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# **Edward I and the Anglo-French War: The Relief of Gascony, 1294-97**

A C Drake

PhD

2021

# **Edward I and the Anglo-French War: The Relief of Gascony, 1294-97**

Adam Christian Drake

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Northumbria at Newcastle for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Research undertaken in the Faculty of Arts, Design & Social Sciences

September 2021

## **Declaration**

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas, and contributions from the work of others.

**I declare that the Word Count of this Thesis is 77,248 excluding footnotes and bibliography.**

Adam Drake

23 September 2021

*For Anthony Hartley*

*1940-2021*

## Abstract

This study aims to provide a new interpretation of Edward I's army in Gascony throughout the Anglo-French war (1294-1297). The conflict has been viewed as a futile cause because only very small numbers of English troops departed for the duchy, yet it will be the intention here to explore the military effectiveness of these contingents. This will be achieved through an assessment of the organisation, strategy, and tactics of the expeditionary forces. This is important for it will highlight how the English pursued the same military policy, with increasing success, from 1294 through to victory at Poitiers in 1356.

The first part of the thesis, chapters two and three, will investigate the military composition of the expeditionary forces, providing a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the king's overseas army. Chapters four and five will assess the strategy of the military command against the backdrop of a French ambush at Bellegarde and the scorched earth policy of the earl of Lincoln. The second part, chapters six and seven, will highlight the contribution of Edward's continental allies, from the mounted retinues of Gascon and Aragonese troops to the resurgence of a Grand Alliance across the Low Countries. And finally, chapter eight will set the Anglo-French war within the ever-expanding military revolution debate, here proposing that an *evolutionary* process was taking place within the Edwardian army.

Overall, the thesis will place the Anglo-French war at the head of a series of late medieval conflicts between the English and French, but more importantly, it will be argued that the campaign was the catalyst for the Hundred Years War, both in its origins as a dispute over ancestral right and sovereignty, and in the ways the English military command conducted the expeditions.

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## Author's Note

Throughout the study, foreign names have either taken the form of the English translation, such as Philip the Fair or Robert of Artois, or have been given in their original language if there is no common translation, such as Arnaud-Guillaume de Marsan and Pons de Castillon.

Regarding money, English sums have generally been given in both pounds (£), shillings (*s.*) and pence (*d.*), and on occasion the term *livres sterling* (equivalent to 20 shillings) has been used to denote pounds when directly quoted from a source. The other unit of currency used in England at this time was the mark, this was equivalent to 13*s.* 4*d.* and has been used on occasion. Other units of currency that were in circulation throughout the period and have been referred to within the study are the *livres tournois* (*l.t.*), or sometimes the black money of Tours; the *livres bordelais* (*l.b.*), the money of Bordeaux; and the *livres chapotenses* (*l.ch.*) from Bigorre.

The term “Gascony” has been used throughout instead of Aquitaine to denote the English controlled portion of south-western France.

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Map 1. The Duchy of Aquitaine before 1337. A large part of the English war effort between 1294 and 1297 took place in the Bordelais, and along Gascony's southern region in the Landes. Map created by G. Pépin and S.L. Harris, 'The Gascon Rolls Project (1317-1468)', [www.gasconrolls.org](http://www.gasconrolls.org).

## One

### **Introduction: Merchants at war and failed negotiations**

Edward I's military campaign in Gascony has become somewhat of a "forgotten war", certainly in the context of Anglo-French warfare during the later Middle Ages. This study will attempt to rectify this by signalling the conflict as the catalyst for more than a century's long struggle in France, one that initially began as a conflict over ancestral right before the issue of sovereignty. The Anglo-French war began on 19 May 1294 when Philip IV confiscated the duchy of Gascony from his "defaulting" vassal Edward I, as duke of Aquitaine, rupturing the amicable feudal relationship between the kings of England and France ('cette rupture des relations féodales').<sup>1</sup>

Yet, it was only since the Treaty of Paris in 1259 that Gascony's status as a free and independent land (*allod*) — inherited by English kings on their accession to the throne through ancestral right — changed. Up until this point, Gascony had been part of the landed wealth originally acquired by Henry II (r.1154-1189) through his marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine, however, after the peace treaty in the following century Gascony, 'the apple of English (royal) eyes', became legal property of the kingdom of France.<sup>2</sup> The negotiation between Henry III of England (r.1216-1272) and Louis IX of France (r.1226-1270) effectively made the English king-dukes vassals to the French Crown overnight.

The treaty was certainly a greater victory for the French, clearly expressed in Louis' claim that "the king of England is now my vassal, which he was not before"; it was seen as a victory

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<sup>1</sup> *Rôles Gascons*, ed. C. Bémont, Volume iii, (Paris, 1906), cxxx-cxxxi, [hereafter, *RG*]; M.R. Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century, 1216-1307* (Oxford, 1953), 648; R. Studd, 'A Fragile Tenure: England & Gascony 1216-1337', *History Today*, 36:4 (1986), 42. The position of the English king as duke of Aquitaine was the 'most enduring continental role in the period', lasting from 1154 to 1453, see A.C. Ruddick, 'Gascony and the Limits of Medieval British Isles History', in *Ireland and the English World in the Late Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Frame*, ed. B. Smith, (Basingstoke, 2009), 69.

