event but sets the location as Hexham instead, writing that '[The Scots] herded together a crowd of little scholars in the schools of Hexham, and having blocked the doors, set to fire to that pile...'<sup>28</sup> Despite the discrepancy in locations, it seems that if the event did occur in some form, and is not purely exaggeration for propaganda purposes, then it is Lanercost that is correct in recording the location of Hexham rather than Corbridge, although the two are just a few miles apart.<sup>29</sup> The Chronicle also records further damage at the Hexham Abbey complex, which seems certainly to be true, given that the events recorded also include damage to the monastery at which the chronicle itself was written. 'Three monasteries of holy collegiate were destroyed by them – Lanercost, of the Canons Regular; and Hexham of the same order; and [that] of the nuns of

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<sup>24</sup> '1296. Nov – Warrant for the Allowance of Expenses incurred by Robert de Balliol upon the invasion of Northumberland by the Scotch' in J. Stevenson (ed.) *Documents illustrative of the history of Scotland*, 118-119

<sup>25</sup> F. Palgrave (ed.), *The parliamentary writs and writs of military summons. Vol 1.* [ebook] (London: The Record Commission, 1827), 312

<sup>26</sup> M. Prestwich, *War, politics and finance under Edward I* (London: Faber and Faber LTD., 1972), 95

<sup>27</sup> F. Palgrave (ed.) *Documents and records illustrating the history of Scotland and the transactions between the crowns of Scotland and England, vol 1.* [ebook] (London: The Records Office, 1837), 159

<sup>28</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost* (Glasgow: The Grimsay Press, 2010), 136

<sup>29</sup> G.W.S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the community and the realm of Scotland* (Berkeley: University of Los Angeles Press, 1965), 100; M. Prestwich, *Edward I*,

Lambley...<sup>30</sup> This attack on Hexham abbey is of course one of the factors that lends credence to the notion that the attack on the schoolboys, if it did occur, would have been nearby at Hexham. In its criticism of the 'dastardly' and 'perfidious' Scots, the chronicle also accuses them of '[attacking] a weaker community where they would not be likely to meet with any resistance.'<sup>31</sup> Although at face value this may seem to be a simple act of slander against a foe, this is actually an accurate and valid assessment. The Scots certainly had raided these northern areas of England because they simply did not have the capabilities or strength in force to directly engage the superior English army. Harrying English supply lines and settlements behind Edward's army must have seemed certain to bring more success than risking direct engagement. Despite this, on their way back to Scotland this particular force, led by the earls of Mar, Ross and Menteith elected to capture the castle of Dunbar, the earl of Dunbar being a supporter of Edward I.<sup>32</sup> In the early years of the war, raids like these into Northumberland and Cumberland would prove the only real threat of Scottish aggression into England.

Although there was some initial success of the English forces in Scotland, this would not last. The submission of John Balliol in 1296 claiming that 'our lord the king of England has entered the realm of Scotland and taken and conquered it...' proved to be a little overly confident on the part of the English.<sup>33</sup> In fact, by July 1297 the English administration in Scotland had 'ceased to function beyond Roxburgh and Berwick.'<sup>34</sup> By November only Edinburgh and Berwick remained in English hands.<sup>35</sup> As the Chronicle of Lanercost details, 'Hardly had a period of six months passed since [John Balliol's submission] when the reviving malice of [the Scots] excited their minds to fresh sedition.'<sup>36</sup> After the English defeat at Stirling Bridge, raiding once again began in Northumberland. The victorious forces of William Wallace

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<sup>30</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 136

<sup>31</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 136

<sup>32</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 471

<sup>33</sup> 'Copy of a letter from John Balliol about the renunciation of his homage' in E.L.G. Stones (ed.) *Anglo-Scottish relations 1174-1328: some selected documents*. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons LTD, 1965), 73

<sup>34</sup> M. Brown, *The wars of Scotland*, 183

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 185, H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 163-165

<sup>36</sup> H Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 163

'entered Northumberland in strength, wasting all the land, committing arson, pillage and advancing almost as far as the town of Newcastle; from which, however, they turned aside and entered the county of Carlisle [Cumberland]. There they did as they had done in Northumberland, destroying everything, then returned into Northumberland to lay waste more completely to what they had left at first...'<sup>37</sup> This again demonstrates that from the very beginnings of the conflict, Northumberland and Cumberland were both at direct risk from Scottish incursion.

After the catastrophic English defeat at Bannockburn in 1314, the war began to turn significantly in favour of the Scots. The Chronicle of Lanercost is damning of Edward II's defeat, recording that 'Bannockburn was spoken about for many years in English throats.', and describing how the 'The king... with many others mounted and on foot, to their perpetual shame fled like miserable wretches to Dunbar castle... the king embarked with some of his chosen followers in an open boat for Berwick, leaving all the others to their fate.'<sup>38</sup> Although the war would continue for four more years, the battle served to eliminate some of Robert Bruce's key Scottish enemies, such as John Comyn who was killed in the battle.<sup>39</sup> Although the flight of the English king to Berwick is itself a demonstration of the military importance of strongholds in the North, as a site to which they might retreat, the defeat at Bannockburn would have severe consequences for the North. For the next four years, the war would increasingly take place 'outside of the Scottish realm', and counties such as Yorkshire which had previously been relatively shielded from Scottish aggression found that their positions were no longer so secure.<sup>40</sup> Although raiding had always been a risk in the northernmost counties such as Cumberland and Northumberland, more southerly counties such as Lancashire and Yorkshire had rarely been troubled by direct conflict. In fact, as will be addressed in greater detail in the next chapter, York had been secure enough to host

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 164

<sup>38</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost* (Glasgow: The Grimsay Press, 2010), 207-208

<sup>39</sup> M. Brown, *The wars of Scotland*, 208

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 209

numerous parliaments, and had for a time during Edward I's reign effectively served as England's capital city. After Bannockburn this state of relative security was certainly no longer the case. Although the city would continue to enjoy an enhanced role itself, its surrounding regions were not so lucky. Just a few months after the battle, in August 1314, Robert Bruce's brother Edward led a host across the River Tees into Yorkshire, before returning to Scotland.<sup>41</sup> This route into Yorkshire, and then back to Scotland via Westmorland would be copied and extended further south in the years succeeding 1314, by both the king himself and his lieutenants.<sup>42</sup> Although there had been some raiding further south than this in the early 1310s, it was largely after Bannockburn that the North became increasingly defenceless against Scottish incursion. However, that is not to say that Scottish strength had not been growing before this, and indeed English power conversely waning. This is demonstrated by the fact that in the year prior to the fateful battle, during its record of Robert Bruce's attack on Lanercost monastery, its namesake chronicle refers to Robert as "Robert de Brus, King of Scotland".<sup>43</sup> Although not a title any Scottish king would have used himself, the correct form being King of Scots, this is notable as it is the first time the chronicler allows Robert a regal rank, and acknowledges that he is indeed a king.<sup>44</sup> The Chronicle continues afterwards to refer to Robert with the title of king, be this as King of Scotland or with the correct title of King of Scots, suggesting that by this point at least in the North of England things had escalated to the point where even the pretence that this was simple rebellion could no longer be maintained. This is certainly a sharp contrast with the policy laid out in Edward I's reign that this was a mere rebellion, not a war between kingdoms. Indeed the elder Edward's strength had been such that, despite never claiming the title himself, the Irish Annal of Loch Cé in fact referred to him as 'King of Alba [Scotland]' in its entry for the year 1307, reporting his death.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 211

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>43</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 197

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>45</sup> W. M. Hennesy, (ed.), *Annals of Loch Cé: a chronicle of Irish Affairs from A.d. 1014 to A.D. 1590* (London: Longman & Co., 1871), 541

From 1311 onwards, however, the risk of attack by the Scottish throughout the North had become great enough that a practice of purchasing local truces began.<sup>46</sup> This process had begun in advance of the English defeat at Bannockburn, and that practice was so beneficial both to the Scots and the northerners that in 1313 invasion and raiding were averted almost entirely, when simply the threat of invasion was enough to convince the English in the North to send payment to Bruce.<sup>47</sup> On this occasion, King Robert 'halted in peace and safety near Corbridge', sending a small force to Durham where admittedly some damage was done and supplies were 'carried off.'<sup>48</sup> However, the Chronicle of Lanercost describes how, despite the violence at Durham, the castle and abbey were 'scarcely' attacked.<sup>49</sup> After this, the Scots were able to extract 'two thousand pounds to obtain truce for that bishopric [Durham] until the nativity of John the Baptist'.<sup>50</sup> The resolve in the North at this point was so weakened that the Scots were able to push the demand that they would only accept this truce should they retain the freedom to travel through and retreat through that land 'whensoever they wished to make a raid into England.'<sup>51</sup> This startled the Northumbrians enough that they also offered two thousand pounds in return for peace until the same date, and this was quickly followed by offers from Westmorland, Copland and Cumberland who 'redeemed themselves in a similar way' but had to provide hostages in exchange for a part of the money due to their lesser wealth.<sup>52</sup> Satisfied with this, Robert returned to Scotland with barely an engagement fought, and a substantial part of the far North's wealth in tow.<sup>53</sup> After 1314, it seems however that Northumberland in particular was no longer able to continue this practice of 'paying off' the Scots, however, and after Bannockburn the county was 'seemingly incapable of negotiating as

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<sup>46</sup> J. Scammel, 'Robert I and the North of England', *The English Historical Review*, 73, 288 (1958), 385

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 386

<sup>48</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 199

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 200

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*

an entity'.<sup>54</sup> This seems to have been to the great detriment of the county, given that in 1315 while occupying north and south Tynedale, the Scots 'again wasted Northumberland', whilst Cumberland was able to avoid a similar fate by paying '600 marks' at the same time.<sup>55</sup> These truces severely impacted the ability of large swathes of the North to engage the Scots, although whether these regions would've have possessed the requisite strength to form any significant resistance towards the end of the period is doubtful. A truce signed between the Steward of the Bishopric of Durham, and other representatives of the 'people of the community of the bishopric of Durham' is demonstrative of this.<sup>56</sup> This truce, running from the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1312 to the feast of the nativity of St John the Baptist on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 1313, seemingly committed the entire Palatinate of Durham, 'between the tyne and tees', to 'not rise in war against the king of Scotland, or against his followers within his realm, under anyone except the king of England, or someone who has royal authority; and if they do so with the king or with any other, from that time the truce shall be considered as null and void.'<sup>57</sup> It seems that this truce was likely in response to the razing of Durham in 1312 by the Scots, the town according to the Scottish chronicler Fordun being 'in great part burnt down'.<sup>58</sup> The terms of this truce are significant, as they not only represent the lack of military resistance in the North, but also represent an instance of not only a northern county, but one of the North's frontier counties on the front line of the war with Scotland essentially being removed entirely from the war for a period. Although as the treaty states, Durham could not have refused a royal command to engage the Scots, the capacity of the county to react to any swift Scottish aggression into England was removed entirely, potentially leaving more southerly counties such as Yorkshire exposed to Scottish aggression, without a military obstacle to protect them.

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<sup>54</sup> J. Scammel, 'Robert I and the North of England', 387

<sup>55</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 212

<sup>56</sup> 'A Truce', in E.L.G. Stones (ed.), *Anglo-Scottish relations*, 144

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 144-145

<sup>58</sup> W.F. Skene (ed.), *John of Fordun's chronicle of the Scottish nation* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872) [ebook], 339

By the 1320s, it was not only local towns and lords that sought truces with the Scots, and by this less successful period of the war, the practice of negotiating truces entered royal policy, and was no longer an act of simple desperation. As early as 1321, Edward II sent representatives to negotiate a truce with Robert Bruce, instructing his ambassadors to negotiate with the Scots at Newcastle. A note attached by the exchequer clerks confirms that 'the said [notarial] document, [was] delivered to John of Brittany, earl of Richmond, who was going to Newcastle Upon Tyne to negotiate for the making of a peace between the king and the Scots, along with the archbishop of York, the bishop of Worcester, and others [already] negotiating there, by authority of a writ of privy seal...'<sup>59</sup> This was followed just a few years later in 1323 with a thirteen year truce. This 1323 truce is particularly notable as it came just a few months after Edward had executed the Earl of Carlisle for attempting to broker a similar deal, and perhaps demonstrates a realisation of just how much the situation in the North had deteriorated by this point of the war, given that Edward was now forced into adopting a policy strikingly similar to that which had been treasonous enough to cost Harclay his life.<sup>60</sup>

The more frequent excursions and raiding further and further south culminated in Yorkshire in the Battle of Old Byland, a significant victory for the Scottish, and unlike Bannockburn this time victory came on the offensive in England. The loss at Byland closely followed the capture of Edward II himself by Robert Bruce. Although the English king was able to escape, this was not until after the routing of the forces remaining from his recent campaign in Scotland, at Byland.<sup>61</sup> The Chronicle of Lanercost alludes to the magnitude of defeat at Byland, recording how Edward II, 'ever chicken-hearted', took flight from nearby Riveaulx Abbey in such haste that much of the treasure and silver held there was left behind and carried off by the victorious Scots.<sup>62</sup> In fact, the loss at Byland certainly acted as a catalyst for increasing political disillusionment with Edward II and the war itself in the 1320s, and perhaps

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<sup>59</sup> 'Negotiations with the Scots' in E.L.G. Stones (ed.), *Anglo-Scottish relations*, 149

<sup>60</sup> This episode will be addressed in greater detail in the next chapter.

<sup>61</sup> M. Brown, *The wars of Scotland*, 221

<sup>62</sup> H. Maxwell (Ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 240

contributed greatly to the actions of the Earl of Carlisle, which will be addressed in greater detail in the next chapter.<sup>63</sup> The range with which the Scottish forces were now able to range into England is clear in the aftermath of the battle. Having been restricted to raiding in the far north of England in the war's beginnings, significant Scottish forces were now able to reach not only Yorkshire's North Riding, but could penetrate deep into the county. The Chronicle of Lanercost describes how immediately after the battle, the Scots 'marched on the Wolds, taking the Earl [of Richmond] with them, laying waste that country nearly as far as the town of Beverley, which was held to ransom to escape being burnt by them in like manner as they had destroyed other towns.'<sup>64</sup> Given that in 1299 Hull, just a few miles south of Beverley, had been granted its royal charter and earmarked due to its perceived safety from Scottish incursions into England, this is clearly demonstrative of just how much the situation in the North had changed, and indeed of how much the war had turned against the English by this point. The fact that a relatively significant market town such as Beverley chose to pay off the Scots rather than rely on the king's protection also demonstrates how weakened the English military force was in the aftermath of Byland, and that the English king was no longer able to guarantee the security of the entirety of Yorkshire. Indeed, perhaps only the security of York, the walled city to which Edward II had fled, could be guaranteed by this point.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, when the Earl of Carlisle led his force South, intending to join with the king's force and drive the Scots from the North 'he found the king all in confusion and no army mustered' and thus decided to 'disband his own force, allowing every man to return home.'<sup>66</sup> Post-Byland, and perhaps even post-Bannockburn, it is less useful to think of a 'two-norths' dynamic when examining the region and the war. The whole of the North was certainly now either suffering directly from Scottish raiding and incursions, and even those regions lucky enough to escape battle or plundering

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<sup>63</sup> M. Brown, *The wars of Scotland*, 221

<sup>64</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 240

<sup>65</sup> Andrew Harclay, the Earl of Carlisle, found Edward at York when intending to mount a response to the Scots, *Ibid*

<sup>66</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 240-241

could certainly no longer be assumed to be safe, as they perhaps might have been during Edward I's reign, or even the early years of Edward II's reign.

