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'A "Very Fowle Warre": Scorched Earth, Violence and Thomas Howard's French and Scottish Campaigns of 1522-3'

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In April 1523, Thomas Cromwell delivered a speech to Parliament in which he lauded Thomas Howard, earl of Surrey, for having sacked the town of Morlaix and devastated the surrounding countryside 'to the grete and high honour of our soverayne and his valiant nation'.¹ Two months after sacking Morlaix, Howard launched a scorched earth campaign in northeastern France which was so destructive that seventy years later peasants in the Boulonnais still remembered 1522 as 'the year of the great fires'.² Cromwell praised Howard for the violence he had inflicted on French towns and villages and called on him to deploy the same methods to against the Scots.³ Following his appointment in February 1523 as warden-general of the northern marches and

¹ The National Archives, London (TNA) SP 1/27, fols. 197v-198r (*Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, ed. J. S. Brewer, 21 vols (London, 1862-1932) [hereafter *LP*], iii. pt. 2, no. 2958).

² A. de Rosny, 'Enquête faite en 1578 par le maître particulier des Eaux et Forêts de Boulonnais,' *Mémoires de la Société académique de l'arrondissement de Boulogne-sur-Mer*, XXVII (1912), p. 364.

³ TNA SP 1/27, fol. 206v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2958).

lieutenant-general of the king's army against Scotland, Howard systematically destroyed large tracts of the Scottish Borders.

The scale and severity of the warfare prosecuted by Howard in 1522-3 surpassed normal levels of destruction, and he sought to achieve the prolonged ruination of the frontiers of France and Scotland. In 1522, Sir William Sandys told Henry VIII that the army had swept the Boulonnais clean of settlements and sources of food, while Howard informed Cardinal Wolsey that he had inflicted so much damage on the land that it would not recover for seven years.⁴ Howard went on to make similar declarations about the level of destruction he would wreak on the Scottish Borders in the following year.⁵ These claims were more than just boasts and a wide range of contemporary evidence (English, French, Imperial and Scottish) reveals that Howard's campaigns in France and Scotland in 1522-3 saw exceptional levels of violence directed against the populations of these regions. The Imperial commanders who fought with Howard in 1522 were uncomfortable with the severity of his scorched earth strategy, while Charles de Bourbon, duke of Vendôme, who led the defence of the Boulonnais, condemned Howard for waging a 'very fowle warre'.⁶

The lack of a focused study of the 1522 offensive has encouraged a wider misunderstanding of Howard's actions in France. In particular, the campaign is seen as

⁴ British Library (BL), Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 269v-270r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2530); TNA SP 1/26, fol. 96r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2592).

⁵ BL Cotton MS Caligula B/VI, fols. 374r-374v, B/VII, fols. 33r, 34r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, nos. 3321, 3364).

⁶ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 271v-272r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2541).

strategically flawed and unnecessarily destructive.⁷ Yet while historians have considered the war in France in 1522 to be a failure because Howard did not make any territorial gains, this misconstrues the purpose of Howard's actions.⁸ In contrast to Henry VIII's other invasions of France, the 1522 expedition was not directed at the acquisition of territory. While Cardinal Wolsey brokered the treaty of London in 1518 to bring peace between the powers of Christian Europe (with the friendship between Henry VIII and Francis being renewed at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520), he made an agreement at Bruges in 1521 with Emperor Charles V's representatives to break this peace and renew the war with France in order to provide Henry VIII with 'a golden

⁷ R. B. Wernham, *Before the Armada: The Growth of English Foreign Policy, 1485-1558* (London: Cape, 1966), p. 102; J. J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1968), p. 171; M. A. R. Graves, 'Howard, Thomas, Third Duke of Norfolk', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004); D. M. Head, *The Ebbs and Flows of Fortune: The Life of Thomas Howard, Third Duke of Norfolk* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), p. 60. Susan Vokes' unpublished thesis on the early career of Thomas Howard provides an overview of the organization of the war in 1522/3 and its wider political context, though she does not seek to provide a focused examination of the character of the violence which lay at the heart of Howard's military strategy: S. E. Vokes, 'The Early Career of Thomas, Lord Howard, Earl of Surrey and Third Duke of Norfolk, 1474-c.1525' (PhD thesis, University of Hull, 1988), pp. 228-40.

⁸ M. Fissel, *English Warfare, 1511-1642* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 11; J. D. Mackie, *The Earlier Tudors, 1485-1558* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), p. 312; G. Phillips, *The Anglo-Scottish Wars, 1513-1550* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), p. 139.

opportunity to win honour and glory'.⁹ While the agreement made at Bruges bound Henry VIII and Charles V to invade France in 1523, the Tudor monarch was keen to launch an immediate attack on France and he began his preparations for war in March 1522. The specific plans for an Anglo-Imperial invasion of France in 1522 were formulated when Charles V visited England that summer. While the capture of Boulogne was mooted as an objective as part of the treaty made at Waltham on 2 July, it was only to be attempted if the army commanders 'think it probable that they can conquer it'. Rather, the treaty gave the commanders 'liberty to devise any plan, by the execution of which, in their opinion, the greatest mischief can be done to the enemy.'¹⁰ The vagueness about what was to be attempted in France in 1522 gave Thomas Howard considerable control over the character of the campaign, particularly because his men formed the bulk of the army. The military strategy Howard implemented in France in 1522 sought to do 'the greatest mischief' by destroying rather than conquering the land.

In 1523, Howard was sent to take command of the army in the north. He employed a similar strategy of devastation in Scotland to that he had used in France – and which had won him praise at court. As with the 1522 campaign, Howard was given considerable scope to shape the nature of the war against Scotland. While historians occasionally discuss individual elements of Howard's actions in the Scottish Borders in 1523, there has been no attempt to provide an extended examination of the character of

⁹ P. Gwyn, 'Wolsey's Foreign Policy: The Conferences at Calais and Bruges Reconsidered', *Historical Journal*, xxiii, (1980), p. 766.

¹⁰ *Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers Relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain. Volume 2*, ed. G. A. Berengoth (London: HMSO, 1866), p. 442.

English violence.¹¹ This may be because, in contrast to France, there was no single campaign in Scotland; instead, Howard laid waste to the Scottish Borders through a series of well-planned shorter expeditions. There is a tendency to situate Howard's actions in both Scotland and France in 1522-3 within the context of the low-level raiding which permeated life on England's frontiers.¹² Yet Howard's actions in Scotland in 1523 far outstripped these raids in both scale and severity (including the highly destructive raids Thomas Dacre launched in 1513 and 1514), and he sought to achieve the complete destruction and depopulation of large tracts of the Borders. Likewise, while one historian has dismissed Thomas Howard's actions in France 1522 as 'small-scale raiding', an Anglo-Imperial army of 11,000 men marched over seventy miles into Francis I's kingdom and destroyed tens of thousands of acres of the French countryside, as well as dozens of towns, villages and strongholds.¹³

While Howard had already made use of burning during his time in France, Ireland and Scotland over the previous decade, the scale of destruction he employed in 1522-3 was more akin to the military strategy the English had employed during the later Middle Ages, particularly the *chevauchées* of Edward III and the Black Prince, which went far beyond localised burnings. Older studies of these campaigns either ignored the *chevauchées* or saw them as devoid of strategy.¹⁴ Sir Charles Oman, one of

¹¹ Phillips, *Anglo-Scottish Wars*, pp. 141-3.

¹² Fissel, *English Warfare*, pp. 23-4; Head, *Thomas Howard*, pp. 60-1.

¹³ Head, *Thomas Howard*, p. 60.