<sup>2</sup> M.G.A. Vale, *The Ancient Enemy: England, France and Europe from the Angevins to the Tudors* (London, 2007), 35; Studd, 'A Fragile Tenure', 36; M. Burrows, 'The Publication of the Gascon Rolls by the British and French Governments, Considered as a New Element in English History', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6 (1892), 109; Amicie Péliissié du Rausas, ' 'Ad Partes Transmarinas': The Reconfiguration of Plantagenet Power in Gascony, 1242-1243', in A. Spencer and C. Watkins, eds., *Thirteenth Century England XVII: Proceedings of the Cambridge Conference, 2017* (Cambridge, 2021), 65; Vale, *The Ancient Enemy*, 33; P. Chaplais, 'The Making of the Treaty of Paris (1259) and the Royal Style', *The English Historical Review*, 67:263 (April, 1952), 235-253.

because now Gascon appeals against English jurisdiction could be presented to the *parlement* in Paris, while it was also to be expected that the king-dukes were to perform liege homage and to provide military support to the king of France — both undertakings significantly emphasised the king-duke's subordinate status in the feudal hierarchy.<sup>3</sup> However, feudal overlordship had never truly been clear-cut, and when Henry III had endeavoured to ascertain his rights in the duchy prior to 1259 it was almost as if he was trying “to plough the seashore” such were the challenges of imposing royal rule in a semi-autonomous region.<sup>4</sup>

The reason behind the treaty was to broker a peace between England and France after a series of military setbacks for Henry III through the acknowledgment by right of conquest to the loss of Normandy, Anjou, Maine, Touraine, and Poitou in King John's reign (1199-1216).<sup>5</sup> In return, the English king-duke's position as one of the Twelve Peers of France, like that of the count of Flanders for instance, was reaffirmed; while, in theory, the king-duke was allocated a cohort of 500 knights from the French Crown for Holy Crusade or “to the profit of the kingdom of England”; the king-duke was also granted the fiefdoms of Limoges, Cahors, Périgueux, the Agenais, Quercy, and the lands south of the Charente in the Saintonge, extending their continental possessions in the south-west of France.

However, Henry III and his successors had, on the face of it, gained very little. According to Robin Studd the ‘French king did not hold much territory personally in these bishoprics, and the lands held here by his brother [Alphonse of Poitiers] were specifically exempted by the terms of the treaty’.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Alphonse's succession to the title of count of Toulouse in 1249 (a result of his marriage to Raymond VII's daughter), meant that Henry had a potential enemy immediately to the east of his borders. Nevertheless, what Henry had gained through these fiefdoms was the nominal title of

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<sup>3</sup>Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, ed. N. de Wailly, (Paris, 1874), 65, in M. Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony, 1204-1453* (London, 1980), 34; Studd, ‘A Fragile Tenure’, 39.

<sup>4</sup>D. Carpenter, *Henry III: The Rise to Power and Personal Rule 1207-1258* (London, 2020), 489.

<sup>5</sup>Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 29; Vale, *The Ancient Enemy*, 30; Chaplais, ‘The Making of the Treaty of Paris’, 240. This even extended to any claims that were made by King John's ancestors, namely Richard of Cornwall, Henry's brother, along with his sister the countess of Leicester, see *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1247-1258*, 663, [hereafter, *CPR*]; Studd, ‘A Fragile Tenure’, 36-39; C. Warren Hollister, ‘King John and the Historians’, *Journal of British Studies*, 1:1 (November, 1961), 6; G. Small, *Late Medieval France* (Basingstoke, 2009), 46.

<sup>6</sup>Studd, ‘A Fragile Tenure’, 38.

overlord which proved enough for the king of England to agree to the terms; terms that, as will be demonstrated, were only effective while both monarchs were willing participants.

In 1293 this feudal relationship was severely tested when the French blamed Edward I (and particularly his Bayonnais subjects) for a series of unprovoked and subsequently fatal attacks upon merchant sailors from Normandy.<sup>7</sup> These origins of the Anglo-French war remain ambiguous, and although there are several contemporary chronicle accounts that recall the breakdown in royal relations — ranging from Walter of Guisborough and Peter Langtoft, to the anonymous Lanercost chronicler (or chroniclers) — the benchmark for our understanding of events (and still the most plausible) remains Charles Bémont's translation in the late nineteenth century compilation of the Gascon Rolls.<sup>8</sup>

The Gascon Rolls are the series of surviving records for the administration of the duchy under English rule. And from the available evidence Bémont was able to lay the root cause of the conflict in the acts of piracy and bloody retaliations ('actes de piraterie et de sanglantes représailles') off the coast of Brittany between English, Gascon and Norman merchant sailors; the two main episodes, according to Bémont, came in an Anglo-Gascon attack on La Rochelle, alongside a heavy defeat for a Norman fleet close to Cap Saint-Mathieu on 15 May 1293.<sup>9</sup> Yet, as with all outbreaks of war in the Middle Ages there are varying contemporary interpretations.

Walter of Guisborough, for instance, claimed that a brawl in a Norman port between some locals and the crew of an English ship had left one Norman dead, while the Bridlington chronicler, Peter Langtoft, reported how the 'English and Normans have commenced at sea, Each war upon other, and have given battle. Much people was killed there on both sides; The Normans at sea have

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<sup>7</sup> E.M. Hallam, *Capetian France 987-1328* (London, 1980), 280; M.G.A. Vale, *The Origins of the Hundred Years War: The Angevin Legacy 1250-1340* (Oxford, 1996), 183, 193-194.

<sup>8</sup> It is likely that the Lanercost account derives from a group of individuals who were either Minorite friars from Carlisle or Augustinian priors from Lanercost itself. The works cover a long period of time from 1201 to 1346, meaning that there were many different compilers of the chronicle across different periods. For the purposes of this research the works will be referred to in the singular tense. See *The Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272-1346*, ed. H.E. Maxwell, (Glasgow, 1913), vi; A. King and D. Simpkin, eds., *England and Scotland at War, c.1296-c.1513* (Leiden: Boston, 2012), 9. For Bémont's translation see *RG*, iii, cxxvi-cxxxi.