Although on these occasions Bruce's forces often avoided besieging the stronger towns fortresses of the North, simply ignoring and bypassing their weakened garrisons, this is not to suggest that any of these settlements could be considered 'safe', as the attack on Beverley demonstrates. Although ordinarily targeting towns rather than fortified castles, on occasion the Scots were bold enough to do just that. An attack on the castle town at Scarborough in 1318 is one example of this. Although most famous during this period for its involvement in the demise of Piers Gaveston, the castle at Scarborough remained an imposing and formidable fortification held by the English in North Yorkshire, which of course by the late 1310s and 1320s was now very much within range of Scottish attacks. The town was attacked by Scots after razing Northallerton and Boroughbridge in 1318, on an occasion when Scottish forces reached as far south as Ripon before turning back where they were again able to extract a tribute of one thousand marks rather than burning the town.<sup>67</sup> The fact that the presence of a commanding and imposing royal castle was no longer enough of a deterrent to prevent such an attack is certainly revealing in exposing the weakness of the North by this point. 1318 also provided another crucial point in the turning of the war. Throughout the war to this point, there had been little success on the part of the Scots in any of their attempts to capture castles within England, despite some victories in driving the English from Scottish castles. The 1318 campaign demonstrates a clear change in this, with garrisons at the castles of Wark on Tweed and Harbottle surrendering to the Scots on account of receiving insufficient aid and relief to hold them.<sup>68</sup> The Scots were also on this occasion able to capture the castle of Mitford, 'by guile'.<sup>69</sup> These accounts are also corroborated by *Scalacronica*, which records that Milford was taken through the treachery of the castle holder's own people.<sup>70</sup> It goes on to describe how

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 221

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 220

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>70</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *Scalacronica: the reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III as recorded by Sir Thomas Gray* (Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons, 1907), 60

'the Scots had become so bold that they subdued the Marches of England and cast down the castles of Wark and Harbottle, so that hardly was there an Englishman to withstand them.'<sup>71</sup> However, it is worth remembering that this account was certainly written some decades after these events. The fact that these castles were 'cast down' is true, and the castle of Mitford also became ruined around the same time, and it is thus no great stretch to suggest that the Scots were likely responsible for this too.<sup>72</sup> The destruction of these castles does demonstrate that limits to the Scottish ability to capture, and certainly to hold English castles remained, with only Berwick surviving this fate. Although these castles could be captured, it was unlikely that they could be held by Scottish forces against any significant English attempt to retake them, and as such destruction was the only certain way of ensuring that they could not once again be used against the Scots. The destruction of these castles of course also represents the loss of defensive structures in the North of England, and as such a weakening of the regions ability to defend itself. This also had the effect of forcing settlements that escaped or survived Scottish raids to re-examine their defences, at great expense. The port of Hull received further fortifications in the 1320s, when a licence to crenelate the town walls was granted, likely as a result of the sackings of 1318.<sup>73</sup> The fortifications built in the 1320s consisted of a great foss and defensive ditches, in addition to the crenellation and reinforcement of the town walls. Similar preparations were underway in Durham, Hartlepool, Lancaster, Richmond and Beverley at this point, with all of these settlements applying to be allowed to collect 'murgage', a toll levied on goods entering the town in order to raise the money needed to build these.<sup>74</sup> The immense cost of these defences, and the discouragement to trade caused by the tolls necessary to raise the money to build them, certainly discouraged some towns from building them, or at the very least saw them completed to cheaper specifications than required. The

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>72</sup> C. McNamee, *The wars of the Bruces: Scotland, England and Ireland, 1306-1328* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), 140

<sup>73</sup> A.S. Harvey, *The De la Pole family of Kingston Upon Hull*, (East Yorkshire Local History Society, 1957), 27

<sup>74</sup> C. McNamee, *The wars of the Bruces*, 221

cost in Hull, for example, is recorded in the Hull Chamberlain's account roll for 1321-24, which puts the total cost of the defences at the significant sum of £347 including materials and wages.<sup>75</sup>

As has been briefly mentioned so far, the English strongholds in the North often came under siege at various points during the war. Again, these sites were largely the same as those already mentioned, that is Berwick, Carlisle, Newcastle and the like. These sites were not only important strategic locations for the English, but often also the focal points of active campaigning by the Scots. In the aftermath of the battle of Bannockburn, Carlisle found itself under siege by Robert Bruce's forces in 1315. *Vita Edwardi Secundi* records that '[Robert] collected a large force and laid siege to the city of Carlisle', describing how 'This city was always hateful to the Scots; it was always feared by them, for it frequently intercepted their raids and many times hindered their flight.'<sup>76</sup> Carlisle had in fact been occupied by the Scots during the reigns of Henry I of England and David I of Scotland for some time. The town was a personal favourite of the Scottish king and he had increasingly spent time in residence there, to the extent that he seemed to almost conceive of it as a sort of southern capital, with the mint in the town producing significant quantities of Scottish coinage.<sup>77</sup> The importance of Carlisle is again made clear by the chronicle's account, with the chronicler stating that 'If, therefore, [Robert] could take this place there would be no one to resist him as far as Newcastle.'<sup>78</sup> Given that Newcastle is at the opposite end of the northern border with Scotland, this passage clearly demonstrates the limited number of strong fortifications that were actually available in the North at this point. Certainly Newcastle, Berwick and Carlisle were the three vital English possessions in the region. This serves only to highlight the importance of these towns. Although the notion that there would have been no resistance

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<sup>75</sup> R. Horrox, *Selected records and accounts of medieval Hull: 1293-1528* (Leeds: Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1983), 53-58

<sup>76</sup> W.R. Childs (ed.), *Vita Edwardi Secundi: The life of Edward the second* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 105-106

<sup>77</sup> N. McCord & R. Thompson (eds.), *The northern counties from AD 1000*, (London: Longman, 1998), 53

<sup>78</sup> W.R. Childs (ed.), *Vita Edwardi Secundi: The life of Edward the second*, 107

until Newcastle may be a slight exaggeration on the part of the chronicler, it is probably not far from the truth given the state of the North and the shattered English army reeling from defeat at Bannockburn. The Scots would certainly have been aware of the importance of these settlements, and targeted them as a consequence of this.

These northern English strongholds took on a more important role than they perhaps otherwise would have, had more finances been available. During his campaigns in Wales, Edward I had built a number of impressive castles and fortifications, which remain some of the best examples of medieval castle architecture and design to this day. The most striking example of the excess and magnificence of Edward's Welsh castles is the famous Caernarfon Castle, with its impressive and towering walls. These castles were vital tools in Edwards attempts to consolidate his gains in Wales, and ensure English dominance of the principality.<sup>79</sup> However, castles such as Caernarfon were built to extravagant specifications and cost, far beyond what one would expect the cost of building defences to dominate the technologically disadvantaged Welsh to encompass. Caernarfon, for example, cost around £20,000 to build, a large portion of which was seemingly spent on polychrome banding akin to that of the walls of Constantinople.<sup>80</sup> It seems that this was simply to try and create an imposing copy of imperial symbolism, and there certainly appears to be little structural justification for the expense.<sup>81</sup> Regardless of the justification, the king's excessive spending on castle building programmes in Wales and in the other wars of his reign ensured that by the time of the Scottish campaigns, the finances of the Kingdom were vastly depleted, an issue which will be addressed more fully in the chapter dealing with finance and supply. More recently, the kingdom's finances had been drained by the expensive war with France which ended up costing far more than fighting the comparatively cheap Welsh campaign had.<sup>82</sup> Michael Prestwich estimates that the total

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<sup>79</sup> A. Wheatley, *The idea of the castle in medieval England* (York: Boydell & Brewer, 2004), 112

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 112-115

<sup>81</sup> Abigail Wheatley actually suggests that the walls were intended to mimic Roman walls, which often featured a similar patterning. However, given the Roman origins of the Byzantine Empire it could be argued that this is essentially the same imperial vision. *Ibid*. 133

<sup>82</sup> M. Prestwich, *War, politics and finance*, 170-171

military expenditure from 1294 until the king's return from Flanders in 1298 can be placed at around £750,000, compared to around £20,000 spent in Edward's first Welsh war, and £150,000 in his second.<sup>83</sup> The staggering financial demands of Edward's insatiable war machine meant that by this point the English king was simply unable to afford the expense of constructing fortifications on the scale of his Welsh castles to consolidate his Scottish gains.<sup>84</sup> In fact, even fortifications which were built could not be built to their original specifications in all cases, with fortifications initially planned in stone for Linlithgow in 1302 downgraded to timber, and wooden fortifications constructed at Selkirk in the same year.<sup>85</sup> Ironically, the military technology employed to intimidate in Wales would likely have been much more practical against the more militarily advanced Scots. The absence of any significant English fortifications within Scotland therefore meant that castle towns such as Carlisle and Newcastle remained the foremost English military outposts in the war, and thus made them both vitally important to the English, and an obvious military target for the Scots. The only real military stronghold of the English added to their number during the conflict was Berwick, which was of course captured rather than built, and was certainly not enough alone to reduce the burden on of these other important Northern strongholds.

This series of sieges would eventually lead to the loss of Berwick, or rather its return to Scottish hands in 1318 and the expulsion of its English burgesses, marking the end of Berwick as a Northern English town for the period.<sup>86</sup> This siege was one of the major military defeats in the North for the English during the war, and along with Bannockburn and Old Byland one of the most important military victories for the Scots. The situation in Berwick seems to have deteriorated in 1317, shortly after Robert Bruce had rejected the attempts by the Pope to enforce a truce.<sup>87</sup> It seems that in February of that year a dispute had arisen between the

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, 174-175

<sup>84</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 497-498

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 498,

<sup>86</sup> M. Brown, *Bannockburn: The Scottish war and the British Isles, 1307-1323* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 151

<sup>87</sup> M. Brown, *Bannockburn*, 150-151

burgesses and the garrison of the castle in Berwick.<sup>88</sup> *Vita Edwardi Secundi* suggests that the townspeople allowed the Scots to enter, stating that ‘When the king committed this town to the care of burgesses, the treacherous servants handed it over to the enemy.’<sup>89</sup> In the wake of this the Scots were able to push on and capture the castles at Wark and Harbottle, both in Northumberland. In both cases the castles seem to have surrendered due to a lack of relief.<sup>90</sup> The English Burgesses of Berwick were expelled in humiliating fashion and found no sympathy from an enraged Edward II who considered that they had handed over the town too easily. In fact, Edward sent orders to Hull commanding ‘the mayor and bailiffs of Kingston-upon-Hull to arrest all the goods of the community of Berwick found there, at the advice of John de Weston.’<sup>91</sup> Indeed, Robert went to great lengths to re-establish the town as a Scottish royal burgh, choosing not to demolish its walls or castle, and clearly intended to rehabilitate the port as a trading centre for Scotland.<sup>92</sup> By expelling the English burgesses and repopulating the town with Scots, the Scottish king essentially erased the growing identity of Berwick as an English town. However, by failing to demolish its walls and castle, Robert arguably left the town as a tangible and visible goal for the English, and the town would change hands multiple times before its final capture by the English in the fifteenth century. Although it is perhaps unfair to expect Robert to un-fortify a key border town, given the problem that the town’s paltry defences had caused in 1296, the Scottish king had dismantled defences at other castles within Scotland, particularly during his surge of victories in 1314 that would culminate in the battle of Bannockburn.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> ‘Edward II learns of the surrender of Berwick’ in J. Bain (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Scotland preserved in Her Majesty’s Public Record Office. London* (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1887), 112

<sup>89</sup> W.R. Childs, *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 147

<sup>90</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 220

<sup>91</sup> ‘Edward II learns of the surrender of Berwick’ in J. Bain (ed.), *Calendar of documents relating to Scotland*, 113

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, 151-152

<sup>93</sup> D. Cornell, ‘A Kingdom Cleared of Castles: the Role of the Castle in the Campaigns of Robert Bruce’, *The Scottish Historical Review*, 87, 224 (2008), 233-234

Throughout the period the North was also an important source of manpower for the war, although that is not to say that other regions of England, and particularly Ireland, did not contribute in this way. The proximity of counties such as Northumberland and Cumberland to the border made them a useful and quick source of troops. One example of this can be seen in 1300, when The king sent orders to the Sheriff of Northumberland to aid Robert Fitz-Roger in his efforts against the Scots.<sup>94</sup> Fitz-Roger had been placed in command of the garrisons of Berwick and Wark, and appointed Lieutenant of Northumberland, and the orders to the sheriff instruct him to ‘obey, and attend upon the said Robert and his orders... as fully as if we ourselves were there, as is... contained within the letters-patent which the said Robert has from us.’<sup>95</sup> The document also suggests that this extends beyond supplies and shelter, as although it focuses on the supplies and victuals that might be needed, it repeatedly dictates that ‘whatsoever the said Robert shall charge, or intimate to you therein his letters’ should be obeyed, which of course would include the supply of any extra troops.<sup>96</sup> Another example in which troops from the North were also provided can be seen in 1304, when Edward I commanded that forty crossbowmen be sent to the siege of Stirling Castle, ‘without delay.’<sup>97</sup> This also demonstrates that not only the far north was utilised as a readily available source of additional troops during times of active campaigning, but that those regions further south could still be drawn upon as a relatively swift and useful source of men.