¹⁴ H. Denifle, *La desolation des églises, monastères & hopitaux en France pendant la guerre de cent ans*, 2 vols (Paris: Picard, 1899), II, p. 86; A. H. Thompson, 'The Art of War to 1400', in *The Cambridge Medieval History. Vol. 6*, eds. J. R. Tanner, C. E. Previt -Orton

the key proponents of this view, saw Thomas Howard's French campaign of 1522 as falling within this mould and termed it an 'ill-conceived and ill-managed war', while Herbert Fisher declared it 'one of the most purposeless and unnecessary contests in which this country has ever been engaged...a war of fruitless raids and ravages'.¹⁵ While H. J. Hewitt's work on the campaigns of the Black Prince and Edward III moved away from this view of ravaging and highlighted the rationale which lay behind the devastation of the land, nonetheless he maintained the view that this type of warfare was 'marked by an absence of strategy' and was designed to avoid battle.¹⁶ This view of ravaging continues to be influential and Jonathan Sumption views the Black Prince's *chevauchée* of 1355 as a battle avoiding scheme and of 'questionable' military value.¹⁷ Yet Clifford Rogers has demonstrated that the *chevauchées* the English launched in France during the fourteenth century were designed to bring the French king to battle, while – in most recent study of the Black Prince's 1355 campaign – Mollie Madden

and Z. N. Brooke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), pp. 796-7; G.

Wrottesley, *Crécy and Calais from the Original Records in the Public Records Office* (London, 1898), pp. iii-iv, 10-11.

¹⁵ C. Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1937), p. 322; H. A. L. Fisher, *The History of England: From the Accession of Henry VII to the Death of Henry VIII (1485-1547)* (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1913), p. 240.

¹⁶ H. J. Hewitt, *The Black Prince's Expedition of 1355-1357* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), p. 13; H. J. Hewitt, *The Organization of War under Edward III* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), pp. 110-18.

¹⁷ J. Sumption, *The Hundred Years War. Vol. II: Trial By Fire* (London: Faber and Faber, 1999), pp. 182-5.

argues that the expedition was ‘a thoroughly planned military operation’ with ‘a specific agenda’ to bring the French to battle.¹⁸ While Tudor *chevauchées* remain much less well studied than those of Edward III and the Black Prince, in this article I show that Thomas Howard revived this form of warfare for the same strategic purposes they were used during the Hundred Years War. In this respect, he was returning to the Vegetian practices of warfare which were so influential in the fourteenth century. These tactics remained well-known in England in the early sixteenth century – Henry VIII had four copies of *De re militari* in his library and it is likely that Thomas Howard also knew this work well.¹⁹

Beyond knowledge of the works of Vegetius, familiarity with the specific English *chevauchées* of the fourteenth century may have provided a model for Thomas Howard’s

¹⁸ C. J. Rogers, ‘The Black Prince in Gascony and France (1355-57), According to MS78 of Corpus Christi College, Oxford’, *Journal of Medieval Military History*, xliii, (2009), pp. 168-75; C. J. Rogers, ‘Edward III and the Dialectics of Strategy, 1327-1360’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, iv, (1994), pp. 83-102; C. J. Rogers, ‘The Vegetian “Science of Warfare” in the Middle Ages’, *Journal of Medieval Military History*, i, (2002), pp. 1-20; C. J. Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy under Edward III, 1327-1360* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000); C. J. Rogers, ‘Fire and Sword: Bellum Hostile and “Civilians” in the Hundred Years War’, in *Civilians in the Path of War*, eds. M. Grimsley and C. J. Rogers (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), pp. 33-78; M. Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée of 1355* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2018), p. 3.

¹⁹ C. Allmand, *The De Re Militari of Vegetius: The Reception, Transmission and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 72.

actions in the 1520s. The early Tudor nobility sought to win honour by replicating the campaigns of men such as Edward III, the Black Prince, and Henry V, who were lauded for their actions in France. Steven Gunn notes that the elite of Henry VIII's England 'looked back to the heroic deeds of their ancestors and read Froissart's chronicles'.²⁰ It is interesting to note that John Bourchier, Lord Berners, completed the first volume of his influential English translation of Froissart's chronicles in 1522 (it was published the following year). As both Lord Deputy of Calais and Thomas Howard's brother-in-law, it is possible that Berners showed Howard the first volume of his translation of Froissart as the English army gathered in the town before setting out to join the Imperial force to invade France. This volume which contains an account of Edward III's *chevauchée* through Normandy in 1346, with Froissart noting that the English king's 'wastyng and brennyng the country' incited the French monarch to give battle – which then led to the great English victory at Crécy.²¹ This volume also includes an account of the Black Prince's *chevauchée* through Auvergne, Berry, Touraine in 1356, with Froissart recording that John II resolved to give the English battle after learning that they had burned and destroyed the country 'asmoch as they might'.²² The two armies met outside Poitiers and the English won what was arguably their greatest victory of the

²⁰ S. J. Gunn, *The English People at War in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 2.

²¹ *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles of England, France, Spain, Portugal, Scotland, Brittany, Flanders, and the Adjoining Countries Translated from the Original French, at the Command of King Henry the Eighth, by John Bourchier, Lord Berners*, 2 vols (London: Rivington, 1812), p. 148.

²² *Sir John Froissart's Chronicles*, p. 190.

Hundred Years War, particularly because the French king was captured during the battle. As we shall see below, Howard employed precisely this strategy in France in 1522 when he launched a *chevauchée* through northeastern France – close to places such as Agincourt and Crécy, where the English had won great victories – in the hope of provoking Francis I to battle. Berners' edition of Froissart was made at the instigation of Henry VIII and Pamela Neville-Sington notes that it was intended 'to inspire readers to feats of glory on the battlefield'.²³

Whatever the motivation for Howard's strategy of devastation, an examination of the resurgence of this type of warfare is important because a key strand of the historiography of Tudor warfare claims that the English only used scorched earth extensively in Ireland.²⁴ This view has led some historians to see English violence in Ireland during the reign of Elizabeth as being both genocidal and unique in European terms.²⁵ Vincent Carey has argued that Lord Mountjoy's scorched earth campaign in

²³ P. Neville-Sington, 'Press, Politics, and Religion', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume III, 1400-1557*, eds. L. Hellinga and J. B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 585.

²⁴ D. Edwards, 'The Escalation of Violence in Sixteenth-Century Ireland', in *Age of Atrocity: Violence and Political Conflict in Early Modern Ireland*, eds. D. Edwards, P. Lenihan and C. Tait (Dublin: Four Courts, 2007), pp. 34-78.

²⁵ B. Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 169-212; D. Edwards, 'Tudor Ireland: Anglicisation, Mass Killing and Security', in *The Routledge History of Genocide*, eds. C. Carmichael and R. C. Maguire (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 23-37.

Ulster in 1602 'was novel, and perhaps unprecedented even by contemporary European standards' because of 'its unprecedented scale and systematic nature.'²⁶ Although undoubtedly destructive, there was nothing novel or unprecedented about Mountjoy's campaign in Ulster – and Howard achieved similar levels of destruction in France and Scotland eighty years earlier. This article will focus on the character of English warfare in the sixteenth century and show that Howard's campaigns of 1522-3 represented a marked escalation in the level of violence English armies directed at civilians.

In early September 1522, English and Imperial forces invaded the Boulonnais with the aim of causing as much destruction as possible.²⁷ While the burning of villages on the borders between France and Flanders was common, the scale and severity of Howard's scorched earth campaign troubled the Imperials.²⁸ On 7 September, Howard informed Henry VIII that while most of Charles V's commanders were opposed to any burning, he had nonetheless launched a widespread scorched earth programme and made 'somany smokes' in the Boulonnais that the Imperials 'think it is to late to forbere to burne'.²⁹ By pressing ahead with the burning of the Boulonnais, Howard effectively forced the Imperial commanders to participate in a harsh military strategy they did not want to adopt.