<sup>9</sup> *RG*, iii, cxxvi; M. Prestwich, *Edward I* (London, 1988), 377.

lost their power'.<sup>10</sup> The Lanercost chronicler — who was presumably writing the account from four hundred miles away on the Anglo-Scottish border — was able to provide more detail; the chronicler reported that an 'intestine naval war between the English and the French' had broken out close to Saint-Mathieu, 'where the French lost two hundred and fourteen vessels and six thousand and sixty men; but on the English side only three men perished'.<sup>11</sup>

It is worth noting that these inflated figures should be treated with caution as they are likely given due to the increasing sense of national pride amongst political commentators; a national pride that had developed since the separation of England and its continental possessions in the first half of the thirteenth century. Significantly, the Lanercost chronicler's death toll for the Norman fleet resembles far more closely that of an invading army rather than a fishing armada, and for this reason should be treated with some scepticism. Nevertheless, what the chronicler does provide is a clear image of the growing hostility between the merchant sailors of both kingdoms.<sup>12</sup>

In response the English crews had claimed that the Norman merchant ships had flown 'bausons or streamers of red sendal', "which everywhere amongst mariners mean death without quarter and war to the knife", while on another occasion it seems that a deserted ship anchored out to sea had been placed there to mark the location of the next battle.<sup>13</sup> Still, the reason behind the conflict at sea, in what was effectively a "merchant navy war", is unclear but it is reasonable to suggest that it most likely derived from a private struggle over fishing rights and local rivalries.

Envoys were dispatched by Edward I to Paris to appease the situation (the first group notably involved the king's brother, Edmund, earl of Lancaster).<sup>14</sup> Yet, although Edward had attempted to distance himself from the events at sea Philip endeavoured to assert his position as superior overlord, exercising his rights through the 1259 treaty. Not only did the French king demand the voluntary

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<sup>10</sup> *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, ed. H. Rothwell, (Camden Series, 1957), 240; M. Morris, *A Great and Terrible King: Edward I and the Forging of Britain* (London, 2008), 264; *The Chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft*, ed. T. Wright, ii (Rolls series, 1868), 197.

<sup>11</sup> *Lanercost*, 104.

<sup>12</sup> Vale, *The Ancient Enemy*, 24; Studd, 'A Fragile Tenure', 36. Since the loss of Normandy in 1204, the English Channel had become a political and cultural barrier.

<sup>13</sup> Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, 644; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 377.

<sup>14</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 378; W.M. Ormrod, 'Love and War in 1294', in *Thirteenth Century England VIII: Proceedings of the Durham Conference 1999*, eds., M. Prestwich, R. Britnell and R. Frame, (Woodbridge, 2001), 145.

surrender of Edward's officials in Gascony — in what was effectively the first attempt to confiscate the duchy — but when Edward tried to extricate himself from his feudal bond with Philip the king- duke was summoned to appear at *parlement* to answer for the events at sea: Edward ignored the summons.<sup>15</sup>

Despite this act of rebellion by a vassal to the French Crown, Edward did make one final attempt at the start of 1294 to placate his liege lord.<sup>16</sup> Again, Edmund of Lancaster was sent to negotiate with Philip IV in what seemed to be a wise decision on Edward's part. Edmund was not only married to the widowed Blanche of Artois, countess of Champagne, but Blanche's daughter (Edmund's stepdaughter) through her previous marriage to the former king of Navarre was now Philip IV's wife, Jeanne.<sup>17</sup> With the aid of the French queen the negotiations initially seemed to go well and, in what may have been deemed to be an advantageous political agreement between both parties, it was decided that the major towns and fortresses in Gascony — including Bordeaux where the English exchequer was — were to be handed over to Philip's Capetian officials throughout March, certifying his position there as superior overlord, before finally being restored to Edward within forty days.<sup>18</sup> In return Edward's summons to the *parlement* was revoked and a marriage alliance between Edward and Margaret (Philip's sister) was arranged.

Strict orders were issued to keep the agreement as a private matter, perhaps to preserve Edward's dignity, yet the surrender of Gascony to the French Crown was publicly proclaimed throughout France to 'satisfy opinion', particularly in Normandy where the merchant sailors had protested that they had 'lost their ships, their wares, and their money' in the attacks out at sea.<sup>19</sup> Once in possession of Gascony, however, Philip changed his mind as he ordered his forces to strengthen their hold over the towns and strongholds in the region, while renewing Edward's summons to

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<sup>15</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 378.

<sup>16</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 187.

<sup>17</sup> Ormrod, 'Love and War in 1294', 145.

<sup>18</sup> Langtoft, 199; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 378-379; Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, 646-647; Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 267-268; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 188.

<sup>19</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 379; Langtoft, 201.

*parlement*. In the words of Langtoft, Philip and his court had ‘By premeditated deceit ... given judgment, And have deprived sir Edward for ever Of the lands of Gascony’.<sup>20</sup>

Contemporaries, according to Kathleen B. Neal, were incensed by Edward’s uncharacteristic lack of judgement and, quite understandably, were ‘driven to generate their own fantastical explanations’ for the sudden loss of Gascony.<sup>21</sup> The most prominent of these was Edward’s desire, Langtoft reported, ‘To espouse a noble lady of high descent, Of whom he might have issue for his heirs, To restore the peace and nourish friendship, And save the two kingdoms, that there should be no fighting’.<sup>22</sup> The intended bride, suggested Langtoft and which was also supported by Bartholomew Cotton, was that of Blanche, Philip IV’s younger half-sister, and not Margaret as has later been identified.<sup>23</sup>