This should be viewed in the context of the other actions of Robert Bruce and his subordinates during this period, and as such it is worth taking a brief aside to remind oneself of the Bruces’ campaign in Ireland. A number of motivations have been proposed for the invasion, including a desire to build a ‘Celtic’ alliance against the English; a personal desire for Kingship of Ireland by Edward Bruce; that the Bruces’ were dragged into Ireland at the behest

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<sup>94</sup> ‘1300. March 1 – The King orders the Sheriff of Northumberland to aid Robert Fitz-Roger against the Scots.’ in J. Stevenson (ed.) *Documents illustrative of the history of Scotland*, 410-411

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 411

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, 412

<sup>97</sup> ‘1304. June 40. – Crossbowmen and Carpenters to be sent to Siege of Stirling Castle.’ in J. Stevenson (ed.), *Documents illustrative of the history of Scotland*, 484

of the local Irish kings; and finally that the invasion was an attempt to cut off the steady supply of men and resources to the English war effort against Scotland.<sup>98</sup> Whatever their motivation, the flow of men and resources from Ireland through the north of England was indeed interrupted, and the situation in Ireland is therefore worth addressing here. The Annal of Loch Cé records that in 1303 'A great hosting by the King of the Saxons to Alba... went from Erinn with a large fleet, and obtained sway in Alba in this occasion.'<sup>99</sup> Although it is often assumed that Ireland had begun to take on reduced importance to the English crown by Edward II's reign, and that English hegemony over the island was at arm's length, this downplays Ireland's importance too much.<sup>100</sup> In fact, the continued significance and importance of the island is demonstrated by the fact that Edward II himself would flee to Ireland in 1326.<sup>101</sup> Of course reasoning aside, this also served to open a second front in the war, which had prior to this taken place almost entirely on the England-Scotland front. Similar tactics to those that had been used in the North were also adopted in Ireland by Edward Bruce. Contemporary sources certainly link the Bruce invasion in Ireland to having a tangible, direct effect on the north of England. *Vita Edwardi Secundi* makes a direct link between a false rumour of Edward Bruce's defeat in Ireland, and Robert Bruce's decision to break his siege. The chronicler states that 'A false report meanwhile throughout England that our army in Ireland had scattered the Scots, that Edward Bruce had perished, and that hardly one of the Scots had remained alive. Hence Robert Bruce, both on account of these wild stories and because he heard that the earl of Pembroke had recently arrived with many men at arms, gave up the siege and set out towards Scotland.'<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> C. McNamee, 'The Bruce Invasions of Ireland', *History Ireland*, 1, 1 (1993), 11

<sup>99</sup> W.M. Hennesey, (ed.), *The Annals of Loch Cé*, 529

<sup>100</sup> P. Dryburgh 'The Last Refuge of a Scoundrel? Edward II and Ireland, 1321-7' in G. Dodd & A. Musson (eds.), *The reign of Edward II: new perspectives* (York: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 120

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, 119

<sup>102</sup> W.R. Childs, *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, 107

It is also necessary for context to briefly explain that military goings on in the North of England were not limited to those relating to the Scottish wars during the 1310s and 1320s. Again, the political turmoil of the younger Edward's reign will be delved into more deeply during the next chapter dealing with the political situation, but it is worth briefly examining the internal military events of Edward II's reign here. During Edward II's reign, hostility between the king and his vassals, including those in the North, was often the defining state of affairs, and on occasion this manifested itself in physical military encounters, particularly when the Earl of Lancaster's revolt almost sparked open civil war. Perhaps the most obvious example of dissent against the king can be seen with the famous siege of Leeds Castle, Kent, in 1321. After Edward's wife, Isabella, was refused entry to the castle by its keeper Bartholemew de Badlesmere, although this seems to have been Isabella's hope all along.<sup>103</sup> Although this was of course happening in the south of England, events like this are a clear distraction from the ongoing situation in the North, and from the affairs of the war with Scotland in general. The siege at Leeds Castle took place almost a year exactly before the defeat at Old Byland, which clearly demonstrates that the Scottish situation was far from stable. In addition to being an unwelcome distraction from Edward's external wars, events such as this also had clear repercussions in the North, which as will be discussed in the next chapter, was a region Edward had limited political control over in the 1320s. Indeed, as the episode at Leeds Castle was unfolding, in the North the troublesome Earl of Lancaster continued to scheme against the king.<sup>104</sup> This would culminate in open war and the Earl's execution for treason. At first glance, one might presume that the battle of Boroughbridge, just north-west of York, was an engagement between Scottish and English forces, given its location and the deterioration of the situation in the North. However it was in fact an engagement in which the English fought themselves, with the loss of a number of high profile northern figures including the Earl himself who would lose his life for his rebellion.<sup>105</sup> This episode demonstrates the astonishing

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<sup>103</sup> S. Phillips, *Edward II* (London: Yale University Press, 2010), 397

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, 399-400

<sup>105</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 232-234

reality that by this time, not only could the North not be guaranteed against Scottish aggression, but that it could not even be guaranteed against the English battling amongst themselves. This surely must have left the North in a weakened state when the Scots drove south a few months later, and it is therefore no wonder that as has been discussed above, when the Earl of Carlisle arrived to aid Edward II he found a force almost entirely absent, and a king seemingly 'in confusion'.<sup>106</sup> It had in fact, been Carlisle who had delivered Edward his victory at Boroughbridge. Edward's use of force against his own vassals was at this point by no means unusual, and a climate of 'commonplace... demonstrations of force... in political or social dispute...' had been created within England.<sup>107</sup> Military aggression between the English king and rival English lords during this period certainly reduced the ability of the kingdom to respond to Scottish invasion, and rendered the king incapable of launching any serious assault into Scotland in the 1320s. This fractious situation is thus vital in understanding the reduced ability of the North to fight off the raiding Scots, and indeed the absence of any serious, successful attempts to turn the war back in England's favour after Bannockburn.

Despite the signing of a thirteen year truce in 1323, hostilities began again after the deposition of Edward II in 1327. Although this is certainly one of the briefest stages of the war, the North once again took a crucial role in the events that would culminate in the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton in 1328 and the effective end of the First Scottish War of Independence, although the cessation of war was hardly to last. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 1327, having secured recognition of his kingship from the Papacy and an alliance with France, Bruce once again turned his attentions to the war, launching an unexpected attack on Norham castle, coinciding with the coronation of the young King Edward III of England.<sup>108</sup> This attack was unsuccessful in that it was unable to take Norham castle, when 'about sixteen [Scots] boldly mounted the castle walls; but Robert de Maners, warden of the castle had been warned

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, 241

<sup>107</sup> R.M. Haines, *King Edward II: Edward of Caernarfon his life, his reign and its aftermath, 1284-1330* (London: McGill-Queens University Press, 2003), 148-149

<sup>108</sup> R. Lomas, *North-East England in the Middle Ages* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers LTD, 1992), 45-46

of their coming by a ... Scot within the castle, and... killed nine or ten and took five of them alive.<sup>109</sup> Despite this failure, the attack on Norham served to confirm that the Scots remained able to harass the North, and this was swiftly followed by an invasion of northern England led by the Earl of Moray, Sir James of Douglas, and the Earl of Mar.<sup>110</sup> Bruce himself was absent on this occasion.<sup>111</sup> Whilst the Chronicle of Lanercost claims that the 'new king of England' led an army in response to this, at this although crowned the fifteen year old Edward III was far from *de facto* ruler of England. The kingdom was in theory governed by the king with the advice of a council, however in practice despite not holding a position on this council, the Queen Mother's lover Roger Mortimer was able to wield much power, without any real accountability.<sup>112</sup> Although the king likely had little authority over the campaigning, he certainly did lead the force in as much as he was present with the army. In fact the young king was almost captured in an indecisive engagement with the Scots at Stanhope Park, after which the Scots quietly withdrew from their position on the banks of the Wear, with the English unable to follow.<sup>113</sup> Although indecisive as a military engagement, this encounter proved the death knell for English hopes of continuing the conflict, and was a 'humiliating failure for the English host' which was much larger and better equipped than its Scottish counterpart.<sup>114</sup> The cost of assembling both this force, and the earlier force assembled by Mortimer and Isabella, the Queen Mother, was a crippling expense for the new regime, the bill for the Hainaulter mercenaries hired for both campaigns coming to £55,000 alone.<sup>115</sup> The expense of these two campaigns left the English with little choice but to agree to the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton in 1328, although not without much stalling and disagreement at an earlier

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<sup>109</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 256

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, 256-257

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>112</sup> Despite this there was no formal regency for Edward, although for the years in question Mortimer was certainly able to assume much of the power of a *de jure* regent. For a more precise explanation of the governmental arrangements of Edward III's early reign see W.M. Ormrod, *Edward III* (London: Yale University Press, 2011), 58-63

<sup>113</sup> C. McNamee, *The wars of the Bruces*, 242

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*

parliament in York that year.<sup>116</sup> The treaty provided some financial relief to the English, with the Scots agreeing to pay £20,000 for English recognition and the marriage of Bruce's son David to the sister of Edward III, Joanna, with a further £100,000 to be paid should the marriage fall through.<sup>117</sup> Although the treaty 'offered the English nothing to show for 32 years of war', it must certainly have come as a relief to the beleaguered population of the kingdom, particularly those in the North who had been repeatedly struck by Scottish attacks over the previous decade.<sup>118</sup>

It seems then that the military campaign in the North to some extent tells a tale of two distinct periods. In the early part of the war, it is noticeable that raiding and warfare is restricted to the 'far north', largely in the border counties of Cumberland and Northumberland. These more northerly regions were also the sites of the English strongholds in the region, and as such drew not only raiding but also proved the target of Scottish campaigning throughout the period. Particularly before the 1310s, and certainly in Edward I's reign, this created a 'two norths' dynamic, which will become more apparent in the next chapter on the political functioning of the region, where more attention will be paid to the role of those counties further south, particularly Yorkshire, in the early years of the war. However, as explained earlier, by the 1320s this was no longer the case and the whole region had become a battleground, even if the Scots were never able to hold any ground other than in the recapture of Berwick.

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<sup>116</sup> W.M. Ormrod, *Edward III*, 71-72

<sup>117</sup> '1328 Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton' in G. Donaldson (ed.), *Scottish historical documents* (Glasgow: Neil Wilson Publishing, 1997), 61-62

<sup>118</sup> A. King & C. Ety, *England and Scotland, 1286-1603*, 38

## Chapter Two – The Political Landscape and Functions of the North

From the very beginnings of Edward I's involvement in Scottish affairs following the death of Alexander III, the North of England entered a period of increased political importance. The region became a site for English political functions, such as the various parliaments that took place in the North, and of course the various treaties signed there. The context in which this occurred is also important. In the preceding centuries, the region had been heavily contested, and although the North was perhaps more firmly English than it had been previously, it is worth remembering that medieval England was still far from a cohesive entity or state in the modern sense. Indeed, as previously mentioned, cross-border lordship remained rife during this period, and holding estates on one side of the border did not necessarily guarantee loyalty to the respective kingdom's ruler. For example, the Earl of Dunbar, a supporter of Edward I, found his king laying siege to Dunbar's own castle in 1297 when other members of his family, possibly his wife or brother, chose to open the gates to the Scots.<sup>119</sup>

As addressed in the introduction, the North had often been a problematic region for the English kings and was certainly markedly different and less definitively English than the south. In the centuries preceding this period, it had certainly not been the case that the loyalty of the northern lords could be assumed. Not only had the loyalty of these lords historically been unpredictable, there had been occasions where northern lords had actively opposed the English kings, going so far as to cavort with their enemies or enter open opposition themselves. This had happened during the reign of King John, when northern lords had invited down the King of Scots and paid homage to him for their lands during the rebellion that would result in the famous signing of Magna Carta at Runnymede.<sup>120</sup> As J.C. Holt accurately describes, 'The Northerners, in fact, provided not only the most extended opposition to the king, but the

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<sup>119</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 471

<sup>120</sup> J.C. Holt, *The Northerners: a study in the reign of King John* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) [ebook], 14

most virulent, and also the most radical attack on his policies and position.<sup>121</sup> The rebellion against John would certainly have still been something that Edward I was painfully aware of. The fact that John's reign was still a crucial component of the English political landscape is perhaps best demonstrated by the fact that in 1297 Edward I was forced to concede a reconfirmation of Magna Carta, the document his grandfather had been coerced into signing in some 82 years earlier.<sup>122</sup> Even prior to this the king had remained somewhat restricted by its demands.<sup>123</sup>

By the 1290s it seems clear that regardless of the political loyalties of its Lords, the North of England was certainly becoming a region considered firmly English to most, something which had not been the case in the preceding centuries. The status of Northumberland as an area under the English crown had been resolved during the reign of Henry III with the 1237 Treaty of York including an acknowledgement by Alexander II of Scotland that the area was part of England.<sup>124</sup> The Scottish king had in the treaty 'remitted and quit-claimed for himself and his heirs... in perpetuity the... earldoms of Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland.', receiving 'two hundred liberates of land within the said earldoms'.<sup>125</sup> This made the king of Scotland himself a cross-border lord, demonstrating just how problematic the problem had become in the north of England. Of course, this was not an issue restricted to the North, for example the Balliol family had historically held numerous lands in England as well as Scotland. When William Wallace's raiding of Northumberland is recounted in a 'Song on the Scottish War', it is described how Englishmen 'must fight for their country'.<sup>126</sup> Although the nature of any political song is one of propaganda, this certainly suggests that the notion that the northern counties formed part of the Kingdom of England

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>122</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 421-422

<sup>123</sup> R. Frame, *The political development of the British Isles 1100-1400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 145

<sup>124</sup> R. Frame, *The political development of the British Isles*, 48

<sup>125</sup> There is no extant copy of the treaty itself, but a contemporary transcript survives. '1237 Treaty of York', in G. Donaldson (ed.) *Scottish historical documents*, 33

<sup>126</sup> 'Song on the Scottish Wars' in T. Wright (ed.), *Thomas Wright's political songs of England from the reign of John to that of Edward II*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 179

was accepted politically and by popular opinion, at least in England. Although the North was certainly administratively and legally part of the Kingdom of England, there were a number of royal castles in the North and the region was of course subject to the English judicial circuits and taxations. However, local loyalties could certainly be fluid and thus the administration and local lordship on occasion did not always point in the same direction.

As such, the North remained an area which had continued to prove difficult for the English kings to control. The so-called Northern Marcher lords enjoyed a considerable level of freedom, if not quite at that of their Welsh March counterparts. Indeed, the palatinate of Durham (which included Howden in East Yorkshire), was effectively ruled as the Bishop of Durham's own personal principality at times.<sup>127</sup> In fact, as has been highlighted by Cynthia Neville, the autonomy of the northern lordships was not only preserved but in some cases increased during this period.<sup>128</sup> As with any frontier region, this relative freedom means that the political allegiances of lords in northern England should also not be underestimated, despite the earlier statement that the region was now much more intrinsically seen as England. Although one only needs to look at the problems encountered by the kings of England and France in their disputes over the homage owed for Gascony during this period to see the problems associated with cross-border lordship, the practise was rife within the North of England. Although this war would go some way to ending the practise, it remained a problem at the beginning of the conflict.<sup>129</sup> Indeed, as mentioned above, the price for Scottish acknowledgement that Northumbria and Cumbria were within England was the granting of 'two hundred liberates of land within the said earldoms' to the King of Scots.<sup>130</sup> Naturally, the Treaty of York also details that ' [the] king of Scots has done his homage for these lands to the said king of England, and has sworn fealty to him.'<sup>131</sup> If the wording of the lost original

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<sup>127</sup> S. Raban, *England under Edward I and Edward II: 1259-1327* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2000), 112

<sup>128</sup> C.J. Neville, 'Keeping the Peace on the Northern Marches in the Later Middle Ages', *The English Historical Review*, 109, 430 (1994), 5

<sup>129</sup> A. Grant 'Scottish foundations: Late medieval contributions' in A. Grant & K. Stringer (eds.), *Uniting the Kingdom? The making of British history* (London: Routledge, 1995), 103

<sup>130</sup> '1237 Treaty of York' in G. Donaldson, *Scottish historical documents*, 33

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, 34

document reflected what is written in this transcription, then the ambiguity of the phrasing is clear to any reader. By stating that the king of Scotland had done homage to Edward and sworn fealty, the document presumably refers only to his swearing fealty and doing homage for these lands within England, similarly to how the English kings were required to perform homage to the kings of France for Gascony after Henry III's acceptance that it was held as a fief of the French crown.<sup>132</sup> The fact that the lands granted to the Scottish kings were in the north of England predictably ensures that the North is the key political landscape in the debate over whether the Scottish kings had performed homage for these lands alone or in fact for the Kingdom of Scotland. This form of constructive ambiguity of course ensured both sides to believe that they had emerged victorious from the negotiations, at least until disputes arose. Although this was never an argument that would have been likely to have stood up to any rigorous examination, it was certainly used on occasion by Edward I to justify his claims in Scotland. Although Balliol's homage did not rest upon the Treaty of York, and instead was based on a much more clear cut homage given by all of the candidates for the Scottish throne, the confusion between whether homage was done for lands in England or for the whole Kingdom of Scotland was also utilised by the Scottish king where advantageous, with Balliol's renunciation of his homage to Edward I stating that '...we renounce the fealty and homage which we have done to you, and which any other person among our faithful subjects, the inhabitants of our realm, has done, by reason of the lands which are held of you in your realm...'<sup>133</sup> The insinuation here is clearly that the homage done was not for the Kingdom of Scotland, but for John's lands within England, which included the impressive Barnard castle in Durham. Of course this was not true, Balliol, and indeed all of the other candidates, had clearly recognised Edward as their legal overlord, and after being selected as Edward's choice for the kingship had done homage to him 'as lord superior of Scotland, for the realm and its

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<sup>132</sup> R. Frame, *The political development of the British Isles*, 130

<sup>133</sup> 'Copy of a letter from John Balliol about the renunciation of his homage.' In E.L.G. Stones (ed.), *Anglo-Scottish relations*, 63

appurtenances...'<sup>134</sup> However, the fact that the Scottish king utilised this argument, however tenuous, highlights how the problematic notion of cross-border land holding had risen to the highest ranks of Scottish society, and it was lands in the North that generated this confusion.