²⁶ V. P. Carey, 'Elizabeth I and State Terror in Sixteenth-Century Ireland', in *Elizabeth I and the 'Sovereign Arts': Essays in Literature, History, and Culture*, eds. D. Stump, L. Shenk and C. Levin (Tempe: CMRS, 2011), p. 214.

²⁷ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 263r-264v (LP iii. pt. 2, no. 2511).

²⁸ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 271v-272r (LP iii. pt. 2, no. 2541).

²⁹ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 266r-266v (LP iii. pt. 2, no. 2517).

The Imperial nobles were troubled by the English use of scorched earth because they feared it would lead to retaliatory attacks on their lands, and they tried to prevent Howard extending the burnings beyond the Boulonnais by pushing for a stationary siege of Thérouanne.³⁰ The Imperial commanders' unease with the scale of the English burnings in 1522 was echoed at Margaret of Austria's court in the Low Countries.³¹ It was only towards the end of September – when it became clear that the French lacked sufficient military resources to combat the Anglo-Imperial army – that Charles V's commanders assented to the English scorched earth strategy. On 28 September, Howard informed Wolsey that the Flemish had set aside their former reservations about the use of scorched earth and were now committed to the destruction of the land. He attributed this to the fact that the army council had just learned that Francis I was at St. Germain-en-Laye and thus too far away to retaliate for the burnings.³²

If the aim of the campaign from the English perspective had simply been to humiliate the French king by having an enemy army enter his lands unopposed, then the desultory strategy proposed by the Imperial commanders would have sufficed. Yet Howard hoped to play on expectations of revenge to provoke the French king into battle by undertaking the systematic destruction of the Boulonnais. This strategy struck not just at Francis I's honour but also undermined the region's economic value to the French crown and made it more difficult for the Valois monarch to keep garrisons

³⁰ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 263r-264v (*LP* iii, pt. 2, no. 2511).

³¹ BL Cotton MS Galba B/VII, fol. 359v (*LP* iii, pt. 2, no. 2593).

³² BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fol. 278r (*LP* iii, pt. 2, no. 2579).

near the borders of the Calais Pale.³³ Once the army had finished destroying the Boulonnais, it was to burn the Somme lands (where the English incorrectly believed Francis I was then based) to provoke the Valois monarch into giving them battle.³⁴

As the effects of scorched earth could be seen for miles, the English hoped to draw attention to the damage they were doing to the land. Howard informed Henry VIII on 7 September that the burnings were so extensive that if the French 'wynk not they shall se plente off sm[oke]'.³⁵ By highlighting Francis I's inability to protect his own subjects, the burnings undermined his kingship. It was a win-win situation for the English because if the French responded to their burnings by meeting them in the field they stood a good chance of defeat as the Anglo-Imperial army outnumbered the Valois monarch's forces in the region. The English also sought to provoke other leading French nobles into giving battle by burning their lands. The duke of Vendôme, who was leading the defence of the region, saw his village and castle of Hucqueliers destroyed as he watched from the walls of Montreuil, an action which the English believed would provoke him to battle. Yet it soon became clear to Howard that the French were not going to meet them in the field and 'revenge the same [i.e. the burnings] by bataille'.³⁶ In the fourteenth century, French kings had responded to English *chevauchées* by giving battle, a strategy which had led to defeat and disaster. In response to Tudor invasions in

³³ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 263r-264v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2511). BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 268r-268v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2526).

³⁴ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 259r, 259v, 261r-261v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, nos. 2499, 2500); TNA SP 1/26, fols. 46v-47r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2567).

³⁵ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 266r-266v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2517).

³⁶ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fol. 273r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2540).

the sixteenth century, the French simply waited behind the walls of major towns until the English left the region.

Howard extended to Scotland the scorched earth strategy he had employed in France, where he was supported by men such as Thomas Dacre who – unlike the Imperial nobles – had no reservations about systematically wasting the countryside. While the campaigns in France and Scotland were waged against political elites, Howard’s destruction of crops and houses ensured that the peasantry were the principal victims of his actions. He informed Wolsey on 15 August 1523 that his burning of villages and crops was designed to achieve Henry VIII’s aim of causing the Scottish lords to give up the duke of Albany (regent of Scotland) ‘orels to dryve theym to hunger by distroying ther corne that the total ruyne of ther borders shall ensue’.³⁷ In advance of his incursion of September 1523, Howard informed Margaret Tudor (mother to James V) that he would burn the crops in the borders unless the Scottish lords abandoned Albany.³⁸ Margaret attempted to stop Howard from pressing ahead with his scorched earth campaign by telling him that his planned destruction ‘wolbe for nought; for the Lordes set not by the hurt of the pore foulkes, but lawhis at the same’.³⁹ While Margaret may have been exaggerating the lords’ contempt for the borderers, nonetheless her comments point to the Scottish government’s inability to defend the kingdom from the English. Albany was then in France and while he had appointed a council to govern in

³⁷ BL Cotton MS Caligula B/II, fol. 162r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3241).

³⁸ *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3222; TNA SP 49/2, fol. 30r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3344); *State Papers Published under the Authority of His Majesty’s Commission: Henry VIII* [hereafter *StP*], 11 vols (London: HMRO, 1830-52), IV, p. 10.

³⁹ *StP*, IV, pp. 26-7.

his absence, it proved unable to prevent attacks on the border. When the members of the council met in September 1523 to discuss the defence of the frontier, they noted the borders had been destroyed without resistance. On 22 September 1523, the earl of Argyll was appointed lieutenant-general of the army and a summons sent out to mobilise men for war.⁴⁰ Yet this was much too late to prevent Howard's burning of Teviotdale and his sack of Jedburgh, an expedition which completed his campaign of destruction.

Howard's campaigns in France and Scotland were designed to cause as much harm to local populations as possible. At the beginning of the 1522 campaign, Howard targeted the Boulonnais because the region had not been burned in living memory.⁴¹ Howard could expect that as these highly-fertile lands had not seen a major conflict in a generation he could inflict especially high levels of damage on its population, who had no immediate direct experience of warfare.⁴² Indeed, the native inhabitants had not even hidden their goods and the English found towns and villages full of stacked food stores.⁴³ Rather than wander aimlessly around France (as is sometimes claimed), the

⁴⁰ NRO CS5/34, fo. 12r.

⁴¹ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fol. 266r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2517).

⁴² Edward III and the Black Prince's also targeted their *chevauchées* on regions which had been spared from attack: S. McGlynn, "Sheer Terror" and the Black Prince's Grand *Chevauchée* of 1355', in *The Hundred Years War (Part III): Further Considerations*, eds. L. J. Andrew Villalon and D. J. Kagay (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p. 323.

⁴³ Edward Hall, *The Triumphant Reigne of Kyng Henry the VIII*, 2 vols (London & Edinburgh: T.C. and J.C. Jack, 1904), I, p. 268.

1522 campaign was carefully planned to entirely destroy targeted regions.⁴⁴ The army wasted everything in its path and the soldiers spread out across the land to burn it in a systematic fashion, so that 'all the countreye twelve myle about was of light fyer'.⁴⁵ Howard also sent groups of soldiers out from the main host to burn the further parts the Boulonnais.⁴⁶ By the time the Anglo-Imperial army completed its march through the Boulonnais, it had burned tens of thousands of acres of countryside and numerous villages, towns and castles, before pressing on to the Somme to destroy the fertile riverlands.⁴⁷ As with the Boulonnais, Howard's aim was destruction rather than conquest and he returned home once he had wasted the land.⁴⁸ By the time he returned to Calais on 15 October, Howard had completed what was probably the most destructive campaign in France since the reign of Edward III.