Yet this dissemination of contemporary ‘hearsay, rumour and gossip’, writes W.M. Ormrod, was a way for the English people (and Gascons for that matter) to understand the reasons behind the ‘embarrassing failure’ that was the so-called “secret treaty”.<sup>24</sup> This, however, only gave way for further condemnation of the king, for not only would any of Edward’s ancestors through this marriage alliance have created a ‘cadet line of the Plantagenet dynasty’ in the region — and therefore ‘reneging on the settlement of 1254 that guaranteed the inseparability of the crown of England and the duchy’ — but Edward’s pursuit of a marriage alliance with that of the twelve year old Blanche (when Edward himself was fifty-five) created an image of the king as a ‘*senex amans*, the old man driven mad by his lust for a beautiful young woman’.<sup>25</sup>

Whether Edward did intend to avoid war through, what Ormrod terms, ‘the power of love’, remains highly debatable and it is still far more likely that Philip was ultimately pushed to annexe the territory (once he was in control of the vast majority of the duchy’s key towns and strongholds)

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<sup>20</sup> Langtoft, 201.

<sup>21</sup> K.B. Neal, *The Letters of Edward I: Political Communication in the Thirteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2021), 153; Ormrod, ‘Love and War in 1294’, 144-145.

<sup>22</sup> Langtoft, 197.

<sup>23</sup> *Bartholomaei de Cotton, Historia Anglicana (A.D. 449-1298)*, ed. H.R. Luard, (Rolls series, 1859), 232.

<sup>24</sup> Ormrod, ‘Love and War in 1294’, 147-148.

<sup>25</sup> Ormrod, ‘Love and War in 1294’, 149. It must be stated that conjugal relations, dictated by royal convention, would have been reserved until the girl was of at least fifteen years old, given to the dangers attributed to childbirth at such a young age.

through the manipulation of an anti-English faction at court, a council of “prud’hommes” ‘who advised and informed him’.<sup>26</sup> The final decision on any important issue would still have been made by the French king, yet it has been claimed that Philip would often listen and ‘rarely spoke, leaving it to ministers to speak for him. He is accused of letting officials do the work and giving way to their demands’.<sup>27</sup> This faction was headed by the king’s brother, Charles of Valois, but it also included Raoul de Clermont-Nesle, the constable of France; the Crown lawyer, Pierre Flote; and the main French protagonist in the war, Robert II, Count of Artois.

The failed negotiations had left Edward dispossessed of his inheritance, yet it had also humiliated the king of England. Not only had Edward seemed foolish in delivering into Capetian control the last remaining continental territory belonging to the kings of England (by birth right), but at a time when Edward was also engaged in domestic military and political affairs both in Wales and Scotland, coupled with his plans for a crusade to the Holy Land, the king of England faced no other alternative but to mount a costly and time-consuming defensive campaign to relieve Gascony of its French occupants.<sup>28</sup>

## Societies at War

The English diplomatic efforts prior to the outbreak of war have been branded a complete ‘failure’ by Michael Prestwich, who continued in his damning verdict of the 1293 and 1294 negotiations by suggesting that they ‘must rank with the appeasement policies before the Second World War as among the most dismal episodes of English foreign policy’.<sup>29</sup> The efforts to settle the dispute, and to place complete trust in Philip’s word that he would hand back Gascony within the allotted time-frame was certainly a risky decision and it was far from Edward’s finest hour. Yet, there

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<sup>26</sup> Ormrod, ‘Love and War in 1294’, 152. For the anti-English faction see Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 198-200; Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 268; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 378; Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, 646; J.R. Strayer, ‘Philip the Fair – A “Constitutional” King’, *The American Historical Review*, 62:1 (October, 1956), 30.

<sup>27</sup> J. Bradbury, *The Capetians: Kings of France 987-1328* (London, 2007), 240; Strayer, ‘Philip the Fair’, 32.

<sup>28</sup> ‘Edward I: Summer 1294’, *Parliamentary Rolls of Medieval England*, eds., C. Given-Wilson, P. Brand, S. Phillips, M. Ormrod, G. Martin, A. Curry, and R. Horrox, (Woodbridge, 2005), *British History Online*, [www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk). [accessed 3 April 2019], [hereafter, *PROME*]; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 379; Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 269-270.

<sup>29</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 380.

is also an argument to be made, certainly one set forth by J.F. Verbruggen and Jim Bradbury, that Philip and his council were focused on a ‘policy of expansion’, and of ‘strengthening the frontiers’ while ‘tightening its grip over both demesne and realm’: any promises of returning Gascony were nothing more than a pretext.<sup>30</sup>

Regardless, Edward had made it easy for a French annexation of the region by agreeing to the demands at an early stage in the proceedings, a decision that was seemingly made worse when, according to Bémont, Margaret (or Blanche, as contemporaries viewed it) later refused Edward’s hand in marriage, therefore removing the only certain reserve for the restitution of the duchy (‘et ainsi tombait la suele reserve certaine mise dans le traité à la restitution du duché’).<sup>31</sup> For Margaret Labarge, the French court’s political deception was nothing more than a ‘crass’ undertaking, and the occupation of Gascony was built upon ‘faithless opportunism’, particularly at the expense of the king’s brother, Edmund of Lancaster, who, as Prestwich points out, was ‘too trusting in what was said to him’.<sup>32</sup>

Yet, underhanded practices such as these were a way for Philip to extend the royal demesne, certainly by framing his opponent in the region as a “trouble-causing” vassal and, subsequently, a defaulter by not appearing at *parlement* when summoned. Philip and his advisors were testing the king-duke’s resolve, while Edward and his envoys (although initially preferring a peaceful approach) refused to acknowledge the feudal summons, breaking the protocol between lord and vassal and in their view allowing the king of England to go to war against Philip as his equal and not as an unruly subject. Yet, to quote Philippe Wolff, what was to be expected when two sovereign authorities were forced to play “the old game of lord and vassal?”<sup>33</sup>

The Anglo-French war, which for this study will be centred on the years between the outbreak of war in Gascony during 1294 and the formal peace treaty of 1297, was the first military engagement

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<sup>30</sup> J.F. Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs (Courtrai, 11 July 1302): A Contribution to the History of Flanders’ War of Liberation, 1297-1305*, ed. K. DeVries and trans. D.R. Ferguson, (Woodbridge, 2002), 13; Bradbury, *The Capetians*, 242-243; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 376.