In order to hold on to such a debated land, the English king instituted the office of 'Warden of the Marches', a subject which seems to have received relatively little attention in recent years. Although the Northern Marches were not exempt from English common law entirely as had been suggested by much of the early work on the topic, it seems that they did enjoy some degree of freedom.<sup>135</sup> In 1297 the king appointed Robert Clifford and two others captains of the wards of Cumberland and Westmorland, with the power to raise levies in order to guard the region against the Scots.<sup>136</sup> In 1309 the same Robert Clifford was appointed Warden of the Marches by Edward II, solidifying the position.<sup>137</sup> This represented, according to R.R. Reid, a significant change in the practice of appointing a commission in the borders, establishing the office of Warden of the Marches and indeed the commission as a permanent fixture, rather than something which had only been granted when it was deemed necessary.<sup>138</sup> Indeed, the fourteenth century in particular saw the temporary reversal of the previous trend for the absorption of the North into England and the desire to bring it fully into the fold of the royal administration.<sup>139</sup> Although the appointment of a warden, and indeed an increase in the powers of that and similar offices might be seen as a political victory for the North, granting the northernmost counties of England a degree of political power, this conversely means that the act can be seen as a weakening of royal power in the North. However, the king's control over the North should perhaps not be overstated, given that the first act of the war involved a northern lord siding with his enemies. Although the role was initially a military, as C.J. Neville

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<sup>134</sup> 'Instrument concerning the homage which the king of Scotland did to the king of England' in E.L.G. Stones (ed.) *Anglo-Scottish relations 1174-1328*, 20

<sup>135</sup> C.J. Neville, 'Keeping the Peace on the Northern Marches in the Later Middle Ages', 1-2

<sup>136</sup> F. Palgrave (ed.), *Parliamentary writs and writs of military summons. Vol 1.*, 301

<sup>137</sup> Macpherson, D. *Rotuli Scotiae in Turri Londensi et in domo capitulari Westmonasteriensi asservati, vol 1.* [ebook] (London: The Record Commission, 1831), 76

<sup>138</sup> R.R. Reid, 'The Office of Warden of the Marches; Its Origin and Early History', *The English Historical Review*, 32, 128 (1917), 481

<sup>139</sup> N. McCord and R.Thompson, *The northern counties from AD 1000*, 70

argues, agreeing with Reid's earlier work, this should not negate the loss of political control that the handing of more powers to the office must have entailed.<sup>140</sup> By empowering a single individual with this level of power, it is inconceivable that this does not represent a weakening of direct royal authority in the region to some extent, however inconsequential or minor it may be. This is perhaps best demonstrated by the fact the office was awarded to Andrew Harclay in 1322.<sup>141</sup> As will be discussed thoroughly below, Harclay would act with a staggering degree of autonomy and take it upon himself to negotiate a peace with the Scots on behalf of the king, an act which would cost him his life.<sup>142</sup> However, this should not be overplayed, and it should not be forgotten that the period examined here is still one in which the Royal court moved regularly around the country. The situation is also somewhat replicated in the Welsh Marches, although under the guise of a number of powerful marcher lords with greater legal and political freedoms than in the North. This is then perhaps indicative of the nature of medieval English kingship and a characteristic of English, and perhaps even medieval European, borderlands in general, rather than a northern phenomenon.

This serves to highlight further the importance of the North when dealing with Scottish affairs. With the movement of the royal court around the Kingdom, and a monarchy in which despite the issuing and reissuing of Magna Carta, power was very much centred around the king and his court. This therefore means that the king's presence in the North was often required when actively dealing with Scottish affairs, even prior to the opening of hostilities. This can be seen at Norham in 1291, when Edward I was himself situated at the castle whilst holding parliament there. It was from Norham that Edward sent the instructions for the keepers of the castles of Dundee and Forfar to deliver them to him.<sup>143</sup> Largely due to the geographical proximity of the region, Norham being about as close to Scotland as an English

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<sup>140</sup> C.J. Neville, 'Keeping the Peace on the Northern Marches', 5. Neville concurs with Reid's earlier assessment of the responsibilities of the office. R. R. Reid, 'The Office of Warden of the Marches', 482

<sup>141</sup> S. Phillips, *Edward II*, 422

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, 433-434

<sup>143</sup> *Indemnification to the keeper of the castles of Dundee and Forfar for delivering them to Edward I. Norham (1291)* [Letter] Records of the Exchequer. E 39/20. The National Archives, Kew.

king could hope to get whilst remaining within his own realm, Northumberland found itself the epicentre of a crisis of kingship in Scotland, and the centre of Edward's efforts to ensure that Scotland was secure and placated before passing judgement. It was the castle at Norham that provided the site for Edward's arbitration of the great cause, and thus the fateful recognition of Edward as overlord of Scotland.<sup>144</sup>

The proximity of the North of England to Scotland is of course the key factor in its increased political importance to the English kings during this period, and is consequently the primary reason for the number of parliaments and political events held in the region. In a document believed to have been issued in the early 1320s, during Edward II's reign, the process of holding a parliament is described in some detail.<sup>145</sup> The document states that 'The summoning of a parliament ought to precede the first day of parliament by forty days.'<sup>146</sup> Whether this forty day period was followed stringently or not, the document certainly highlights the importance of location of a parliament, and it is certainly correct in suggesting that summoning a parliament is something which would take a significant amount of time. Taking this into account, it seems obvious that a northern city like York would be a much more attractive and convenient location for a parliament dealing with issues relating to Scotland than a more southerly location like Westminster, given its proximity to the pressing events of the kingdom. For example, it was at the July-August 1328 parliament in York that the English community would ratify the decision to form an agreement with the Scots, paving the way for the signing of the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton some months later.<sup>147</sup> The usage of York as a site at which to hold parliaments was very much a phenomenon of the reign of Edward II rather than that of Edward I, however. Although the final parliament of his reign was held in Carlisle in 1307, Edward I largely held parliament in the south of England, predominantly at

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<sup>144</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 363-364

<sup>145</sup> Although undated, the document is believed by V.H. Galbraith to date from either 1321 or 1322, at least between 1316-1324. '235. How to hold a parliament (1316-1324)' in H. Rothwell (ed.), *English historical documents: 1189-1327* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1975), 924

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>147</sup> M. Penman, *Robert the Bruce: King of the Scots*, (London: Yale University Press, 2014), 285

Westminster.<sup>148</sup> This certainly contrasts with the reign of Edward II. Although initially parliament was once again largely confined to Westminster, parliament was first held at York in 1314, shortly after the defeat at Bannockburn.<sup>149</sup> Between 1318 and 1322 five more parliaments took place in York, after which point it met exclusively at Westminster until the reign of Edward III.<sup>150</sup> Parliaments had become commonplace events by this point, however the frequency and regularity of parliaments could not always be guaranteed. As Sandra Raban describes, 'meetings became less frequent in the 1290s and there were no parliaments at all in 1303 and 1304.'<sup>151</sup> Although the fact that Edward faced the rebellion and dissent of northern lords during this period should certainly be considered a factor in parliament sitting more often in the North, it is still no coincidence that as the war turned against the English and the North came under attack more and more frequently, parliamentary visits to York increased. Under Edward II parliaments became more regular events once again, however they were often wont to suffer changes in location or a delayed arrival by a king who often found himself at odds with the assemblies called.<sup>152</sup>

Perhaps the most obvious, and indeed one of the earliest demonstrations of the political importance of northern locations in the examined period, is the holding of a Parliament at Norham Castle in 1291, on the English side of the River Tweed. This location was a careful consideration by Edward I, the summons to appear within Edward's realm rather than Scotland for the arbitration of the Scottish undoubtedly generated some concern amongst the Scottish magnates involved.<sup>153</sup> During this meeting of claimants and the English king, two major concessions were reached. As mentioned, all of the claimants agreed in their submission that '...of our own will, without any manner of force or constraint, will, concede and grant to receive justice before him as sovereign lord of the land; and we are willing,

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<sup>148</sup> H.G. Richardson & G.O. Sayles (eds.) *The English parliament in the Middle Ages* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1981), V 151-154

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, XVI 86

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, XVI 87-88

<sup>151</sup> S. Raban, *England under Edward I and Edward II*, 124

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 124-125

<sup>153</sup> A. King & C. Ety, *England and Scotland*, 16

moreover, and promise to have and hold firm and stable his act, and that he shall have the realm to whom right shall give it before him.<sup>154</sup> This event therefore provides the homage from John Balliol that would be so crucial to the onset of war in Scotland, Edward I justifying his marching against Balliol under the guise that he had violated the fealty he had sworn to the English king.<sup>155</sup> Parliament was held in York in late 1297, granting Edward a tax to fund his war in Flanders, but also summoning the Scottish nobles to attend.<sup>156</sup> The Scots of course failed to appear, and in any case the English were clearly preparing for war, with the parliament of 1298, again held in York, seeking to smooth over political conflicts amongst vassals before marching, 'ostensibly united', for Scotland.<sup>157</sup> The last parliament of Edward I's reign was held at Carlisle in 1307, shortly before his death on campaign the same year.<sup>158</sup>

The practice of holding parliaments in the north of England continued throughout the period, with Edward II holding parliament in York in 1318.<sup>159</sup> The number of parliaments held in the region, particularly at York, demonstrates a definite political importance for the North. Indeed, there were numerous parliaments held during the period in York, particularly in the late 1310s and early 1320s, and although naturally they did not always deal with affairs directly relating to the Scottish wars, the conflicts can never have been far from concern. Indeed, while these parliaments did of course deal with the situation in Scotland and the North, the bulk of their time seems to have been spent on the almost constant conflict between the king and his vassals, over the ordinances of 1311 and the fallout from the death of Piers Gaveston. This created a changed political dynamic, in which the political centre of the kingdom could be found in the North rather than its traditional location in the Thames valley.

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<sup>154</sup> '1291 submission of the claimants to Edward I' in G. Donaldson, *Scottish historical documents* (Glasgow: Neil Wilson Publishing, 1997), 44

<sup>155</sup> M. Morris, *A great and terrible king: Edward I and the forging of Britain* (London: Windmill, 2009), 285

<sup>156</sup> F. Palgrave, *Parliamentary writs*, 62-64

<sup>157</sup> M. Morris, *A great and terrible king*, 310

<sup>158</sup> R.R. Davies, *The first English Empire: power and identities in the British Isles 1093-1343* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2000), 28

<sup>159</sup> W.R. Childs & J. Taylor *The Anonimalle Chronicle: 1307-1334* (Leeds: University of Leeds on behalf of The Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1991), 92-93

Although the financial aspects of this will be dealt with in the next chapter examining the North's role in supplying the war effort, it is also worth addressing the movement of key components of the royal household and administration to the north of England. Whilst this is indeed an important supply aspect, it also represents a change in the political landscape of the North, making the region the seat of Royal government for considerable swathes of the period. During the initial English success in Scotland, a permanent administration was necessary.<sup>160</sup> The chancery and exchequer moved to York in 1298, in order to be closer to the front line, and although this is primarily an issue of finance and supply, having the exchequer in the city naturally increased the political relevance and importance of the city.<sup>161</sup> Although the exchequer only remained in York until 1304, during these years York was effectively the capital of the Kingdom of England, especially when coupled with the regularity with which parliaments met in the city. This is a clear example of enhanced political importance for the region, particularly the city of York, although this would not survive the turning of the war in favour of the Scots as raiding into Yorkshire became more and more common. The other key component of the kingdom's finances was of course the king's wardrobe. The movement of the wardrobe to the north of England is not quite similar to the conscious decision of moving the exchequer to York, however it is still an important factor in increased political importance for the region. The wardrobe was the more effective of the two financial arms of royal government in this period and given that it travelled with the king in order to run his own personal finances, was not always present in the North. However, when the king was present in the North during the period in which the chancery and exchequer were based at York, the region was effectively the centre of English royal government, albeit for a short-lived period. York itself was also regularly the site of the royal courts of law during this period, which initially came with the exchequer in 1298.<sup>162</sup> The movement to York in 1298 in fact saw a

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<sup>160</sup> M. Prestwich, *War, politics and finance*, 164

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, 153

<sup>162</sup> R.A. Brown et al. (eds.), *The history of the King's works: volume II the Middle Ages* (London: HMSO, 1963), 891

temporary structure constructed in which the Court of Common Pleas was housed, whilst the Exchequer occupied the great hall of the castle.<sup>163</sup> A new building was again constructed for the Court of Common Pleas when the courts returned to York in 1319-20, and was seemingly permanent on this occasion, as when the courts returned to York again in 1322 they occupied the same buildings as in 1319-20.<sup>164</sup> The political significance of this move is clear. Even in this period, the exchequer seldom left its regular home in Westminster, but the move to York in order to ensure quick communication with the king was possible, making the city the general administrative centre of England.<sup>165</sup> The significance of York during this period is also demonstrated by the fact that although the exchequer seldom moved from Westminster, it moved to the city of York six times in total in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, although only the first four occasions are of relevance to this study. These visits were of six years between 1298 to 1304, five months from September 1319 to February 1320, one year and three months between April 1322 and July 1323 and two months between October and December 1327.<sup>166</sup> It is worth noting at this point, that despite the obvious benefits enjoyed by a city basking in its newfound status as England's *de facto* capital, the presence of the exchequer does seem to have brought some problems with it. As Dorothy Bowe, one of the few historians to specifically examine the movement of the exchequer to York, points out that 'while no doubt York thrived on Westminster's loss, even York sometimes suffered unpleasant results from the presence within her walls of what was in effect an administrative capital. Lawlessness seems to have been increased...' <sup>167</sup> It seems therefore, that even a seemingly positive aspect of the war for the region, could in fact negatively impact its people.