After returning to England, Howard was sent north to lead the war against Scotland. Whereas the war in France consisted of a single major expedition which laid

⁴⁴ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fol. 266v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2517).

⁴⁵ Hall, *Henry VIII*, I, p. 268. For the methodical nature of the destruction, see also: BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 269r-269v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2530). In 1355, the Black Prince had spread his army out 'to inflict the most damage possible on the countryside': McGlynn, 'Grand *Chevauchée*', p. 319.

⁴⁶ Hall, *Henry VIII*, I, pp. 268-9; BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 269r-269v, 271v-272r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, nos. 2530, 2541).

⁴⁷ BL Cotton MS Caligula E/II, fols. 20r-20v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2560), D/VIII, fol. 278r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2579).

⁴⁸ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fol. 273r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2540); Hall, *Henry VIII*, I, p. 270.

waste to large parts of the kingdom over seven consecutive weeks of fighting, the more limited resources available to Howard in the north meant that such a campaign was not feasible in Scotland. Instead, Howard and those who served under him launched a series of short expeditions to waste the Scottish Borders from April 1523.⁴⁹ In contrast to the army's actions in France in 1522, where the soldiers marched seventy miles into France and left a trail of continuous destruction behind them, in 1523 each attack targeted a different area in the Scottish Borders to achieve a similar level of ruination. After returning from an invasion in May 1523, Howard observed that the few towns and villages left untouched would soon be burned.⁵⁰ When Dacre made a further major raid in early June he entered the territory immediately to the east of where Howard had attacked and burned Kelso.⁵¹ Later that month, Dacre led a force of six thousand men to the area immediately east of his previous attack and burned it. As in France, the expeditions took one route out and another back to achieve the greatest levels of destruction.⁵² On 26 June, Dacre observed that each of the three major attacks he had made since Howard assumed command of the war against Scotland had caused more destruction than all those launched during the reigns of Edward IV and Henry VII combined – and that three further incursions 'would entirely destroy the Borders'.⁵³

As well as playing to the expertise of local men such as Thomas Dacre, this style of warfare allowed Howard to mitigate difficulties provisioning his forces. Victualing

⁴⁹ BL Cotton MS Caligula B/II, fol. 160r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2974).

⁵⁰ BL Cotton Caligula MS B/II, fols. 156r-159r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3039).

⁵¹ *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3135.

⁵² *LP* iii. pt. 2, nos. 3097, 3098.

⁵³ *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3134.

was important because it determined how much damage the English could achieve during an attack.⁵⁴ Short incursions across the border required few victuals and the soldiers participating in the raid of June 1523, which sacked Kelso and destroyed the surrounding region, only required food for one day.⁵⁵ Soldiers typically mustered at villages lying just within the English border and left at dawn, so that they could achieve as much destruction as possible in a single day.⁵⁶ All soldiers were required to participate in the burning so that large areas could be destroyed in a limited time.⁵⁷ Overall, Howard's strategy of using a series of well-planned expeditions to destroy specific parts of the Scottish Borders allowed him to achieve considerable results with limited resources.

As well as burning towns, villages and fields, Howard pulled down fortifications in the regions targeted for destruction. Following his Scottish expedition of May 1523, which destroyed a number of towers and castles in Teviotdale, Howard noted that the English population on the frontier as joyfull at the destruction of these strongholds, considering it better 'then if Edenborough and iij of the bestes townes of Scotland had be brent and dispoyled', undoubtedly because Scottish soldiers used these fortifications as bases from which to harass villages across border.⁵⁸ The destruction of frontier fortresses also formed a key component in Howard's strategy to turn the enemy frontiers into a

⁵⁴ *StP*, IV, pp. 20-1

⁵⁵ *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3135.

⁵⁶ *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3147.

⁵⁷ *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3098.

⁵⁸ BL Cotton MS Caligula B/II, fols. 156r-159r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3039).

wasteland, because the pulling down of these buildings ensured both that there would be no bases for enemy soldiers and nowhere for peasants to flee to during times of danger (a strategy which may also show a knowledge of Vegetius, who emphasised the important role that strongholds played in resisting an invader).⁵⁹ In 1522, Howard systematically pulled down and burnt both the strongholds and their attendant settlements as he marched through the Boulonnais.⁶⁰ In short, the destruction of strongholds formed an important part of Howard's strategy to depopulate enemy lands lying adjacent to England's frontiers, because while houses could be rebuilt their inhabitants would be less keen to return without the ability to take shelter in local strongholds.

Howard also destroyed religious buildings as part of his drive to sweep the frontiers clean of enemy fortifications.⁶¹ In the absence of a castle or stronghold, peasants fled to their village church, which was often constructed with defensive considerations in mind. In the Boulonnais, Howard destroyed a church which was 'more like a Castle than a Church, for it was depe ditched with drawe bridges and with

⁵⁹ S. Ellis, *Defending English Ground: War and Peace in Meath and Northumberland, 1460-1542* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 35; BL Cotton MS Caligula B/II, fols. 156r-159r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3039).

⁶⁰ Hall, *Henry VIII*, I, p. 268; BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 225r-225v, 268r-268v, 271v-272r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, nos. 2526, 2541, 2549).

⁶¹ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fol. 273r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2540).

Bulwarkes, fortified and loopes very warlike'.⁶² The peasants who sheltered in churches were subject to the same laws of war which governed the sieges of castles and towns. In 1522, Sir William Sandys and Sir Edward Guildford burned the priests and villagers of Whitsandbay in the bell-tower of the fortified church.⁶³ The populations of towns in the Scottish Borders commonly fled to abbeys during English attacks. When the English assaulted Jedburgh in September 1523, the inhabitants 'were all taken, slain, and driven into the abbey'.⁶⁴ Religious buildings which did not house garrisons or civilian populations were also burned in 1522-3, particularly those capable of supporting artillery.⁶⁵

While rural churches were frequently destroyed, it was customary to spare religious buildings during the sack of towns. Following Henry VIII's capture of Thérouanne in 1513, all the buildings in the town were destroyed except for the cathedral and the houses of the clergy.⁶⁶ When Thomas Howard sacked Morlaix in July 1522, he ordered his men 'to set fyre in al places of the tounne (the holy places onely except)', and while he ordered the burning of Desvres later that year he spared the

⁶² Hall, *Henry VIII*, I, pp. 268-9. He also burned the church at Lottinghen because it 'was fortified more like [a] h[ouse] of warre than the howse of god': BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 269r-269v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2530).

⁶³ Hall, *Henry VIII*, I, p. 262.

⁶⁴ *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3360.

⁶⁵ *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3097.

⁶⁶ A. Chagny, ed., *Correspondance de Laurent de Gorrevod*, 2 vols (Macon: Protat, 1913), I, p. 271.

town's churches and monasteries.⁶⁷ Yet Maurice Keen notes that while churches were 'technically secure' from attack during the sack of a town, this convention was not always respected.⁶⁸ Certainly, the ferocity of Howard's 1522 invasion of France led to a breakdown in this custom as the campaign progressed. While Howard spared the churches and monastic houses of Desvres during his sack of the town, when he took Doullens a month later its religious buildings were destroyed.⁶⁹ His campaign in Scotland in the following year also witnessed an upsurge in the destruction of religious buildings. While the English spared Kelso abbey when they fired the town in 1522, when they attacked again in 1523 they assaulted the abbey and reduced its buildings to rubble.⁷⁰ Likewise, when Howard sacked Jedburgh in September 1523, he burned the abbey and pulled down its great tower.⁷¹ Some religious houses tried to avoid destruction by putting their buildings beyond military use. While the English burned Eccles in 1523, they spared the convent on the condition that the prioress 'cast down...all walls and ditches of any strength'. Sir William Bulmer was instructed to burn the building if she failed to take the necessary measures.⁷² Howard also agreed to spare Coldstream abbey as long as its abbess, Isabelle Hoppringle, spied for him. Yet her

⁶⁷ Hall, *Henry VIII*, I, pp. 260, 268.