<sup>31</sup> *RG*, iii, cxxix.

<sup>32</sup> Labarge, *Gascony, England’s First Colony*, 66; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 380.

<sup>33</sup> P. Wolff, ‘Un problème d’origines: La Guerre de Cent Ans’, *Evertail de l’histoire vivante: Hommage é Lucien Fébuer*, ii (Paris, 1953), 147-8, in Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 4.

between the two kingdoms of England and France for more than fifty years — since Henry III's ill-fated Taillebourg-Saintes campaign in the early 1240s.<sup>34</sup> For some historians the Anglo-French war proved to be little more than a futile affair. Joseph Strayer in particular believed it was 'one of those wars that accomplish nothing and should never have occurred', while Prestwich has taken a similar stance in suggesting that Edward I's war with the French king 'was the last of the series of thirteenth-century military failures on the continent' for the English Crown.<sup>35</sup> For Malcolm Vale though, the military engagement deserves a greater status amidst the catalogue of late medieval conflicts for its impact would transcend the reigns of both Edward I and Philip IV; according to Vale the Anglo-French war 'marked a watershed in relations between the two powers' as 'trust and cordiality were never fully re-established'.<sup>36</sup>

The breakdown in royal relations in the mid-1290s certainly created a "cold war" scenario between England and France, one which has prompted Labarge to point out that the Anglo-French war should indeed be seen as 'the first military episode in a struggle which was to continue over 160 years'.<sup>37</sup> Richard Kaeuper has also supported this view in his claims that 'in 1294 the two great kingdoms went to war against each other, in effect beginning the series of Anglo-French wars which would last to the middle of the fifteenth century, one portion of which we are accustomed to isolate as the Hundred Years War (1337-1453)'.<sup>38</sup> And K.B. McFarlane went a step further by suggesting that Anglo-French warfare would resurface due to the same issues 'from the time of Edward I to that of Henry VIII', while Maurice Powicke categorised the Anglo-French war of the mid-1290s as a 'complicated series of dramatic events', and a landmark moment in 'the history of the west of Europe'.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> For Henry III's campaigns at Taillebourg and Saintes, see Carpenter, *Henry III*, 261-263; also, Vale, *The Ancient Enemy*, 39; N. Denholm-Young, 'Feudal Society in the Thirteenth Century: The Knights', *History*, 29:110 (1944), 109; Studd, 'A Fragile Tenure', 37-38.

<sup>35</sup> J.R. Strayer, 'The Costs and Profits of War: the Anglo-French conflict of 1294-1303', in *The Medieval City*, eds., H.A. Miskimin, D. Herlihy, and A.L. Udovitch, (New Haven, 1977), 270; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 381.

<sup>36</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 227.

<sup>37</sup> Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 63; J. Maddicott, 'The Origins of the Hundred Years War', *History Today*, xxxvi (1986), 35; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 244.

<sup>38</sup> R.W. Kaeuper, *War, Justice and Public Order: England and France in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1988), 4.

<sup>39</sup> K.B. McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England* (Oxford, 1978), 5; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 3; Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, 644.

Yet despite these views the Anglo-French war has always played a supporting role in the great panoply of Edward I's military endeavours, often as a sideshow to the king's greater achievements in Wales during the 1270s and 1280s, and in Scotland, particularly in 1296 and 1298.<sup>40</sup> The reasons behind this are simple. The main concern for the military historian is that firstly, Edward did not want an overseas war (unless this was a joint campaign with the king of France in the Holy Land), and secondly, when pushed to send a relief effort the two expeditions to Gascony (the first in 1294 and the second in 1296), only ever consisted of very small numbers of men-at-arms and infantry troops. Interestingly around 300 of these infantrymen involved in the first expedition alone were released criminals who had been handed their freedom from gaol or outlawry in return for overseas service.<sup>41</sup>

Further still, the conflict never progressed from the siege or the counter-siege. The war came to an unsatisfactory conclusion, certainly in terms of an outright military victory for either side, while Edward's ambitions to fund an alliance of Northern European princes against Philip IV spiralled out of financial control; political unrest in England on the eve of the Flanders expedition in 1297 threatened to destabilise Edward's plans, adding to the list of growing setbacks for the king's military ambitions. The only proactive form of warfare for the English (the earl of Lincoln's *chevauchée*) came too late as a battle-seeking initiative as the main French army under the leadership of Robert of Artois had left the region to counteract Edward's landing in the Low Countries: both sides were struggling with fatigue and disease by this point (particularly epidemic typhus, a fever often brought on by overcrowded camps and a lowered standard of living), which most likely contributed to the untimely and unforeseen death of Edmund of Lancaster at Bayonne in 1296.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Important studies of Edward I's wars in Wales and Scotland are R.R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales, 1063-1415* (Oxford, 1987); A. Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers in the Later Middle Ages, 1282-1422* (Woodbridge, 2015); J.E. Morris, *The Welsh Wars of Edward I* (Oxford, 1901); D. Simpkin, *The English Aristocracy at War: From the Welsh Wars of Edward I to the Battle of Bannockburn* (Woodbridge, 2008); F.J. Watson, *Under the Hammer: Edward I and Scotland, 1286-1306* (East Lothian, 1998); M. Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance under Edward I* (London, 1972).