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<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>165</sup> D.M. Broome, 'Exchequer Migrations to York in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries' in A.G. Little & F.M. Powicke (eds.), *Essays in Medieval history presented to Thomas Frederick Tout* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1925), 291

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid*, 291-292

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid*, 300

In fact, the parliaments held in York in this period actually provided the site for some of the increased political dissent faced by Edward II in the late 1310s and 1320s. The political dissension against the king in England had by 1318 begun to completely undermine the English war effort, at a time in which the conflict was continuing to escalate.<sup>168</sup> The debacle surrounding Edward II's relationship with Piers Gaveston was, as mentioned briefly in the introduction, perhaps the defining aspect of the king's reign, and although opposition to the king was obviously not based entirely around this, it certainly played a part. The king's favouring of Gaveston saw the implementation of the Ordinances of 1311, an attempt to limit the power of the king.<sup>169</sup> This should of course also be viewed in the context of recent failures in the Scottish wars. Although the ordinances themselves were given at London, York provided the site for their repeal in 1322, shortly after the death of Thomas of Lancaster, the main leader of opposition to the king.<sup>170</sup> The opposition to the king itself not only saw parliaments dealing with the issue held in the North, but was in fact led in part by influential northern lords. The most obvious example of this is the role of the previously mentioned Thomas of Lancaster, whose refusal to attend the council at Nottingham on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July in 1317 almost sparked open civil war.<sup>171</sup> The considerable political strife in England must certainly have hampered the English war effort, and much of this opposition to the king came from and took place in the North. The political situation in England had begun to effect the war effort directly in 1314 when the Chronicle of Lanercost records that upon Edward's attempts to raise an army, '...the Earl [Thomas] of Lancaster and the other English earls who were of his party remained at home with their men...'<sup>172</sup> The Chronicle is a northern English record covering the period 1272-1346, originating at Lanercost near Carlisle, and appears to have been written as a

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<sup>168</sup> A. King & C. Eddy, *England and Scotland*, 34-35

<sup>169</sup> 'The New Ordinances, 1311' in H. Rothwell (ed.), *English historical documents: 1189-1327*, 527

<sup>170</sup> 'Statute of York, repealing the Ordinances of 1311 (1322)' in H. Rothwell (ed.), *English historical documents: 1189-1327*, 543-544

<sup>171</sup> S. Phillips, *Edward II*, 297

<sup>172</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 206

Franciscan chronicle, 'adapted and interpolated by a canon or canons of Lanercost.'<sup>173</sup> It seems that Thomas of Lancaster's rift with the king began almost as soon as Edward II had been crowned, with the Earl keen on imposing the terms of the 1311 ordinances on his cousin, and a desire to gain real power over the royal household as Steward of England.<sup>174</sup> The proximity of Lanercost to events in the North ensures that it remains one of the most useful and informative accounts of many of the important events of the period. Edward himself had perhaps not helped the situation by granting Gaveston lands in the North of England, in Yorkshire.

Lancaster's role also demonstrates the problems of ensuring northern lords remained loyal to the English crown during the wars. Although a first cousin of the king, Lancaster's vociferous opposition to Edward's rule and role in the execution of Piers Gaveston clearly demonstrates a significant rift between the two men. This began to spill over actively into the war with Scotland, beyond even the refusal to meet Edward's request for men. It seems that towards the end of his life, Lancaster was in communications with Robert Bruce in an attempt to reach a settlement with the Scottish king, despite hostilities being ongoing.<sup>175</sup> Had this succeeded, it is perhaps conceivable that Cumberland might have once more fallen under Scottish control as it had in the 1140s. English letters close from the time describe how discovered letters revealed a 'confederacy made by [Lancaster] with the Scots'.<sup>176</sup> In terms of the extent of this confederacy, these documents should be treated with some caution, given that copies of the letters fell into the hands of staunch Edward II ally the Archbishop of York, who promptly sent them to the king.<sup>177</sup> Lancaster was by this stage unable to attract much northern support, and as Michael Prestwich rightly states, it is striking that it was in fact

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<sup>173</sup> A.G. Little, *Franciscan papers, lists, and documents* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1943), 42

<sup>174</sup> M. Prestwich, *The three Edwards*, 81-82

<sup>175</sup> M. Brown, *The wars of Scotland*, 220

<sup>176</sup> Public Records Office, *Calendar of the Close Rolls: Edward II A.D. 1318-1323* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1895), 525

<sup>177</sup> S. Phillips, *Edward II*, 406

another northern lord who proved his downfall.<sup>178</sup> As mentioned above, northern lords dealing with the Scottish king is by no means an unique event. Cumberland had been Scottish as recently as the 1150s and the border had only been formally acknowledged by the Scots with the 1237 Treaty of York.<sup>179</sup> As mentioned above, the northern lords had gone as far as performing fealty to the Scottish king during the Baronial revolt against King John, and as such a powerful northern lord such as Lancaster seeking to side with a Scottish king would certainly not have been as unusual a circumstance as it might first appear, even without taking into consideration the deterioration of the relationship between the earl and his cousin, the king, by this point.

Lancaster, however, was not the only troublesome northern lord to act against Edward II during the latter stages of the war. Although Andrew Harclay, the Earl of Carlisle had actually been responsible for the defeat of Lancaster in 1322, for which he had been granted his earldom, this newfound favour with the king was not to last.<sup>180</sup> After the rout at Byland later the same year the earl initiated negotiations with the Scots of his own accord. The Chronicle of Lanercost describes how ‘...when the... Earl of Carlisle perceived that the King of England neither knew how to rule his realm nor was able to defend it against the Scots, who year by year laid it more and more waste... he chose the less of two evils... [and] on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January [1323] the said Earl of Carlisle went secretly to Robert the Bruce at Lochmaben and, after holding long conference and protracted discussion with him, at length to his own perdition, came to agreement with him...’<sup>181</sup> It seems that the Scottish king believed that the negotiations had been authorised by Edward himself, and only later discovered that this was certainly not the case. Perhaps predictably for a chronicle written so close to Carlisle, the Lanercost account is not overly complimentary towards Edward’s abilities, not actually criticising the earls actions at all simply remarking how the earl desired ‘peace... instead of so many homicides and arsons,

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<sup>178</sup> M. Prestwich, *The three Edwards: war and state in England, 1272-1377. 2nd Edition.* (London: Routledge, 2003), 82

<sup>179</sup> ‘1237 Treaty of York’ in G. Donaldson, *Scottish historical documents*, 33-34

<sup>180</sup> M. Prestwich, *The three Edwards*, 82

<sup>181</sup> H. Maxwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Lanercost*, 241

captivities, plunderings and raidings taking place every year.<sup>182</sup> It should be noted at this point that the severity of Edward's treatment, and praise laid upon Harclay, by the Lanercost Chronicle is perhaps in part due to the fact that Lanercost was within the Earldom of Carlisle, and as such Harclay would have been a familiar figure, and presumably popular for his role in defending the region from the Scots. The treaty negotiated with Bruce was brokered under the guise that it was a true peace that would be endorsed by the king, unlike the temporary truces addressed in the last chapter. The document places Harclay as the guarantor of its terms, closing with the statement that '... the king of Scotland will never make peace with the king of England, unless all those who are concerned in this agreement are included in his peace... the earl of Carlisle has sworn to maintain all those who are concerned in the agreement.'<sup>183</sup> Although the episode did not end well for the fledgling earl, with his capture and execution after having his title stripped from him following shortly afterwards, it must have still proved an embarrassing experience for Edward's ailing kingship.<sup>184</sup> This demonstrates how weak royal influence over the North had become under Edward II, with Edward unable to prevent the erosion of his authority by not only a powerful lord with royal blood such as Thomas of Lancaster, but also an earl newly created by the king himself. Although Edward's kingship was perhaps weakened already, the king had recently scored a significant victory with the capture and execution of Lancaster. The betrayal by a newly created northern lord would perhaps have been more understandable had the earl of Carlisle been from a powerful noble family, but as Michael Prestwich points out, the title was brand new, and Harclay simply too poor to maintain the elevated status of an earl.<sup>185</sup> In fact, Edward had to 'promise him [Harclay] lands worth 1,000 marks a year', something which had never happened before, although it would become common for later earldom creations under Edward III and his successors.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>183</sup> 'The Peace made with the Scots by Andrew Harclay' in E.L.G. Stones (ed.), *Anglo-Scottish relations*, 157

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*, 245

<sup>185</sup> M. Prestwich, *The three Edwards*, 131

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*

In both cases this inability to adequately control the northern lords entailed a collaboration with Scotland, hampering the war effort, although certainly by Harclay's treachery the war was almost certainly already lost. Although the political disaffection with Edward was a widespread phenomenon, the fact that it manifested itself in the northern lordships during a time of war, and despite the frequent meeting of parliament at York, clearly demonstrates that political strife in the region greatly hindered the English efforts. Harclay's treason demonstrates Edward's loose control over the North perhaps even better than the quarrel with Lancaster. Whilst Lancaster opposed Edward on a number of issues unrelated to the Scottish war, and his opposition to the king could thus perhaps be dismissed as a more widespread affair, the same cannot be said for Harclay. As explained above, Harclay was to a large extent a man of the king's own creation, recently elevated to an earldom that he would have found impossible to maintain without the financial contributions of the king. The earl had of course also just delivered Edward a final victory over Lancaster, and thus one might have presumed it safe to assume that Harclay would continue to support his king. It is perhaps testament then, to the situation in the North by this point that Harclay took it upon himself to negotiate this treaty. The episode is also intriguing in that despite his execution and disgrace, the treaty brokered by Harclay was essentially mirrored by Edward just a few months later in the negotiation of the thirteen year truce of 1323.<sup>187</sup> The Harclay case also demonstrates that even when the king appeared to have resorted authority over his northern lords, for example with the executions of Lancaster and Harclay, this was often not in fact the case. Arguably, by being forced to negotiate with the Scots after executing a northern lord for doing the same thing just months prior, it might be ventured that even after death a northern lord was able to dictate Edward's own policy.

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<sup>187</sup> S. Phillips, *Edward II*, 435

It would be unfair, however, to suggest that the problem of ensuring northern lords loyalties remained to the king was a problem particular to Edward II's reign and was not present in that of his father. As explained above, the North remained a politically volatile region, and was certainly distinct from the south politically and was perhaps less 'English' at its core. As briefly examined in the previous chapter, the first military act of the war saw northern English lord Robert de Ros throw in his lot with the Scots. De Ros, despite his brother's protestations, elected to take up arms against the king, supposedly due to his love for a Scottish woman. As a result of this, his brother sought the aid of the king, who at this point was nearing Newcastle.<sup>188</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, De Ros sprung an attack on an infantry force sent to the castle of Wark, forming the first engagement of the war. Michael Prestwich rightly states that this would have been a pleasant happening for the English, allowing them the propaganda victory of being the victims to a Scottish attack on English soil, rather than being the aggressors in Scotland.<sup>189</sup> However, whilst this is certainly correct, the fact that the attack was led by De Ros, a northern English lord, and not one of his Scottish counterparts must have been some cause for concern, and the incident certainly foreshadows the later betrayals by the likes of Harclay and Lancaster. This early episode of the war demonstrates that from the very beginning of the war, the loyalty of the English lords in the North could not be assumed, and although Edward I would not face too much trouble in this regard, as demonstrated above his son Edward II would by the 1320s have lost control of the northern lords almost entirely.

An interesting point that might also be heard here is the political importance of Berwick to the English during this period. As mentioned in the introduction, although not a part of England at this time, and indeed intended by Edward I as a more convenient capital of Scotland, Michael Prestwich's notion that Berwick was essentially an English town in Scotland certainly holds much credence.<sup>190</sup> In this context it is thus possible to view Berwick as

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<sup>188</sup> H. Rothwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, 271-3

<sup>189</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 470

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid*, 474

essentially an extension of northern England into Scotland in many ways, despite its retention of the formality of being within Scotland and the Scottish legal system. It seems that during the English occupation of this period, coins were minted at Berwick bearing the names and likenesses of the English kings.<sup>191</sup> The research of C.E. Blunt in the early twentieth century also raises the intriguing notion that some coins bearing Edward I's likeness curiously appear to have been minted during the Scottish occupation of the town in 1297-8, although this was perhaps an opportunistic attempt to pay their own troops having gained access to the coin making apparatus there.<sup>192</sup> Whatever the case, the minting of coins bearing Edward I and indeed then Edward II until the recapture of Berwick in 1318 is certainly a powerful political statement, as an assertion of English dominance and administration in the North. In addition to this, the capture of Berwick itself must have been a symbolic blow to the Scots, not only in terms of the loss of a vital trading port, but as a political and royal symbol of the Scottish kings. Berwick was the richest Royal Burgh of Scotland, and Scotland's wealthiest and most vital trading port.<sup>193</sup> The town had also been the site of both the Trinity and Michaelmas Scottish parliaments in 1292, the year in which Balliol took the Scottish throne.<sup>194</sup> The capture therefore represented a humiliating display of the English kings superior power, targeting a symbol of Scottish royal power and wealth and slaughtering its inhabitants before essentially recreating it as a model English town.<sup>195</sup>

Indeed, the use and prevalence of royal symbols and structures in the North was an important factor in the region's political role. Royal castles such as those at Berwick, Carlisle and Newcastle served not only as crucial military fortifications as will be discussed in the next chapter, but also as powerful symbols of English royal power in the region, both to the English and the Scottish. One example of this can be seen in the granting of a royal charter to Kingston

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<sup>191</sup> C.E. Blunt, 'The Mint of Berwick-On-Tweed Under Edward I, II, and III', *The Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society: fifth series*, 11, 41 (1931), 32-34

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid*, 30

<sup>193</sup> M. Brown, *The wars of Scotland*, 175

<sup>194</sup> H.G. Richardson & G.O. Sayles, *The English parliament in the Middle Ages*, XIII 316

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid*

upon Hull in 1299, earmarking the port as an important port of supply for the wars, which will be discussed further in the next chapter. This represents a political as well as a pragmatic act. The charter granted the town the status of a free borough, and all the privileges and freedoms that came along with this.<sup>196</sup> This encouraged increased settlement on the north bank of the Humber.<sup>197</sup> Royal properties in the north of England also played a role in housing important prisoners of war during the conflict. Although as has previously been addressed, the English acted with ‘unusual savagery’ during the conflict, there were still politically important prisoners taken. After the capture of the ladies of Robert Bruce’s court at the siege of Kildrummy castle along with the Earl of Atholl by the future Edward II, this savagery was evident. The Earl of Atholl and other captured magnates were executed, and even the women were treated more harshly than custom dictated. However, whilst Bruce’s sister Mary was confined in an open cage, his wife received more conventional treatment.<sup>198</sup> Contemporary orders dealing with the treatment of prisoners detail how Robert Bruce’s wife Elizabeth, who is of course styled as the ‘wife of the Earl of Carrick’ in the document, was sent to the royal manor of Burstwick, in Holderness, where she would remain until 1308.<sup>199</sup> Burstwick had been granted to Edward I’s wife Eleanor, in recompense for some of the lands of her dowry in 1280.<sup>200</sup> Indeed, in 1308 Elizabeth wrote to the newly crowned Edward II complaining that the bailiffs of Holderness had not sufficiently provided for her, presumably hoping that the new king might be more accommodating than his father.<sup>201</sup> Elizabeth would finally be exchanged for English prisoners in 1315 during Edward II’s reign.<sup>202</sup> The use of Burstwick of course

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<sup>196</sup> *Charter of 27 Edward I (1299)* [Royal Charter]. Charters and Letters Patent granted to Hull. C BRC /1A. Hull City Archives, Hull History Centre.