⁶⁸ M. H. Keen, *The Laws of War in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1965), p. 121.

⁶⁹ M. E. Delgove, *Histoire de la ville de Doullens* (Amiens: Lemer, 1865), pp. 97-8.

⁷⁰ J. Morton, *The Monastic Annals of Teviotdale* (Edinburgh: Lizars, 1832), pp. 97-8.

⁷¹ *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3360. Dryburgh may have also suffered in 1523: National Records of Scotland (Edinburgh) GD86/88. See also: NRS RH1/2/340.

⁷² *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3098.

situation was precarious and Margaret Tudor, who petitioned Howard to spare Coldstream, told him he should protect these lands from burning only as long as the abbess was faithful.⁷³

Intercession by powerful figures only went so far and while Margaret petitioned Howard to spare Jedburgh, her brother, Henry VIII, was determined to have it destroyed.⁷⁴ While Jedburgh was the largest settlement in the Scottish Borders, it lacked walls and the town soon fell and was burned on Howard's orders.⁷⁵ As well as being an economic centre, Jedburgh posed a security threat to England. Howard reported that while the town had been large enough to hold one thousand soldiers, its destruction ensured that it could not be garrisoned.⁷⁶ The sack made a fitting conclusion to Howard's campaign to destroy the Scottish Borders and Henry VIII wrote to his commander on 5 October 1523 to congratulate him on the 'arracing and destruction' of the town and the burning of the surrounding region.⁷⁷ Henry VIII was particularly keen to have Thomas Howard sack towns. Wolsey informed Howard on 17 September that the king had called for the destruction of Doullens and its surrounding settlements, which Howard proceeded to do.⁷⁸ The English avoided attacking larger towns in France, which would take time to capture, and focused instead on smaller places. These

⁷³ *StP*, IV, p. 58.

⁷⁴ TNA SP 49/2, fol. 17r (*LP* iii, pt. 2, no. 3240).

⁷⁵ BL Cotton MS Caligula B/VII, fol. 33r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no 3364); *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3360.

⁷⁶ BL Cotton MS Caligula B/VII, fol. 34r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3364).

⁷⁷ BL Cotton MS Caligula B/VI, fol. 352r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3394).

⁷⁸ BL Cotton MS Caligula E/II, fol. 18r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2551); Hall, *Henry VIII*, I, p. 270.

settlements could, in theory, be taken quickly and thus not impede the primary purpose of the campaign, which was to destroy as large an area as possible.⁷⁹

Howard looked to apply the full severity of the laws of war against the populations of the towns he assaulted in 1522-3. Although the army failed to take the castle at Hesdin, Howard declared to its captain that he would kill the men, women and children sheltering there.⁸⁰ While the population of Hesdin had a garrison and castle to protect them, other towns were not so fortunate. Although the count of St. Pol was entrusted with the defence of Doullens, he withdrew the garrison because he believed the town could not be held.⁸¹ Doullens fell without a fight and Martin du Bellay records that the Anglo-Imperial army sacked the town.⁸² While many of the townspeople had fled, those who remained and were killed 'withought sparynge of any'.⁸³ The sack of towns also caused longer economic and demographic problems, a key aim of Howard's

⁷⁹ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 268r-268v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2526).

⁸⁰ Hall, *Henry VIII*, I, p. 269.

⁸¹ *Chroniques de Flandre et d'Artois par Louis Brésin*, ed. E. Mannier (Paris: Dumoulin, 1880), p. 108. This was despite the fact that the town's fortifications were repaired earlier that year: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 12893, fol. 128r; A. Ledieu, *Ville d'Abbeville. Inventaire sommaire des archives municipales antérieures à 1790* (Abbeville: Imprimerie Nationale, 1902), p. 153.

⁸² *Mémoires de Martin et Guillaume Du Bellay*, eds. V.-L. Bourrilly and F. Vindry, 4 vols (Paris: Laurens, 1908-19), I, p. 294.

⁸³ BL Cotton MS Galba B/VII, fol. 362r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2595); Delgove, *Histoire de Doullens*, p. 99; *Mémoires Du Bellay*, I, p. 294; BL Cotton MS Galba B/VII, fol. 359v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2593).

actions in 1522/3. The burning and pillaging of Morlaix was so severe that the town lay in ruins for a decade and its previously thriving linen industry was decimated.⁸⁴

While English soldiers fighting on the 1513 campaign were issued with a code of conduct which forbade the pillaging of the local population, Howard issued no such prohibitions to the soldiers fighting in 1522-3 and his soldiers pillaged villages and abducted peasants.⁸⁵ Howard recruited men in 1522 for their aptitude at plundering the enemy, particularly the four hundred 'wilde persones' from Calais he used to raid French villages.⁸⁶ Howard's widespread pillaging of the peasantry formed part of his plan to provoke the French into giving battle.⁸⁷ Yet while pillaging was undoubtedly destructive, the burning of crops and food stores caused the greatest hardship for civilian populations. Indeed, Howard singled out the burning of corn as the most serious

⁸⁴ G. Le Jean, *Histoire politique et municipale de la ville et de la communauté de Morlaix* (Morlaix: V. Guilmer, 1846), pp. 70-1.

⁸⁵ *Hereafter ensue certayne Statutes and Ordinancs of the Warre* (London: R. Pynson, 1513). For English disciplinary ordinances, see: A. Martinez, 'Disciplinary Ordinances for English Armies and Military Change, 1385-1513', *History*, CII, (2017), pp. 361-85; Hall, *Henry VIII*, I, p. 271; *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3098; A. Curry, 'Disciplinary Ordinances for English and Franco-Scottish Armies in 1385: An International Code?', *Journal of Medieval History*, XXXVII, (2011), pp. 269-94; A. Curry, 'The Military Ordinances of Henry V: Texts and Contexts', in *War, Government and Aristocracy in the British Isles*, eds. C. Given-Wilson, A. Kettle and L. Scales (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008), pp. 214-49 .

⁸⁶ Hall, *Henry VIII*, I, pp. 267, 271, 276.

⁸⁷ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fol. 273r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2540).

effect of his campaigns in 1522-3.⁸⁸ The destruction of crops caused the greatest hurt to civilian populations, particularly the poorer classes who gained the bulk of the calories this way.⁸⁹ The disproportionate effect that the destruction of corn had on the peasantry was paramount in Howard's mind when he ordered scorched earth attacks. On 26 August, he asked Margaret Tudor to persuade the Scottish lords to abandon Albany so that 'the poore people of the borders of Scotland shuld not bee nowe destroyed by brynnung of their corne'.⁹⁰

Howard timed his attacks for the times of year when they would do most damage to crops. In 1522, he laid waste to the Boulonnais during harvest; his expeditions into Scotland the following year took place during spring planting and harvest.⁹¹ While Wolsey wrote in August 1523 that 'my lord of Wynchester and other wise men doo think it hard to bren the corne being grene', Howard did not need lessons in the best way to burn crops. By the time he laid waste to the Scottish Borders in 1523, Howard had a decade's worth of experience in burning crops in France, Ireland and Scotland (albeit on a lesser scale to the scorched earth strategy he applied in the early 1520s). He informed Wolsey he had not planned to attack cereals crops while they were growing during the summer months, but when they were ripe and ready to be gathered.⁹² When Margaret Tudor sought an abstinence of war to Michaelmas to give her time to turn the

⁸⁸ *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3222.