<sup>41</sup> For royal pardoning see N.D. Hurnard, *The King's Pardon For Homicide Before A.D. 1307* (Oxford, 1969), 311-312; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 381; *RG*, iii, cxxxviii.

<sup>42</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 211.

Perhaps the haphazard way in which a relief force was assembled has proven detrimental to the effectiveness of the campaign. And questions regarding the Crown's expectations of the first and second expeditionary forces will be raised in the thesis: for example, how could a limited number of troops, including recently released criminals, be expected to remove the most efficient army in Western Europe? What qualities, in terms of military skill, were the hastily assembled troops able to contribute to a war in a geographically challenging region? What was the *modus operandi* of the military captains on campaign, and how were they influenced in their decision making? What was the operational role of the Anglo-Gascon warrior elite when there was no formal confrontation with the French army? Why did Edward aim to open a new front in the war in Flanders when the conflict in Gascony was, seemingly, far from over? And, what impact did this have on the more "successful" campaigns of Edward II and Edward III in Gascony, or further afield in Northern France for that matter?

By addressing these questions, it will become clear to see how Edward's expeditionary forces were successful in maintaining a foothold in the region. Yet, not only did the Anglo-Gascon army prove to be a stubborn opponent for Philip's forces, but their way of operating would have a far more damaging impact for long-term French superiority in the south-west of the kingdom. The organisation, strategy, and tactics of the expeditionary forces laid the foundation stone for future campaigns in the region to succeed. And although errors were made by Edward I (particularly in Flanders) the experience on the continent became the building block for English armies to learn from.

The overall intention of this study will be to propose that the Anglo-French war was an important break from the past military failures of Henry III and King John, not a continuation; and the organisation, strategy, and tactics of the English expeditionary forces would eventually come to influence the most renowned military leader of the later Middle Ages: Edward of Woodstock, the Black Prince. By 1356 the English army had become the 'most consistent and most feared in Europe', yet prior to the battle of Poitiers the Black Prince was still deploying a similar battle-*seeking* tactic to that of the earl of Lincoln sixty years earlier.<sup>43</sup> Any connection between the two episodes has, until

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<sup>43</sup> R. Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England: The Battle of Crécy and the Company of the Garter* (London, 2013), 463.

this point, remained largely overlooked most likely because Lincoln ultimately failed in his objective to bring Artois to do battle, and because the Edwardian army of the late thirteenth century had not fully perfected the art of scorched earth to the same degree and intensity that Edward III's would later do.

Nevertheless, the underlying importance of the Anglo-French war is that it gave the English and their allies a preliminary run in how to wage a successful defensive war on French soil, whilst it also coincided with an increasing network of inter-frontal warzones. For this reason, comparisons in military techniques across all theatres of Edward I's conflicts will be made, particularly where the king's Scottish wars are concerned. North of the English border battlefield encounters were often encouraged by Edward and his military command, unlike in Gascony where the warrior elite had to adapt their skill set to hit and run tactics and the siege. The English war aim in Scotland was always to force the enemy into the open and to remove the heart of resistance as swiftly as possible, ideally with a battlefield encounter where a cavalry charge was deployed ahead of the main mass of infantry troops (although the surrender of a castle was as equally satisfying to the king, as witnessed at Dunbar in 1296).<sup>44</sup> To effectively compare Edward's "traditional" battlefield-focused form of warfare to that undertaken in Gascony, the study will explore three main areas: military organisation, strategy, and tactics. In turn, these subject areas will draw in ancillary topics such as elite imprisonment and the ransom, chivalry in war, the medieval warhorse, and fortification design, to name a few.

To begin, chapter two will offer a new appraisal of the Anglo-Gascon army through a qualitative and quantitative approach; this will not only challenge the previously accepted figures for the two expeditionary forces, but it will also assess its long-term impact on the overseas armies of Edward II (particularly between 1324-25), and Edward III from 1337. Military recruitment will again form the topic for chapter three; however, this chapter will focus on Edward's novel decision to release prisoners from gaol in return for military service in Gascony. The Crown initiative has been viewed by some historians — both past and present — as setting a dangerous precedent, yet the chapter will argue that there was a more cautious approach at hand, one that accounted for the martial

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<sup>44</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 473.

skill of the individual.<sup>45</sup> Again, this method of military recruitment proved popular and would resurface time and again throughout the entirety of the Hundred Years War.

Chapter four will look to examine how the Anglo-Gascon army avoided complete defeat in the aftermath of Robert of Artois' ambush at Bellegarde, and with the subsequent loss of the English seneschal, John of St John. This chapter will allow for an opportunity to examine the development of elite imprisonment, and by due process, the laws of war and chivalry in combat. It will also allow for a comparison of the state of military conduct between the English and French forces at this particular juncture with the later conflicts at Crécy, Poitiers and Agincourt, for instance, where large-scale battles such as these often degenerated into *guerre mortelle* and no quarter was given.

In the early months of 1297, the Anglo-French war ground to a stalemate. However, it fell to the earl of Lincoln — as the newly appointed seneschal — to implement a *battle-seeking* tactic to turn the tide of war. Chapter five will look at how effective the earl's scorched earth policy was as a form of economic warfare (a tactic that, as will be argued, was drawn straight from Vegetius' classical military manual) while also providing an account of the potential route taken by the Anglo-Gascon force (a novel approach to military strategy which has recently been undertaken by historians in the study of the Black Prince's *chevauchée*, as discussed shortly).