<sup>197</sup> K.J. Allison (ed.), *A History of the county of York East Riding: Volume 1 the City of Kingston Upon Hull* (London: Victoria County History, 1969), 200

<sup>198</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 508

<sup>199</sup> F. Palgrave, *Documents and records illustrating the history of Scotland, vol 1*. [ebook], 357-359

<sup>200</sup> *Patent Roll of Edward I – Letters patent granting to Eleanor, Queen of England (1280)* [Patent Roll]. Documents relating to the Seignory of Holderness. U DCC/2/23. Hull University Archives, Hull History Centre.

<sup>201</sup> *Elizabeth de Brus, to Edward II: the bailiffs of Holderness have not provided for her, (1308)* [Letter]. Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland. SC 1/15/135. The National Archives, Kew.

<sup>202</sup> M. Penman, *Robert the Bruce: king of the Scots*, 158

demonstrates that the East Riding was at this point safely away from active conflict, despite continuing raids into the northernmost counties.

It seems, therefore, that the North not only served a number of important political functions for the kingdom of England during this period, but it also provided the site for several of the landmark political events of the period. In playing host to the resolution of the so called 'great cause', the region became inextricably linked with the English involvement in Scotland from its onset, and went on to play host to various parliaments throughout the period. The region continued to prove difficult to control, particularly for Edward II who faced challenges to his authority throughout his reign from northern lords, and was unable to placate a region already enjoying a degree of autonomy through its marcher style governance. The region also gained administrative significance during the period, and although the peak of this did not last long, York existed as a de facto capital of England during the latter years of Edward I's reign, when the chancery and exchequer moved to the city in order to better sustain the war effort. Sites in the North also provided powerful symbols, both for the English and the Scottish, particularly in Berwick Upon Tweed, where the town's status as a Royal Burgh and its capture by the English contributed to its value to both sides. The North, therefore, seems to have been a region both of great political importance to the Kingdom of England in the context of a war with Scotland, yet the region had not yet ceased to be a problem for the English kings, particularly when it came to dealing with its lords.

### Chapter Three – Supplying and financing the war

In addition to its newfound political importance, the North naturally also played a role in supplying the campaign, and was of course the region through which any supplies travelling by land had to pass. The region's geographical proximity to the war ensured a prolonged involvement in the supply of the war, be that via actively providing goods or simply providing the site of their transition to the front. Often the increased political importance of the North went hand in hand with increased supply responsibilities, particularly in terms of the distribution of money and supplies.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the North became the centre of the king's own personal supply distribution chain, particularly in terms of the activities of the king's wardrobe when the king himself was in the North. The king's paymaster, John de Weston, was based in Berwick upon Tweed for a time, making the newly rebuilt town the centre of royal financial supply of both the North and the Kingdom of England as a whole.<sup>203</sup> This is demonstrated by the fact that receipts from lands in Scotland were sent to de Weston in Berwick, during this time, for example a statement of the receipts of de Weston between 1301 and 1304 details his involvement in paying the men involved in the campaign from the town, and in collecting the revenue of Scottish lands for the king there.<sup>204</sup> Although it has already been highlighted previously that the movement of the king's finances to the North, and indeed the exchequer and the wardrobe to York, served a crucial political function, it should not be forgotten that these are also essentially the instruments of financial supply. During this period, the chancery and exchequer were of course the key instruments of royal finance, along with the king's wardrobe which as has already been stated was also in the North for much of the period. While post-Conquest kings of England had always utilised the apparatus of the English state to extract revenue for their wars in France and the British Isles, the role of domestic financial institutions and royal arms became more important than ever under the spectacular demands

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<sup>203</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 512

<sup>204</sup> '1301-1304. – Statement of the Receipts of John de Weston, Clerk, arising from Lands, etc., in Scotland.' In J. Stevenson (ed.), *Documents illustrative of the history of Scotland*, 428

of Edward I's war machine. Naturally, this led to conflict with his political community and throughout his reign Edward I had made a number of financial arrangements to circumvent the need to obtain taxes from a sometimes-hostile parliament, perhaps most importantly through his relationship with an Italian banking family, the Ricciardi of Lucca. In return for constant access to 'credit on demand', Edward had handed the revenues from wool customs to the Ricciardi, in what Marc Morris describes as a 'simple yet brilliant arrangement', ensuring Edward would always have immediate access to money when needed, without having to go through the rigmarole of negotiating and awaiting new taxes.<sup>205</sup> As simple and brilliant as this may have appeared in Edward's early reign, Edward's constant warring, expenditure and significant debts made the system unviable in the long term. By 1294 the king's relationship with the Ricciardi was over, and although he had developed a relationship with the Frescobaldi to replace them, the king found his credit rating irreparably damaged.<sup>206</sup> Public pressure had also forced Edward to cancel the judicial eyre in 1294, cutting off the very lucrative profits of justice at the same time.<sup>207</sup> Although Edward had perhaps intended to resume the eyre at some point during his reign, this did not happen before his death in 1307 and the general eyre was never really revived by any of the king's successors.<sup>208</sup> This ensured that by the time the exchequer moved to York in 1298, Edward I's finances were more heavily reliant on traditional sources of revenue such as county farms and issues, as well as taxation, and thus the role of the exchequer was perhaps more important than it had been for some time. Although in 1297 the financial situation was poor, due to military overspending in Scotland and Flanders, the presence of the exchequer in York still ensured that the city was the centre of financial distribution for the kingdom for a time, and enjoyed the political importance it brought.

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<sup>205</sup> M. Morris, *A great and terrible king*, 123

<sup>206</sup> N. Barratt 'Finance on a Shoestring: The Exchequer in the Thirteenth Century' in A. Jobson (ed.), *English government in the thirteenth century* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2004), 81

<sup>207</sup> C. Burt, 'The general demise of the General Eyre in the reign of Edward I', *The English Historical Review*, 120, 485 (2005), 1

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid*, 12-14

Of course, northern ports played an important role in supplying the war in Scotland. The granting of a Royal Charter to Hull in 1299, earmarking it as a favoured and important port, was certainly inspired by a need for a port of supply in the North, but one far enough south that it would not be under direct threat from skirmishing or raids. The charter establishing Hull not only sets out the freedoms to be enjoyed by the burgesses of Hull, but the fact that the charter is granted is a clear indication of the city's importance in terms of supply.<sup>209</sup> The establishment of Hull as an important port is demonstrated by the order of two barges to be sent to Scotland from Hull around the time of the charter's granting, in either 1298 or 1299.<sup>210</sup> This demonstrates the use of the town as not only a port of supply in terms of sending goods to Scotland, but also as a site for making the vessels to carry supplies. Although of course not all of the exports or imports coming into the port of Hull during this period would have directly related to Scotland, it is clear that the royal charter helped to create a thriving and busy mercantile port. Merchants during this period could expect their commercial world to range from Iceland to North Africa and the Middle East, and certainly had a central role in the medieval urban society.<sup>211</sup> During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Hull was an important wool port, having been founded by the monks at nearby Meaux Abbey for that purpose before being acquired by the king. According to Jenny Kermode, the wool exports of Hull throughout the middle ages closely followed the national trend, and the wool exports during the First War of Scottish independence did fluctuate somewhat.<sup>212</sup> For example in the period 1300-5, the total number of sacks of wool exported from Hull averaged 5,514 per year, rising to 6,359 in 1305-1310.<sup>213</sup> However after 1310 the yearly average dropped, to 4,718 sacks

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<sup>209</sup> *Charter of 27 Edward I (1299)* [Royal Charter]. Charters and Letters Patent granted to Hull. C BRC /1A. Hull City Archives, Hull History Centre.

<sup>210</sup> *Cost of two barges made at Hull and sent to Scotland* [Exchequer Record] Records of the Exchequer, and its related bodies, with those of the Office of First Fruits and Tenths, and the Court of Augmentations. E 101/7/25, The National Archives, Kew

<sup>211</sup> J. Kermode, *Medieval merchants: York, Beverley and Hull in the later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid*, 166-167

<sup>213</sup> This includes both Denizen and Alien exports. Average per year is the quinquennial average for the period. *Ibid*, 167

in 1310-1315, to 3,465 between 1315-20, and then again to 2,903 sacks between 1320 and 1325.<sup>214</sup> Much of this wool would have been destined for the cloth making towns of Flanders, Brabant and Artois and trade with the low countries made up a large part of the port's outgoings during this period.<sup>215</sup> The downturn thus preceded the great famine of 1315-1317, which, though it would most likely have played a part, cannot be said to have been its primary cause. Instead, the timing clearly demonstrates that as the war in Scotland began to turn against the English during the reign of Edward II, the exports from the port of Hull dropped, with Scottish armies raiding further south than they had before during these years of export decline. As the war ended in 1328, it seems that exports began to rise once again, with the period 1325-30 seeing an increased yearly average of 3,598. Although there are of course undoubtedly other factors which impacted the wool trade aside from the war, it would certainly seem that the turning of the war against England certainly reduced the export value and productivity of its northern ports. This would imply that the North itself was less productive, at least in terms of wool, likely due to the destruction of pasture land and farmland by Scottish raiding into Yorkshire in the late 1310s and 1320s. The recovery of wool exports between 1325 and 1330 certainly suggests that the Scottish raiding had a detrimental impact on the resources of the North, given that it coincides with a period of relative calm. Although the war would continue on until the signing of the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton in 1328, little hostility occurred during the years between 1325 and 1328, other than the brief Scottish foray into the North that brought the English to the negotiating table. The thirteen year truce signed in 1323, although an uneasy peace that was on occasion broken by the English at sea, ensured that the wide scale raiding and invasions of the preceding years did not occur until the truce was broken by the Scots in 1328.<sup>216</sup> The obvious conclusion to be drawn

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<sup>214</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>215</sup> K.J. Allison (ed.), *A History of the county of York East Riding: Volume 1 the City of Kingston Upon Hull*, 184

<sup>216</sup> Whilst Edward II claimed to have honoured this agreement, English 'privateer' attacks on Scottish merchant ships were still rife. T.J. Dowds, *The origins of Scotland's national identity* (Rothersthorpe: Paragon Publishing, 2014), 59-61

from this is that the abatement of raiding during this period allowed for some level of economic recovery in the North, and the brief resumption of war in 1328 was simply too short to have the longer term impacts of the sustained raiding of earlier years.

The port of Hull was directly involved in supplying the campaign, being utilised on multiple occasions both to supply the actual campaigning in Scotland, and as previously mentioned to supply ships. One instance of the port providing supplies to Edward I's campaigning can be seen in 1297, two years prior to the granting of the royal charter, and in the infancy of the war in Scotland. In this year, Edward ordered for provisions to be sent from Hull to Newcastle for an expedition to deal with the 'Scottish rebellion'.<sup>217</sup> In fact, the town was also used as a port of supply for Edward's 1297-1298 Flanders campaign, and is naturally the obvious port from which to supply any campaigns in the low countries given its location on the Humber. This of course demonstrated by the fact that, as mentioned above, much of Hull's wool exports would have been destined for Flanders. The port would continue to play an important role until the end of the war, with ships again leaving the town for Scotland in the final years of the war.<sup>218</sup>

The royal charter granted to Hull in 1299 also set out that the port town should be granted 'two weekly markets... and one fair there in every year, to continue for thirty days.'<sup>219</sup> This of course is of interest to those who attend the event in its modern guise of a fun fair, but it is also an important insight into the city during this period. Fairs during this period would have provided an opportunity for more specialised commerce than the more regular markets, and often provided a marketplace for more exotic goods, with traders visiting from further afield.<sup>220</sup> In northern England during the thirteenth century one might expect to find traders from as far afield as Florence, Lübeck, Cologne and Brabant.<sup>221</sup> Of course fairs would bring in

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<sup>217</sup> '1297. Oct 96 – Provisions required for the expedition into Scotland' in J. Stevenson (ed.), *Documents illustrative of the history of Scotland*, 239-240

<sup>218</sup> MacPherson, D. *Rotuli Scotiae*, 210

<sup>219</sup> *Charter of 27 Edward I (1299)* [Royal Charter]. Charters and Letters Patent granted to Hull. C BRC /1A. Hull City Archives, Hull History Centre.

<sup>220</sup> N. McCord & R. Thompson, *The northern counties from AD 1000*, 56

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid*, 462

income through taxation, which would certainly have contributed financially.<sup>222</sup> The presence of fairs in general, and of course of the fair in Hull, tends to reflect a growing need for more specialised channels of trade, and would have attracted 'more complex patterns of exchange between more distant regions and localities'.<sup>223</sup> The provision of a fair at the town then seems to suggest that the region was to some degree thriving as a trade hub at this time.

The ports in the North were not the only ports involved in the supply of the war. The cinque ports in the south of England were prominent, as they so often were in this period. The ports were mandatorily bound to serve the king for a period of time, and Edward I had taken advantage of this in his Welsh wars, although their obligation wasn't indefinite.<sup>224</sup> The Cinque ports provided naval support on a number of occasions during this period, although curiously their ship service, that is the days service and number of ships they were bound to provide the king, was rarely actually called upon after 1327.<sup>225</sup> Edward II, and certainly Edward I, did not share the reluctance of Edward III to call upon this service, however. In 1322, for example, Edward II had ten vessels from the Cinque Ports serving in his Scottish campaign.<sup>226</sup> Despite the prominence of the Cinque Ports during this period, the role of the northern ports should not be underestimated, and indeed other ports were often used in conjunction with the northern ports, with the Cinque ports usually contributing more to campaigns against the French than the Scottish during this period.<sup>227</sup> In the 1300 campaign although the Cinque Ports were pressed into service as always, the ships procured there and in Ireland were largely used to transport supplies from Carlisle's port of Skinburness into Galloway.<sup>228</sup> Northern ports were often utilised in this manner, as a port of receipt for goods from elsewhere.