⁸⁹ S. L. Kaplan, 'The Famine Plot Persuasion in Eighteenth-Century France', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, LXXII, (1982), pp. 62-3.

⁹⁰ *StP*, IV, p. 10.

⁹¹ BL Cotton MS Caligula D/VIII, fols. 266r-266v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2517).

⁹² BL Cotton MS Caligula B/II, fol. 162r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3241).

Scottish lords against Albany, Thomas Dacre advised Howard to persuade Henry VIII and Wolsey to grant this and hold back from launching further invasions of Scotland until then, 'when their corn will be wonne and they can be utterly ruined'.⁹³ By waiting until late September, the English could target the corn 'on which most of their living depends', and as Howard explained to Wolsey it was advantageous to wait until the Scottish peasants had stacked their crops before burning them.⁹⁴ Howard also justified his postponing of the expedition to destroy Jedburgh from August to late September by saying that a delay of several weeks would allow them to do considerably more damage to the crops.⁹⁵

Howard had used this strategy in France in the previous year. As the army marched across the Boulonnais in September 1522, the soldiers found 'tounes and Castelles full of wyne, corne, and all other necessaries', which they pillaged or burned.⁹⁶ By targeting buildings used for the storage of crops at harvest, the English could also nullify enemy efforts to gather the crops early (French commanders had agricultural instruments brought in the Boulonnais in July to try and save the crops from destruction).⁹⁷ By waiting until the harvest had been gathered, Howard could destroy both food stores for the winter and seed crops for the following year, thus generating famine conditions. Burning the crops in September also ensured there was little

⁹³ *LP* iii. pt. 2, nos. 3104, 3110.

⁹⁴ *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3134; BL Cotton MS Caligula B/II, fol. 162r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3241).

⁹⁵ *StP*, IV, pp. 11-12.

⁹⁶ Hall, *Henry VIII*, I, p. 268.

⁹⁷ BL Cotton MS Caligula E/II, fol. 11r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2376).

possibility of peasants obtaining straw to re-thatch their burned houses.⁹⁸ While some Scottish peasants fled in advance of English attacks and removed those parts of their houses that could be burned, Howard and the northern wardens were meticulous in their destruction and adapted their methods to suit local forms of construction.⁹⁹ Noting that in some parts of the Scottish Borders the houses were 'roved' and without thatch 'so that they will not burn', Dacre advised Howard to purchase three hundred sixpenny axes 'to be distributed to the captains to cut down such houses'.¹⁰⁰ The destruction of crops and houses meant that peasants would either die of hunger and exposure during the winter months or else be forced to flee. Either outcome was acceptable to Howard, who used scorched earth in 1522-3 to depopulate entire regions. On 30 August 1523, Wolsey noted that Howard had so completely destroyed Teviotdale and the Merse 'that ther is left neither house fortresse village tree cattail corne or other socour for man'. According to Wolsey, any of the former residents of this region who returned would find 'no sustentacion' and be reduced to starvation and begging and have to leave their homes.¹⁰¹ To ensure that this region was unable to sustain a population, Howard appointed six hundred horsemen from Northumberland to launch further attacks in November 1523 specifically to ensure that the local population did not attempt to return and sow winter cereals.¹⁰² Howard sought to create a belt of

⁹⁸ When Howard marched on Jedburgh in September 1523 he 'made all possible destruction of corn and houses on the way': *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3360.

⁹⁹ Morton, *Monastic Annals*, p. 31.

¹⁰⁰ *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3098.

¹⁰¹ *StP*, VI, p. 173.

¹⁰² *StP*, IV, p. 54.

wasteland twelve miles deep across the Borders so that 'few or none Scottishmen shall dwell, sow, or kepe catall' within twelve miles of the frontier.¹⁰³ The presence of a wasteland which lay beyond the inhabited ground formed a key element in the defensive strategy of English frontiers.¹⁰⁴ In 1523, Howard sought to extend this barrier into Scotland by creating an artificial waste devoid of people and buildings.¹⁰⁵

It was not enough to just to burn the villages: Howard had to make sure that the population did not return. As well as destroying their homes and sources of food, Howard hunted down Scottish villagers who had fled their villages to hide in remote locations. He enlisted five hundred men from Northumberland who knowing the terrain were to prevent the Scots from going to their 'cots as they wer wont to do when their howsis wer brent but shalbe enforced for lak off corne and vitell to abandon the contre and to leve the same wast'. These actions were intended to lead to prolonged depopulation of the Scottish Borders, because lands left untended over the winter months would become waste.¹⁰⁶ A rare surviving estate record from this period comes in the form of a return the Nisbet family made at Duns in November 1523 regarding the value of their lands, which shows that the estimated value of their lands in the Merse remained unchanged despite the English attacks on the region.¹⁰⁷ While Anthony

¹⁰³ BL Cotton MS Caligula B/VI, fols. 374r-374v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3321). See also: *LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3096.

¹⁰⁴ Ellis, *Defending*, p. 39.

¹⁰⁵ On Louis XIV's use of scorched earth to create 'an artificial desert': J. A. Lynn, 'A Brutal Necessity? The Devastation of the Palatinate, 1688-1689', *Path of War*, 92.

¹⁰⁶ BL Cotton MS Caligula B/VI, fols. 374r-374v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3321).

¹⁰⁷ National Library of Scotland MS Ch. 4787.

Goodman used this source to argue more widely that English attacks on the Scottish Borders caused little lasting damage, there are problems with this example.¹⁰⁸ First, while a Nisbet tower was pulled down early in 1523, the main family estates at East Nisbet – while situated close to Jedburgh, Kelso, Ednam and other places destroyed in 1523 – remained untouched. Second, correspondence between Sir William Bulmer, captain of Norham, and Thomas Howard, shows that members of the Nisbet family were spying for the English in 1523 (the destruction of their tower in early 1523 probably encouraged the Nisbets to save their estates by spying for Howard).¹⁰⁹ Certainly landowners in the Scottish Borders fed information to the English in 1523 to avoid the destruction of property, while leading border families sought to have their lands spared from destruction by assuring Howard that they would come to England and take oaths of loyalty to Henry VIII.¹¹⁰ The economic effects of destruction persisted for years after the land had recovered. Jedburgh was still selling lands in 1539 to repay the Scottish crown for undertaking for the reconstruction of the abbey following its destruction by the English in 1523.¹¹¹ The reports of English captains on the frontiers in 1523-4 also highlight the devastation of Teviotdale and the Merse. The series of major English incursions into Scotland in 1523 so effectively destroyed the Borders that by the end of the year raiding parties from Berwick had to travel far into Scotland to find goods to

¹⁰⁸ A. Goodman, 'The Impact of Warfare on the Scottish Marches, c.1481-c.1513', in *Conflicts, Consequence and the Crown in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. L. Clark (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), pp. 199-200.

¹⁰⁹ *LP* iii, pt. 2, no. 3456.

¹¹⁰ Bodleian Library (Oxford) MS Tanner 90, fol. 44v (*LP* iii, pt. 2, no. 3385).

¹¹¹ NRS CH6/6/1, fols. 4v-6r.

take and people to capture as there was nothing left on the frontiers.¹¹² Howard also achieved his aim of securing a lasting depopulation of the Scottish Borders. Dacre informed Wolsey in June 1524 that 'litill of nothing is left upon the frontiers of Scotland, without it be parte of ald howses' and that there was nothing left to burn.¹¹³

Although it was difficult to achieve such acute depopulation in northeastern France, which was much more densely inhabited than the Scottish Borders, Howard achieved considerable success in this respect. As the army burned its way across the Boulonnais and Picardy, the soldiers found that the population had fled from their settlements, which also perhaps explains the low number of direct attacks on the peasantry reported during the campaign.¹¹⁴ While some members of the native population started to return by the end of 1522, in many places peasants deferred coming back to their villages.¹¹⁵ In February 1523, Anne de Montmorency's revenue agent reported that taxation would be down that year because the peasants feared to return to the land.¹¹⁶ Using ravaging as a form of economic warfare designed to deprive lords of rent monies was of foremost importance to medieval commanders undertaking destructive campaigns.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, local nobles would have to pay considerable

¹¹² TNA SP 49/2, fols. 63-63v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 3570).