Chapter six offers an opportunity to assess the king's heavy cavalry during the conflict, especially as there was, seemingly, little need for their presence: the war had centred around the siege and there was no battlefield encounter. This chapter will therefore offer an alternative theory for the heavy cavalry's presence by examining the operational role; the military function; and the collective status of the knight banneret and bachelor on campaign. By the summer of 1297, however, the war had taken a drastic turn northwards towards Flanders as Edward hoped to open a new front against Philip with the aid of the princes of the Rhineland and the Low Countries.<sup>46</sup> Chapter seven will

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<sup>45</sup> William Stubbs was the first historian to raise concerns surrounding Edward's decision to release prisoners for military service. See W. Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England in its Origins and Development*, II, (Oxford, 1875), 582.

<sup>46</sup> For the domestic political turmoil in 1297, and the Flanders expedition that year, see M. Prestwich, *Documents Illustrating the Crisis of 1297-98 in England* (London, 1980), 1-37. For a more recent account see A. King, 'Crisis? What Crisis? 1297 and the Civil War that Never Was', in A. King and A.M. Spencer, *Edward I: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 2020).

explore Edward's intentions for implementing a policy of encirclement; it will assess the ways in which the English Crown funded the "Grand Alliance"; as well as how the new front impacted upon the conflict in Gascony, and its legacy as an available foreign policy when war with France erupted.

And finally, considering the ever-expanding military revolution debate, chapter eight will propose that there was an *evolutionary* (rather than revolutionary) process taking place within Edward I's reign, one that incorporated the infantry, the artillery, and the Crown's fortification design. This is an important topic to discuss for not only will it provide a case that many of the "revolutionary" aspects of Edward III's armies of the Hundred Years War were, indeed, implemented in one form or another during Edward I's campaigns, but also Gascony — and the king's Gascon subjects — were at the forefront of the evolution in Edwardian military organisation, strategy, and tactics throughout the period.

### **The Study of Anglo-French Warfare**

As previously mentioned the departure point for any historian of Anglo-French warfare in the reign of Edward I remains Charles Bémont's introduction in the Gascon Rolls: the former offers a narrative account of the events of the conflict built upon the evidence found in the 'Acts of the English King's Court of Chancery concerning Aquitaine'.<sup>47</sup> The long series of Gascon Rolls have for this study proven indispensable, allowing for the examination of letters of protection and respite of debts; royal pardons; Crown wages and expenses; as well as horse restoration costs (*restaur*).

For the purposes of the thesis, this evidence has also been extracted from the National Archives' Exchequer accounts, Chancery Miscellanea and Diplomatic Documents, as well as in Ancient Petitions. Moreover, some of the more important documentation relating to foreign affairs in the late thirteenth century has been reproduced in Thomas Rymer's *Foedera* (most notably the diplomatic letters between Edward and his allies on the continent) but there is also an abundance of individual and group letters and petitions (particularly relating to the appeals by Gascon and Aragonese knights) which remain largely untouched within the archives itself: this study has

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<sup>47</sup> See above for Bémont's translation in the Gascon Rolls; Burrows, 'The Publication of the Gascon Rolls', 109; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 7.

endeavoured to unearth some of the more hidden cases to further express the widespread involvement — and growing loyalty — of Edward’s ducal subjects, coupled with the difficulties they often encountered in receiving the promised Crown restoration costs, certainly when the conflict had moved on to its northern frontier.<sup>48</sup>

Although the Gascon Rolls for the reign of Edward I (and Henry III for that matter) have remained largely intact — either as original documents in the National Archives or as printed nineteenth century sources — the situation could not be more different for the administrative records of Edward II and Edward III. Quite recently administrative documentation relating to English rule in Gascony during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries has been re-produced as an on-line calendared series, ‘The Gascon Rolls Project, 1317-1468’.<sup>49</sup> The project began in 2007 by Paul Booth, Malcolm Vale, and Paul Spence, but has also received the scholarly attention in its second, third and fourth phases by Françoise Lainé and Frédéric Boutouille; Anne Curry, Philip Morgan, and Guilhem Pépin, to name just a few. This does not mean though, that Edward I’s reign remains out of reach and, in fact, English rule in Gascony during the late thirteenth century has become far more accessible with the on-line calendared series of patent, close, and fine rolls; the Parliament rolls for the reign of Edward I — preserved in the National Archives — have also been made available as on-line accessible sources.<sup>50</sup>

Regarding chronicles, the historian of the Anglo-French war is mainly reliant upon three important chroniclers: Walter of Guisborough, Peter Langtoft, and the anonymous Lanercost compiler; the information provided by the fourteenth century chronicler, Henry Knighton, conveys a similar interpretation of events, while the *Chronique Artésienne* offers, quite naturally for its geographical location, a sympathetic approach to Philip’s (and Robert of Artois’) war with Edward.<sup>51</sup> However, when these chronicle accounts are woven together with the recorded administrative findings, a far clearer insight into the two expeditions to Gascony can be developed.

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<sup>48</sup> See *Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae, et Acta Publica*, I. ii, ed. T. Rymer, (Record Commission, 1816).

<sup>49</sup> P. Booth et. al., ‘The Gascon Rolls Project (1317-1468)’, [www.gasconrolls.org](http://www.gasconrolls.org).

<sup>50</sup> For the on-line sources see *British History Online*, [www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk).

<sup>51</sup> For Langtoft, Guisborough and Lanercost see above; *Chronicon Henrici Knighton, vel Cniithon, Monachi Leycestrensis*, ed. J.R. Lumby, (Cambridge, 1889-1895) and *Chronique Artésienne (1295-1304)*, ed. F. Funck-Brentano, (Paris, 1899).