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<sup>222</sup> S. R. Epstein, 'Regional Fairs, Institutional Innovation, and Economic Growth in Late Medieval Europe', *The Economic History Review*, 47, 3 (1994), 470

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid*, 462

<sup>224</sup> M. Morris, *A great and terrible king*, 150

<sup>225</sup> C.L. Lambert, 'Naval Service and the Cinque Ports, 1322-1453' in G.P. Baker et al. (eds.) *Military communities in late Medieval England: essays in honour of Andrew Ayton* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2018), 215

<sup>226</sup> C.L. Lambert, 'The Contribution of the Cinque Ports to the Wars of Edward II and Edward III: New Methodologies and Estimates' in R. Gorski (ed.) *Roles of the sea in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2012), 63

<sup>227</sup> C.L. Lambert, 'The Contribution of the Cinque Ports', 69-70

<sup>228</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 486

In the same way that supplies from elsewhere were sent to Northern ports such as Skinburness and Newcastle, supplies sent over land from other regions of the English kings' domains also often made their way to the North before travelling on to Scotland, either passing through or being sent to the North first to be assembled and gathered and then sent on to Scotland. This can be seen in an account of James de Molyn's purchases in 1301. De Molyn had been sent by the treasurer of the king's wardrobe, John de Drokenesforde, to purchase a variety of supplies for the war in Scotland, and these accounts record the money given to him and the prices paid for the various arms and supplies.<sup>229</sup> Although it seems much of the supplies purchased by de Molyns, were not in fact bought in the North, the document records that the bulk of these purchases were sent to York before being sent on to Scotland, detailing a cost of 13 shillings and 6 pence for 'two hackneys hired from London to York, to take two loads of quarrels...'<sup>230</sup> De Moleyns is recorded as having purchased crossbows, cords for the crossbows, belts, the aforementioned quarrels, and a barrel in which to pack some of the crossbows and quarrels for transport. Much of this also seemingly ended up at York, with the document going on to record that money was also paid out for 'the expenses of one lad hired to go with the said quarrels [on the hackneys] and to convey them to York to be trimmed' and also 'for the cost of two carts, with their horses, remaining at London for eight days... until they could be laden' before these were loaded and also sent on to York at further cost.<sup>231</sup>

After the capture of Berwick in 1296, although the town's castle was a formidable structure the town itself seems to have lacked any significant defences, having no walls or earthworks of any real strength.<sup>232</sup> In response to this, Edward I sent orders to the Sheriff of Northumberland instructing that he should send 'very many ditchers, masons, carpenters and

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<sup>229</sup> '130. [Oct 20?] – Account of James de Molyns for the Purchase of Stores for the Scottish War.' J. Stevenson (ed.), *Documents illustrative of the history of Scotland*, 438-440

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid*, 439

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid*, 440

<sup>232</sup> R.A. Brown et al. (eds.), *The history of the King's works: volume II the Middle Ages*, 563

smiths', and ordered the sheriff to 'cause all such suitable artificers or workmen who he can find in his bailwick to come to the king at Berwick-on-Tweed with their tools for the exercise of the crafts aforesaid.'<sup>233</sup> This seems to have culminated, according to Walter of Guisborough, in a deep ditch on the north side of Berwick, 80 feet wide and 40 feet deep.<sup>234</sup> Earthen banks were also constructed around the town, and topped with a wooden palisade that it seems should've been replaced with a stone wall, however this was not completed, supposedly due to the neglect of Hugh of Cressingham, the treasurer of Scotland.<sup>235</sup> In addition to contributing to defensive endeavours such as fortification construction, craftsmen were also sent from the North to aid to active offensive operations to lend their expertise. For example, during the 1304 siege of Stirling Castle, Edward I not only called for forty crossbowmen to be sent from York as explained in chapter 1, but also commanded the sheriff of York to send forty carpenters, again 'without delay'.<sup>236</sup> Presumably these carpenters were to assist with the preparations and construction of siege weaponry and ladders for any planned assault on the castle, which fell to the English shortly afterwards in July, which at the time seemed to represent the a final capitulation on the part of the Scots to Edward's rule.<sup>237</sup>

Even where the North was not responsible for the actual supply of the war itself, it was often the case that the North would be the point at which supplies arrived or travelled through. Important strongholds such as Carlisle and Newcastle were often the destinations for supplies arriving from other regions of the kingdom, or in the case of Carlisle from the English crown's Lordship of Ireland. As mentioned previously, during this period Carlisle had acquired a role as the centre of distribution for royal finances in the North. As explained in chapter one, Carlisle also often provided the site for the mustering of armies for Scottish campaigns, and as

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<sup>233</sup> Public Record Office, *Calendar of the Close Rolls, Edward I: Vol 3, A.D. 1288-1296* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1904), 477

<sup>234</sup> H. Rothwell (ed.), *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, 275

<sup>235</sup> R.A Brown et al. [eds], *The history of the King's works: volume II the Middle Ages*, 563-564

<sup>236</sup> '1304. June 40. – Crossbowmen and Carpenters to bne sent to Siege of Stirling Castle.' in J. Stevenson (ed.), *Documents illustrative of the history of Scotland*, 484-485

<sup>237</sup> R.R. Davies, *The first English empire*, 172

such also often became the point at which supplies would be delivered to from elsewhere within the realms of the English crown.

During the war, the North of England, particularly the most southerly counties discussed here such as Yorkshire, of course continued to provide taxes to the crown, contributing financially to the war effort as well as materially. Quo Warranto rolls from 1293-1294 for Yorkhire are useful in demonstrating the the situation in the region in the years immediately preceding the war, with the records showing that at this point the borough of Scarborough, which would of course later fall victim to Scottish raiding, was annually expected to contribute £66 to the king's exchequer at Michaelmas in exchange for their rights and liberties as burgesses.<sup>238</sup> After the defeat at Byland in 1322, the De la Pole brothers of Hull provided the king with an 'aid' from the burgesses of the town of around £9 which was received at Burstwick.<sup>239</sup> William de la Pole once again provided money to the king, this time to the young Edward III for the ill-fated attempt to confront the Scottish invaders in 1327. De la Pole advanced a loan of £4000 for the campaign, although as the bill for the Hainault mercenaries alone stretched to £50,000 this can hardly have scratched the surface of the expenditures incurred.<sup>240</sup> That aside, this remains a significant amount of money coming from an influential northern figure. Merchants from the ports were expected to provide credit for the king's war effort, and this became particularly important as the Kingdom of England's finances in the late 1320s all but collapsed after years of civil war and political infighting.<sup>241</sup>

The burgesses of towns such as Hull were also expected to raise the money for their own defence, as has been briefly mentioned in chapter one when discussing the building of fortifications in northern towns after 1318. However, on some occasions the cost of defences and war simply outstripped what could be raised from local sources. For example, for the

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<sup>238</sup> B. English (ed.), *Yorkshire hundred and quo warranto rolls* (Leeds: Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1996), 279-280

<sup>239</sup> A.S. Harvey, *The De La Pole family*, 28

<sup>240</sup> See chapter 1 for further discussion of the Hainault mercenaries.

A.S. Harvey, *The De La Pole family*, 28

<sup>241</sup> C. McNamee, *The wars of the Bruces*, 207

previously discussed construction of defences commissioned in Hull cost a total of £347 in the early 1320s.<sup>242</sup> Of this, the burgesses of the town were only able to raise £140 from amongst themselves, with a further £61 raised from the murgage levied. This of course still leaves a shortfall of £146 to be made up from other sources. The fortification of the town was its major expense between 1321 and 1324.<sup>243</sup>

Even seemingly advantageous arrangements such as the presence of the exchequer in York brought additional cost to the North. Although the expense of transporting the exchequer to Westminster in 1298 seems to have brought little expense directly to the city of York and its surrounding area, beyond the readying of the castle and other facilities for its arrival, the same cannot be said for the journey back to Westminster.<sup>244</sup> The arrangements made by the king the first time the exchequer had to be returned to Westminster are recorded in letters close from 8<sup>th</sup> November 1304, which command that 'The war of Scotland having come to an end, the king wills that his exchequer shall be transferred to Westminster, and as it is necessary that he should have horses and carts... he orders and requests [the abbot and convent of Selby] to aid him with a cart with four horses and their harness and with two men to take the cart thither at the king's expense and to bring it back again, so that they shall be at York at the latest on Friday before St. Nicholas next, certifying the treasurer and barons of the exchequer of what they shall cause to be done in this matter.'<sup>245</sup> The document then goes on to list a number of other Abbots in the area who have been sent the same instructions. Although this does suggest that at least some of the expense was repaid to the abbots by the king, the fact remains that the abbots still had to come up with these carts and men, and thus were without them themselves for this period. For this same journey, the casks required for the journey

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<sup>242</sup> These defences are discussed in greater detail in chapter 1.

<sup>243</sup> R. Horrox (ed.), *Selected rentals and accounts of medieval Hull: 1293-1528*, 23

<sup>244</sup> D.M. Broome, 'Exchequer Migrations to York', 299

<sup>245</sup> Public Record Office, *Calendar of the close rolls: Edward I A.D. 1302-1307* [ebook] (London: Mackie & Co. LD., 1908), 223-224

were provided by the sheriffs of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.<sup>246</sup> The presence of the exchequer in York however must have provided something of an economic boost to the region, when the county's resources were not required to send it back to Westminster. The situation in Westminster when the exchequer was elsewhere certainly suggests that this would be the case. In this period, the chancery and exchequer were essentially Westminster's sole reason for existence, and its only real means of financial subsistence.<sup>247</sup> In later decades when the exchequer moved to York between 1333 and 1338, the financial effect on Westminster was so crippling that the city found itself unable to pay its assessed taxation, and a new assessment had to be made.<sup>248</sup> Although later than the period being examined here, this is still a startling insight into the economic boon that the exchequer surely must have brought the city of York, particularly during its extended six year stay between 1298 and 1304.

The northern counties certainly did provide food and supplies for the war during active campaigning, although this is not to suggest that the North was by any means the only source of supply for English armies. During the 1300 campaign, it seems that the English army found themselves short of supplies, having traversed through territory in the Scottish borders 'deliberately wasted' by the Scots.<sup>249</sup> It seems that relatively little had been spent on maintaining naval supply routes for the campaign, with a total of £1,551 being spent on sailors wages in total, which includes the cost of returning Edward I from Flanders and the wages for the actual campaign itself.<sup>250</sup> As Prestwich describes, the much needed supplies to support the main English army were consequently sought from northern England, with specific order for grain to be collected from Yorkshire, and royal clerks despatched to Lancashire.<sup>251</sup> Although clerks were also despatched to more southerly counties, and similar grain orders prepared for

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<sup>246</sup> The wagons would have travelled through Lincolnshire immediately after leaving Yorkshire on their journey back to Westminster, and thus it seems the county's geographical proximity justified its involvement. D.M. Broome 'Exchequer Migrations to York', 299

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid*, 300

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>249</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 480

<sup>250</sup> *1298 Mich. – 1299 Mich.* (1298-9) [Pipe Roll] Records of the Exchequer, and its related bodies, with those of the Office of First Fruits and Tenths, and the Court of Augmentations, E 372/144, The National Archives, Kew. Cited in M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 480

<sup>251</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 480

Lincolnshire, it is perhaps telling that the two specific orders for grain came from counties relatively geographically close to the conflict, yet far enough south that they were free from risk of harrying and skirmishing by Scottish forces.<sup>252</sup> It seems clear in this light, and of course it is perfectly logical, that the North would be the ideal location to draw supplies from at short notice in a crisis, given the geographical proximity and thus reduced travel time for any supplies to reach a poorly supplied army, whether that be the longer route over land or at sea through northern ports.

The town of Berwick was by no means spared the responsibility of supplying the war effort, even relatively shortly after its capture. In 1298, orders were sent to Berwick for a variety of goods to be 'put into a ship at Berwick and sent from thence in the same to Maiden Castle [Edinburgh] there to be placed apart in the castle, so that the same things may be despatched wherever the king has appointed.'<sup>253</sup> This is an example of a northern port being used to supply the English garrisons in Scotland, and the fact that the items were then to be despatched from Edinburgh elsewhere shows that the North continued to play an important role in supply even in instances where supplies were seemingly routine rather than an emergency request. The supplies sent on this occasion included 60 quarters of wheat, 120 quarters of malt, two barrels of wine to be used in mass, 20 oxen, 10,000 herrings, 1000 dried fish and 10 quarters of salt.<sup>254</sup> This is clearly a significant amount of supplies, and as such is demonstrative of the North's ability to produce and supply on a significant scale, and indeed of the English kings' willingness to use the Northern ports to supply other towns in both the North and Scotland. Berwick being just 56 miles from Edinburgh, this is perhaps also indicative that the town was certainly now functioning as an English town or else the supplies could just have easily have been sent from Berwick directly to their final destinations. The quantity

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<sup>252</sup> Although Lincolnshire is outside of the geographical boundaries of 'the North' as defined by this study, it immediately borders the region to the South and as such its geographical 'northernness' compared to more southerly counties is relevant. *Ibid*, 480

<sup>253</sup> '[1298.] Stores sent from Berwick to Leith for the use of the English Garrisons in Scotland.' in J. Stevenson (ed.), *Documents illustrative of the history of Scotland*, 292

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid*, 292

provided certainly suggests that the English were confident that their possession of the town was secure. Another example of the North taking a role in supplying the king's efforts can be seen in 1304. Although not an instance of supply to direct conflict, an order was issued from Dunfermline that year to Newcastle, ordering a provision of fish to be made there and then sent by the way of Berwick to St. Andrews.<sup>255</sup> Edward himself was present at St. Andrews in 1304, and convened a parliament there at which he received the submission of 130 Scottish landowners, having received the allegiance of John Comyn in February the same year.<sup>256</sup> Presumably then, the order of fish was to provide food for Edward's host and to cater the parliament. This demonstrates that even as active conflict was assumed to be winding down, the North continued to play an important role in not only military operations, but also in the facilitation of political and diplomatic summits.

Of course, the situation in the far North, counties such as Cumberland and Northumberland, was certainly different to that in the more southerly counties such as Yorkshire and Lancashire. As discussed in chapter one, the northernmost counties found themselves exposed to skirmishing and direct involvement in the war far more often than those further south, although this is not to say that there was no active conflict in these regions. Particularly during the reign of Edward II, increased raiding into northern England saw the widespread wasting and destruction of farm and pastureland. However, this is not to say that the more southerly counties such as Yorkshire were always a steadfast and reliable source of materials and food. These regions too came under attack occasionally by the Scots, particularly as the war turned. The *Anonimalle Chronice* describes how in 1315 there were 'great floods' in England, and makes special mention of the North, describing how 'the walls of the Greyfriars at York collapsed because of the water about the feast of St Margaret [20 July].'<sup>257</sup> This flooding, combined with a misjudged response from Edward II, led to a shortage

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<sup>255</sup> *Letter from Dunfermline ordering provision at Newcastle of fish, to be sent by way of Berwick, to St. Andrews*, Chancery Miscellanea, C 47/22/3/83. The National Archives, Kew

<sup>256</sup> M. Morris, *a great and terrible king*, 342

<sup>257</sup> W.R. Childs & J. Taylor *The Anonimalle Chronicle*, 88-89

of food and an increase in prices, the king having 'foolishly decreed assises and certain prices of certain provisions which could in no way be enforced and upheld.'<sup>258</sup> To make matters worse, the poor weather continued and further rains caused crop failure throughout the entirety of England, and the chronicle goes on to describe that the ensuing inflated wheat prices lasted 'continuously for three years'.<sup>259</sup> This crop failure struck at perhaps the worst possible time, in the years immediately after the catastrophic English defeat at Bannockburn. Although it would be a tenuous to say the least to suggest that the crop failure was a large factor in the inability of the English to recover from defeat at Bannockburn, it certainly cannot have helped matters in the aftermath. The defeat at Bannockburn had exposed the North to the Scots, and Robert Bruce had certainly seized the initiative. Raiding was no longer restricted to the March, and in 1314 Edward Bruce had led a Scottish host as far south as Yorkshire, driving off animals and burning barns.<sup>260</sup> It is in this context that the crop failures should be viewed. Whilst the failure certainly affected the whole of England, it must have hit the North especially hard, given that the region was still reeling from plundering and raiding by hostile armies, only to then be devastated once more by natural forces. This would undoubtedly have reduced the regions ability to provide supplies, either at short or advance notice, to any English army or military campaign.