¹¹³ Morton, *Monastic Annals*, p. 31.

¹¹⁴ Hall, *Henry VIII*, I, p. 268.

¹¹⁵ BL Cotton MS Galba B/VII, fol. 376v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2678); TNA SP 1/26, fol. 192r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2706).

¹¹⁶ Potter, *War and Government*, p. 202.

¹¹⁷ M. Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066-1217* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 268.

sums to rebuild their homes. The 1522 campaign caused widespread effects across northern France. An assembly called to discuss the fortification of Abbeville led the municipal council to levy a tax on all the inhabitants of the town; the *grand sénéchal* of Normandy instructed Rouen's town council to prepare the city against English soldiers; while at Amiens Henry VIII's declaration of war led to a string of expensive defensive measures.¹¹⁸ The duke of Vendôme instructed the ruling council of Senlis to prepare itself against the Anglo-Imperial army and levied a *taille* of 930 *livres* on the inhabitants to pay for the war against the English, while the municipal deliberations of Beauvais reveal that the town was ill guarded as many had fled, which caused major disruption to the economy.¹¹⁹ The English sought to keep the French settlements situated in the immediate vicinity of the Calais Pale destroyed to create a defensive waste. Marquise, which was burned and pillaged in June 1523, was attacked again in October 1523 and destroyed along with a number of surrounding villages.¹²⁰ In short, the English invasion of 1522 led to an immediate and major negative impact on the economy of northern France, which extended far beyond the conflict zone.

Examinations of ravaging in the fourteenth century show that the effects of this type of warfare could also be long-lasting. The widespread destruction of Northumberland by the Scots in the early fourteenth century put many lands beyond

¹¹⁸ *Inventaire sommaire, Abbeville*, pp. 153-4; Archives Départementales [AD] Seine Maritime, Archives Municipales [AM] Rouen A 12, fol. 142r; AM Amiens BB 22, fol. 71v.

¹¹⁹ AD Oise, Archives Communales de Senlis BB 5, fols. 202v-203r, 212r; R. Rose, *Ville de Beauvais. Inventaire sommaire des archives communales antérieures à 1790* (Beauvais: Imprimerie Nationale, 1887), p. 15.

¹²⁰ Hall, *Henry VIII*, I, pp. 270-1.

cultivation and ensured that rents were unable to be collected for them.¹²¹ Although peasants' houses could be constructed quickly, buildings necessary for food production such as mills and storehouses, as well agricultural equipment such as draught horses and ploughs, were considerably more difficult to replace. Moreover, lands which were depopulated and left untended for even a season could take long to recover, while orchards took years to regrow.¹²² In his study of the impact of the devastation of the French countryside during the Hundred Years Wars, Robert Boutruche shows that areas destroyed by ravaging could suffer the consequences for years.¹²³ Fifteenth-century writers who witnessed the effects of this destruction, such as Thomas Basin and Sir John Fortescue, emphasised the sustained desolation present in many rural areas long after the war had ended, while Jean de Venette provides an eyewitness account of long-

¹²¹ J. Scammell, 'Robert I and the North of England', *English Historical Review*, lxxiii, (1958), pp. 387-9. Areas such as the palatinate of Durham escaped the worst of the destruction by paying the Scots protection money: R. Lomas, 'The Impact of Border Warfare: The Scots and South Tweedside, c.1290-c.1520', *Scottish Historical Review*, lxxv, (1996), p. 153. For the impact of Scottish raids on northern England, see: C. Macnamee, *The Wars of the Bruces: Scotland, England and Ireland, 1306-1328* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), pp. 72-122.

¹²² Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, pp. 269-70.

¹²³ R. Boutruche, 'The Devastation of Rural Areas during the Hundred Years War and the Agricultural Recovery of France', *The Recovery of France in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. P. S. Lewis (London: Macmillan, 1971), pp. 46-7.

lasting spoliation which a single *chevauchée* could have on a region.¹²⁴ Eyewitness accounts from the sixteenth century attest to a similar impact of English campaigns on the French countryside. For instance, the areas around Montdidier was so effectively destroyed by the English in 1523 that it still looked 'lately burned' to George Cavendish who visited the region in the company of Cardinal Wolsey four years later.¹²⁵

Thomas Howard's scorched earth campaigns in France and Scotland in 1522-3 marked an escalation in the violence of English warfare. Not since the Hundred Years War had an English army set out to inflict such widespread and deliberate destruction against civilian populations in France. While Lancastrian France collapsed in the mid-fifteenth century, English monarchs continued to lead invasions of France. Yet although Edward IV, Henry VII and Henry VIII all campaigned in France, and Richard III planned to do so, none of these expeditions saw devastation along the lines of that seen during the Hundred Years War. In Scotland, Howard's actions saw a return to the conditions of the fourteenth century, when widespread destruction was used by both sides. The *Westminster Chronicle* notes that English soldiers under Richard II marched through the Scottish Borders in 1385 'giving free and uninterrupted play to slaughter, rapine, and fire-raising all along a six-mile front and leaving the entire countryside in ruins behind

¹²⁴ *Chronique dite de Jean de Venette*, ed. C. Beaune (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 2011), pp. 214-15.

¹²⁵ George Cavendish, *Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey*, ed. R. Sylvester (London 1959), p. 57.

them'.¹²⁶ Between 1311 and 1328, the Scots destroyed those parts of northern England which did not pay them *appatis*, burning 'both the corn upon which the people depended for sustenance...and the houses wherein they had been able to take refuge'.¹²⁷ While this type of violence never entirely disappeared from Anglo-Scottish warfare, there are few examples of it being used on this scale during the fifteenth century, when the two kingdoms were often at peace. Yet Henry VIII's wars led to a resurgence in this type of violence, particularly during Howard's devastating war against the Scots in 1523, when targeted raids were used to destroy the frontier.

While the destruction of crops and villages was practiced widely across Europe, the scale and severity with which Thomas Howard employed it in France and Scotland in 1522-3 deviated from normal standards of behaviour. The English gained a reputation as specialists in scorched earth as a result of such campaigns. During the severe war Charles V launched against France in 1553, Adrien de Croÿ, count of Roeulx, observed that the English were the most skilled at burning.¹²⁸ Roeulx was in a good position to comment because he had fought alongside the English in the 1522 campaign and in 1544, when Thomas Howard systematically laid waste to the Boulonnais again. It is striking that even with years of experience of the brutal wars which devastated Europe that Roeulx singled out the English as being the most skilful at implementing a scorched earth strategy. Certainly, the English were long known for their aptitude at

¹²⁶ *The Westminster Chronicle 1381-1394*, eds. L. C. Hector and B. F. Harvey (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), p. 129.

¹²⁷ *The Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272-1346*, ed. H. E. Maxwell (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1913), p. 227.

¹²⁸ Gunn, *English People at War*, p. 105.

burning. In the early fifteenth century, Henry V, while prohibiting unauthorised burning in his military ordinances, destroyed the French countryside for strategic purposes. Jean Juvenal des Ursins records that when the population of Meaux came before Henry V to complain about his widespread burning of the countryside, the Lancastrian monarch replied that 'war without fire is worthless'.¹²⁹ With the breakdown of the Anglo-Burgundian alliance in 1435, Sir John Fastolf called for the implementation of scorched earth strategy across northern France, 'brennyng and distruynge alle the lande as thei pas, bothe hous, corne, veignes, and alle treis that beren fruyte for mannys sustenance, and alle bestaile that may not be driven, to be distroiede'. The slaughter of French peasants could be justified because they were 'traitours and rebellis [and] must nedis have anothere manere of werre, and more sharpe and more cruelle werre than a naturelle and anoiennemye'.¹³⁰

In contrast to Fastolf's view of the French peasantry, the population of the Boulonnais were not explicitly deemed rebels in 1522, which may explain why there is little evidence of the direct slaughter of the village populations of the Boulonnais (during Henry VIII invasion of France 1544 and English campaigns in Ireland later in the sixteenth century civilian populations were labelled as rebels and there were numerous instances of direct killing). Nonetheless, Howard's widespread devastation of

¹²⁹ Jean Juvenal des Ursins, 'Histoire de Charles VI, roi de France', in *Choix des chroniques et mémoires sur l'histoire de France. Tome XV*, ed. J.-A. C. Bouchon (Paris: Desrez, 1838), p. 565.

¹³⁰ *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France during the reign of Henry the sixth, king of England*, ed. J. Stevenson, 2 vols (London, 1861-4), II, pt. 2, pp. 580-1.

the land in both France and Scotland in 1522-3 was designed to create an artificial famine, so that even if peasants were spared direct killing they were left to starve. Destroying the land to create famine conditions was central to English military strategy. Vegetius' highly influential *De Re Militari* states that 'the main and principal point in war is to secure plenty of provisions for oneself and to destroy the enemy by famine. Famine is more terrible than the sword.'¹³¹

Thomas Howard was probably the man most responsible for the marked increase in the severity of English warfare during the early sixteenth century. He had burned crops and villages in France, Ireland and Scotland since serving on the Gascon expedition of 1512, though the degree of the devastation he caused in France and Scotland in the early 1520s was of a different magnitude. Howard may have looked back to the campaigns of Edward III and the Black Prince as a way to win honour in France following Henry VIII's resumption of the Hundred Years War. In any case, Howard became Henry VIII's leading man when he wanted to use brutal methods of warfare against civilian populations. He was kept away from the 1513 and 1523 campaigns in France, when Henry VIII sought to mitigate the impact of violence on civilian populations, and sent to implement his severe military methods in Scotland instead. While the king restrained him from using scorched earth against the rebels in the far

¹³¹ Cited in J. Gillingham, 'Richard I and the Science of War in the Middle Ages', in *War and Government: Essays in Honour of J. O. Prestwich*, eds., J. Gillingham and J. C. Holt (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1984), p. 85.

north of England in the late 1530s, he was brought back to France in 1544 to destroy the land and kill or drive out the native population.¹³²

The use of scorched earth tactics on this scale is often seen as being unique to English actions in Ireland in the sixteenth century, with some historians arguing that the Tudor monarchy employed brutal methods of warfare against the Gaelic Irish which they did not use when fighting other Europeans. Yet Tudor commanders first implemented scorched earth on a mass scale under Howard's leadership in the 1520s directly as a result of Henry VIII's increasing participation in continental European wars, of which the conflict with Scotland was an extension. Howard's large-scale scorched-earth campaigns of 1522-3 marked the beginning of a highly destructive period of English warfare which was aimed squarely at civilian populations. Right through to the end of Tudor rule, English monarchs employed the extensive use of scorched earth to lay waste to entire regions and create famine conditions.¹³³

The martial culture of Tudor England meant that noblemen were encouraged to implement this type of destructive warfare to win acclaim and further their careers. Thomas Howard knighted men following the sack of Morlaix in 1522 for their

¹³² R. Robson, *The English Highland Clans: Tudor Responses to a Mediaeval Problem* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1989), p. 149; N. Murphy, *The Tudor Occupation of Boulogne: Conquest, Colonisation and Imperial Monarchy, 1544-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 34-9.

¹³³ For Scotland in the 1540s, see: J. Bain, ed., *Hamilton Papers*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: HMGRH, 1890-2), I, p. xciv; A. F. Pollard, ed., *Tudor Tracts* (London: Constable, 1903), p. 43. For the Anglo-Scottish wars of the 1540s, see: M. Merriman, *The Rough Wooings: Mary Queen of Scots, 1542-1551* (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2000).

'hardinesse and noble courage', and he did the same again the following year in the ruins of Jedburgh, where the men knighted included Thomas Tempest, who had been entrusted with the burning of the town.¹³⁴ While an older generation of historians, particularly those who wrote critically of the medieval *chevauchée*, often working from texts often written by members of the clergy, saw the destruction of the land as an unchivalrous form of violence, more recent studies have shown that the burning of crops and villages had long been part of the profession of war and held no taint for nobles. Matthew Strickland notes the destruction of the land when carried out in the name of the king was a honourable form of warfare, while Nicholas Wright writes of the knight of the Hundred Years War emerging 'from the smoke of the burning villages...with his reputation as a just warrior unsullied.'¹³⁵ By burning crops and destroying villages in France and Scotland in 1522-3 Tudor nobles were following the actions of models of chivalry such as Edward III and Henry V. As Henry VIII modelled his wars in France on these two kings, Tudor nobles could hope to win acclaim from the English monarch by emulating his illustrious ancestors. While sixteenth-century humanists (like the medieval clergy) might condemn the implementation of this type of violence, it was sanctioned in laws of war and those at the very pinnacle of society advocated its use. Sir Thomas More wrote to Charles Brandon on behalf of Henry VIII in

¹³⁴ *Grafton's Chronicle*, 2 vols (London, 1809), II, p. 326; W. A. Shaw, *The Knights of England*, 2 vols (London: Sherratt and Hughes, 1906), II, pp. 44-5.

¹³⁵ Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, pp. 259, 281-90; N. Wright, *Knights and Peasants: The Hundred Years War in the French Countryside* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), p. 33.

1523, in advance of another English campaign in France, advocating the 'burnyng and spoile' of the countryside.¹³⁶

There was a connection between the campaigns of 1522-3 and the introduction of an extensive scorched earth strategy into other Tudor frontiers. It was during the mid-1530s when the English under Lord Leonard Grey first introduced mass scorched earth methods into Ireland. As David Edwards notes, Grey's appointment to Ireland in 1534 'signaled the introduction of a new set of standards concerning what constituted acceptable violence'.¹³⁷ As in France and Scotland in 1522-3, Grey destroyed large tracts of the countryside to create a waste.¹³⁸ Yet Grey was not devising new methods in Ireland – rather, he was introducing methods of violence he had first used elsewhere. Grey fought with Howard both on his French campaign in 1522, which destroyed northeastern France, and then again when he devastated the Scottish Borders in the following year. He took the tactics he had used to waste large swathes of France and Scotland in the early 1520s and applied them in Ireland a decade later, when he was tasked with the suppression of the Kildare rebellion.¹³⁹ It was because the mass implementation of scorched earth was such an effective method of warfare that it re-emerged as a key military strategy during the 1520s and came to be increasingly implemented across various English theatres of conflict throughout the sixteenth century and beyond.

¹³⁶ *StP*, I, p. 139

¹³⁷ Edwards, 'Escalation', p. 60.

¹³⁸ *StP*, II, pp. 263-8.

¹³⁹ *Chronicle of Calais*, pp. 31-2; BL Cotton MS Caligula B/II, fols. 156r-159r (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no 3039), B/VI, fol. 325v (*LP* iii. pt. 2, no. 2955); *LP* iii. pt. 2, nos. 3129, 3130.