Although this has been touched upon in chapter 1 when dealing with the actual war in the North, it is also worth mentioning that in addition to its role in providing vital supplies such as food for English armies north of the border, the North also played a role in providing siege weaponry and support. To suggest that this was simply a northern responsibility would be misleading, given the involvement of other locations elsewhere. For example, in the 1303 campaign the crossing of the Firth of Forth by the English army was supported by several floating bridges, constructed at King's Lynn in Norfolk.<sup>261</sup> Although it is claimed in Langtoft's

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<sup>258</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid*, 90-91

<sup>260</sup> M. Brown, *The wars of Scotland*, 211

<sup>261</sup> M. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 499

chronicle that these bridges were not needed in the event, it still remains an example of the fact that supporting materials need not necessarily originate from the North.<sup>262</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that the North was not the only region providing this support does not negate its role, and the North certainly played an important role once again. During the siege of Stirling in 1304, the siege train was assembled at Berwick, demonstrating the town's strategic importance also made it a crucial location at which a siege could be prepared or supplied from. This demonstrates that where the North did not supply the weaponry itself, it was often the place where the requested weaponry and equipment was brought together. This was also the case in 1301, when, as mentioned in chapter 1, crossbows sourced from London and the south of England were sent on the York before being sent on North to Scotland.<sup>263</sup> During this siege the more specialised elements of the weaponry utilised were sent for from York. The siege of Stirling Castle is notable in its potential use of some sort of gunpowder based weapon on the part of the English, which it has been suggested that in some quarters might have been an early use of guns, although this seems unlikely.<sup>264</sup> It seems similarly unlikely that the mixture made was true 'Greek Fire' as referenced in the order for its materials, given how closely this secret had been guarded by the Byzantines, but it is likely more akin to that than any use of firearms. The order for the materials commands that '[the recipient] cause to be provided in the city of York a horseload of cotton thread, one load of quick sulphur, and another of Saltpetre, and a load of arrows well feathered and ironed...'.<sup>265</sup> This again demonstrates the North being used to supply sieges in Scotland.

It is clear then that the North played an important role in the finance and supply of the war, from hosting the kingdoms financial institutions in York for large swathes of the period, to providing provisions and supplies for campaigning in Scotland. The region and its capacity to

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<sup>262</sup> T. Wright (ed.) *The chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft*, 344-46

<sup>263</sup> '1301 [Oct 20?] Account of James de Molyns for the Purchase of Stores for the Scottish War.' In J. Stevenson (ed.) *Documents illustrative of the history of Scotland*, 438-440

<sup>264</sup> D.H. Caldwell, 'The Scots and Guns' in A. King & M. Penman (eds.), *England and Scotland in the fourteenth century: new perspectives* (York: Boydell & Brewer, 2007), 65

<sup>265</sup> '[1304.] March 31 – King Edward orders Materials for Greek Fire for the Siege of Stirling Castle.' In J. Stevenson, *Documents illustrative of the history of Scotland*, 479-480

supply both financially and in terms of physical goods was certainly harmed by the extensive raiding of the 1320s, but nevertheless it retained an important role in supplying English armies. The ports of the region were crucial in the war effort, and ports such as Hull flourished during the period. The ports of Berwick and Skinburness in the North also regularly received goods from the southern counties of the North, before they were sent on further north to the front.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that the North played a vital role in the English war effort during the First Scottish War of Independence. The region was crucial in supplying and supporting the confident offensive campaigns of the early years of the war, and provided a significant obstacle to Scottish raiding and attempts to take the war to the English. This dramatically changed in the latter years of the war, when the North became the battleground of the war, and whilst Edward II himself became caught up in internal disputes and civil war, the war with Scotland remained a very harsh reality for the region, with successive raids and invasions leaving the North aflame. The war itself represents a pivotal moment in the history of the British Isles, a chapter of the histories of both England Scotland which remains as relevant as ever today. The war itself contained periods in which both sides appeared to be winning, however its ultimate result in Scottish victory is a decisive moment in the history of the British Isles. However, the often forgotten party in the war is the North of England, a region certainly not Scottish but still not a reliably English region. Indeed, it is impossible to adequately assess the First War of Scottish independence without recognition of the North's prolonged and pivotal role, and indeed the fact that the North of England was increasingly the region in which this conflict between the British Isles two feudal powers found themselves warring.

Firstly, largely due to the positioning of the North on the frontier with Scotland, the North proved throughout the conflict to be the key region and provided much of the military might of the English throughout the war, not necessarily in terms of men and equipment, although it undoubtedly did contribute a great deal in these manners as a close source of men, but certainly in terms of its large formidable fortresses, such as the castles at Carlisle and Newcastle, and between its capture in 1296 its loss in 1318, the castle at Berwick Upon Tweed. These fortresses were of great importance for both the Scots and English alike. Due to the absence of any castle building programme on the scale of that in Wales, for the English they

often provided the closest major royal strongholds to the front, however far into Scotland that might be, and indeed after the loss of most initial English gains to the forces of William Wallace this was undeniably the case. For the Scots they provided significant military obstacles, and this is demonstrated by failed attempts to take Carlisle, and the fact that even when the North seemed to be weak the Scots often chose to avoid besieging these northern strongholds and simply went around them, raiding deep into the more southerly counties of Yorkshire and Lancashire but without making any permanent gains or capturing settlements. This is of course with the notable exception of Berwick, which struck a powerful blow to the English leaving little in between Carlisle and Newcastle in the way of royal fortifications. The North also provided the site for the mustering of armies for the English campaigns against Scotland, and the region acted as a staging ground for these campaigns, again the role of the three major royal strongholds of Carlisle, Berwick and Newcastle was vital in this respect. During this period the North also found itself the target of Scottish raiding, with Northumberland and Cumberland taking the brunt of Scottish raiding and skirmishing during the early years of the war. As the war progressed, the whole of the North became the target of Scottish raiding as far south as the East Riding of Yorkshire, despite the negotiation of truces both on a national and local level, with towns such as Beverley falling victim to Scottish forces. Although less famous than the English defeat at Bannockburn, the crushing loss at Old Byland in Yorkshire was one of the war's pivotal moments and this defeat, combined with the political turmoil of Edward II's regime, arguably spelled the end for any real hope of an English recovery and conquest of Scotland, making the North not only the crucial military region for the English campaign, but also the site of its military failings. The North was again the setting for the final military acts of the war, with a Scottish attack on Norham castle and resumed raiding into the North forcing the fledgling regime of Edward III to respond with a failed attempt to force the Scots into a pitched battle at Stanhope Park in the Palatinate of Durham being the decisive final straw in forcing the English to seek a permanent peace with the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton in 1328, a document which certainly contributed to the resumption of hostilities in the 1330s.

The war also saw the North take on an increasing administrative and political importance, from the very origins of the war to the final decision taken at York in 1328 to pursue a peace with the Scots. The movement of the chancery, exchequer and the courts to York for various spells during the war meant that, particularly for a six year spell between 1298 and 1304, the city functioned effectively as England's capital city. This of course demonstrates that at least for this six year period England was essentially ruled and administered from the North, and it is likely that the city received something of an economic boost from the presence of these functions. The return of these aspects of government between 1319 and 1320, 1322 and 1323, and once more in 1327 demonstrates that in times of crisis in the war with the Scots the North was England's administrative centre of government. The prevalence of parliaments in the North during this period, largely during the reign of Edward II again demonstrates the increased political functions taken on by the region in this time of war, the proximity of cities such as York making it ideally close to Scotland, but far enough from the actual frontier to be a much less risky choice than Carlisle for example, although Carlisle did hold the last parliament of Edward I's reign shortly before his death. These arrangements ensured that the North, or at least the more southerly Northern counties, were the centre of English royal government throughout the war, and as such the region is inextricably tied to the war. Aside from parliaments, the region also played host to some of the most important political summits of the region. The use of Norham as the site at which Edward I would arbitrate the initial dispute over Scottish Kingship thrust Northumberland into the heart of a dispute over feudal inheritance laws and homage, and made the North the epicentre of a crisis of Scottish kingship which would leave Scotland fighting for its survival as a kingdom just a few years later. The homage performed by the future Scottish king at Norham laid the groundwork for the next 60 years of war and hostility between England and Scotland, both providing the impetus for Edward I's invasion in 1296 and of course in the longer term the resumption of hostilities when Edward III threw off the shackles of his mother and Roger Mortimer to take full control of his kingdom and overturn the Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton. Thus Norham provided the

backdrop for the event which would define the relationship between England and Scotland for the reigns of three successive English kings. However, the North was far from a reliable political ally to the English kings.

The difficulties caused by the regions complex and powerful lords is clearly a factor which caused the region to hinder as well as help the English war effort, especially in the reign of Edward II. From the very beginnings of the war, the North defined it, with Robert de Ros engaging English forces in Northumberland, the North in a sense turning on itself from the very beginning of the war, in fact in its first military engagement. The institution of offices such as Lord Warden of the March created a potentially dangerous level of autonomy in the North, and this was demonstrated when the serving Lord Warden, Andrew Harclay took it upon himself to negotiate a peace with Robert Bruce on behalf of the king, an act which although it cost him his life was swiftly followed by a similar proposal, this time from the king. The fact that Harclay, a man of the kings own making and one who could not even afford to maintain his status of earl alone, demonstrates the potential unreliability of the northern lords. This is especially so given that Harclay had actually sided with the king during the opposition of Thomas of Lancaster, who had also sought a deal with the Scots. The fact that two of the great betrayals of Edward's reign came from two northern lords, both of whom had opened a dialogue with the Scots of their own volition clearly demonstrates the hinderance that could be caused by the North. The royal castles and houses in the North also ensured an importance for the region, as demonstrated by the symbolic importance of the English possession of Berwick, and of course the imprisonment of Bruce's wife Elizabeth further south at the royal manor of Burstwick. Berwick is of particular importance to both sides in the war. For the English it provided an extension of Northern England into Scotland, whilst for the Scots the now English populated town provided a constant reminder of the loss of one of Scotland's royal burgh, which would drive a desire to retake the town throughout the war.

The North of course also played an important role in the supply and financing of the war. As the site of the chancery and exchequer, York was the central hub of English government during parts of the war, and as such was the centre of the kingdom's finances, not only with regards to the Scottish war but also in the day to day running of the kingdom's affairs. The importance of the chancery and exchequer as the financial arms of the kingdom were heightened in this period, given the collapse of the king's relationship with the Ricciardi banking family in the 1290s, and the revocation of the judicial eyre in 1294. The North also served as the site of important ports of supply such as Hull, which often acted as Edward's favoured port of supply for the Scottish campaigns, this favour causing the king to grant the town a royal charter in 1299. Hull provided both ships and supplies for the king in Scotland, whilst ports further North such as Skinburness and Berwick were used to receive goods from both Ireland, northern ports such as Hull, and the Cinque Ports. The case of Hull also demonstrates that the region for parts of this period could continue to provide revenue for the kingdom, with Hull continuing to thrive as a port of export, largely for wool, until the war turned decisively against the English, although even then wool exports did not stop and remained relatively significant. In the same way that it provided a mustering point for English armies, the North also regularly provided a point at which supplies could be arranged before being sent north to the front, as demonstrated by the accumulation of crossbows and supplies at York in 1301 after they were purchased in London. The North also contributed via taxation and tallages to its own defence, and consequently to the defence of the Kingdom of England as the Scots were able to range further and further south, and whilst a shortfall can be seen in the money raised for Hull's defences, the De La Poles of Hull were still able to loan a considerable amount of money to the king's campaign in 1327. The North was also required to facilitate and supply the movement of institutions back to the south when necessary, as demonstrated by the role the surrounding abbeys played in arranging the transportation of the governmental functions back to Westminster in 1304 after their 6 year stay in York. Of

course this is also a period in which constant raiding and then famine must have drastically reduced the output of the North both financially and in terms of productivity.

At this stage it is also prudent to directly address the obvious discrepancy in experiences between those counties in the frontier zone of the 'far north', that is Cumberland and Northumberland, and those further south such as Yorkshire. The far north clearly bore the brunt of the war from its very beginnings, until Bannockburn most of the Scottish raiding was restricted to the border counties, and where skirmishing did take place in England it was largely confined to these counties. This contrasts sharply with the comparatively calm experience enjoyed by the more southerly northern counties during the period. York basked in its enhanced role as the effective capital of England, and towns such as Hull saw continued growth and exports, whilst their role in the war was largely limited to carrying out these important political functions and supplying the effort further north. This created a 'two norths' dynamic, in which the far north acted as a defensive frontier zone in which the war was fought, whilst the southern counties of the North took on a support and administrative function, created a stark contrast between the two. As such it is important to recognise that the far north and the southern north had differing experiences of the war in many aspects. This contrast was somewhat reduced as the war developed, and English victories dried up. After 1314 in particular, raiding was no longer restricted to the far north and indeed the whole of the region found itself on the front line. Essentially, during the course of the war the frontier zone of Northumberland and Cumberland had been expanded to now include the entirety of the North, from Berwick to York. The fact that raiding as far south as Beverley occurred in years when York was once again serving as the kingdom's effective capital clearly demonstrates that the 'two norths' dynamic had largely been eroded, and the whole region was now sharing the same experience of invasion and raiding, although still with greater regularity in the far North due to its proximity to Scotland.

Therefore, it is clear that the North as a region played a crucial and perhaps often forgotten and underappreciated role in the First War of Scottish Independence. The North was involved in almost all aspects of the English war effort. It was the site of the war's causes, the battleground in which the war was fought, and often hosted the administrative functions and political forums of the English kingdom at war. The early years of the war were won by English armies advancing into Scotland from muster points in the North, and in its later years resurgent Scottish forces advanced deep into the North to win the war with victories such as that at Old Byland. The North is therefore where the war was won and lost, and although of course fighting took place in Ireland, no other region was as crucial to the success of both sides as the North. Simply put, it is almost impossible to write a history of the First War of Scottish independence without inevitably going some way to writing a history of the North.

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