Together they can provide a comprehensive picture of the Anglo-Gascon army (and its *modus operandi*); the inclusion of local troops; the seemingly endless sums of money required by the royal administration to ship, feed, and pay the expeditionary forces; as well as to the stresses and strains imposed upon the royal wardrobe to not only fund the two expeditions (along with the “third” expedition to Flanders) but to provide the necessary recovery costs to its subjects both during and after the campaign, either for their participation in the war or for their indirect involvement as “collateral” damage.

Quite understandably, due to the nature of the conflict, there has been extensive research regarding the campaigns waged in France by English kings and their military captains throughout the more “successful” years of the Hundred Years War, coupled with explorative studies into the capabilities of the late medieval English soldier; this has been possible due to the wide availability of sources and chronicle accounts, both in English and in French. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the Anglo-French war as the historian is reliant upon only a handful of contemporary English chroniclers, some of whom (like the Lanercost chronicler) were writing from the safety of their monasteries, and whether they were a Minorite friar or an Augustinian prior they presumably had very little military acumen; at best, their knowledge of the events in Gascony would have either been relayed by an eyewitness account or from the testimony of a soldier who was returning from the campaign to their homeland.<sup>52</sup>

Recent scholarly works have inevitably prompted a change of approach in the way historians discuss and research military strategy and tactics: military history, according to David Simpkin and Andy King, ‘has come a long way since it was rescued from the clutches of retired army officers’; army officers who ‘assumed that medieval kings and noblemen would have shared the insights of a retired artillery officer, poring over a detailed map of the supposed site of a medieval battle in the

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<sup>52</sup> A select few important studies include A.R. Bell, A. Curry, A. King, and D. Simpkin, *The Soldier in Later Medieval England* (Oxford, 2013), *Oxford Scholarship Online*, [www.oxfordscholarship.com](http://www.oxfordscholarship.com); A.R. Bell, A. Curry, A. Chapman, A. King, and D. Simpkin, *The Soldier Experience in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2011); J. Sumption, *Trial by Battle: The Hundred Years War I* (London, 1990); W.M. Ormrod, *Edward III* (London, 2011); D. Green, *Edward the Black Prince: Power in Medieval Europe* (Harlow, 2007); M.M. Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée of 1355* (Woodbridge, 2018); P. Hoskins, *In the Steps of the Black Prince: The Road to Poitiers, 1355-1356* (Woodbridge, 2011); H.J. Hewitt, *The Black Prince's Expedition of 1355-1357* (Barnsley, 2004); C. Allmand, *Henry V* (London, 1992).

1950s'.<sup>53</sup> Yet a large part of this revisionist approach in army composition and military strategy has entirely centred around the later successes in France by Edward III, the Black Prince, and even Henry Grosmont, duke of Lancaster (from 1351), as well as slightly outside of this study period for Henry V's Agincourt campaign of 1415 (although there is reference to this battle in chapter four).<sup>54</sup>

When there has been detailed scrutiny of Edward I's armies, both in their collective capabilities as voluntary or arrayed troops, and in their overall strategy and tactics, it has focused heavily on the king's campaigns in Wales and Scotland; and where the Gascon campaign is concerned there is only brief or inconsequential mention of the quality of troops, of the tactics employed by the military captains, and of the king's ultimate ambitions.<sup>55</sup> Malcolm Vale's *The Origins of the Hundred Years War: The Angevin Legacy* (1996), and Michael Prestwich's *War, Politics and Finance under Edward I* (1972), alongside the biography of the king by the very same author, *Edward I* (1988), are the case in point here.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, any advancements in medieval military strategy and technology have been far too neatly confined to the reign of Edward III and have failed to acknowledge the progressive and ambitious tactics of Edward I.<sup>57</sup>

Although Vale's significant study of the Angevin backstory to the Hundred Years War has done more than most to bridge the gap between the Anglo-French war and the Hundred Years War, particularly by highlighting the political, financial, and tenurial issues of thirteenth and fourteenth century Gascony, it has still fallen short of a detailed account of the martial qualities of the Anglo-Gascon army: there has been little in the way of a fully-focused, re-examination of the potential capabilities of the Anglo-Gascon army, of the individual recruit (whether they were from England, Gascony, or Northern Spain), or the *modus operandi* of the English military captains.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> King and Simpkin, *England and Scotland at War*, 1: Both King and Simpkin are referring to Lieutenant-Colonel Alfred Burne's doctrine of "Inherent Military Probability", in A.H. Burne, *The Crécy War* (London, 1955).

<sup>54</sup> For the most comprehensive study of Henry Grosmont, see K. Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant: Henry of Grosmont, First Duke of Lancaster 1310-1361* (London, 1969). And, although a public history/academic crossover, Ian Mortimer's *1415: Henry V's Year of Glory* (London, 2009) provides a novel account of the daily experiences of Henry V and his troops on the road to Agincourt.

<sup>55</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 202; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 381-382.

<sup>56</sup> See Prestwich, *Edward I*, 376-400.

<sup>57</sup> C.J. Rogers, 'Edward III and the Dialects of Strategy, 1327-1360: The Alexander Prize Essay', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4 (1994), 83-102.

<sup>58</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 3. This is particularly relevant in chapter six.

Not to acknowledge this campaign for its military potential, and its impact in the long running conflicts between England and France, is to ignore completely the nuanced changes that were taking place within the English army from the 1290s. This study, ultimately, derives from a dissatisfaction with the current perceptions that Edward's Gascon campaign was a pointless enterprise, and it will aim to rectify this view by repositioning it amidst the king's military endeavours — as well as amongst those of his successors — as a competent defensive operation. The ramifications of the Anglo-French war were certainly long lasting, and it is not unreasonable to suggest that the conflict marked the opening salvos in a military struggle between England and France that would continue for at least another century and a half; the pattern of warfare between 1294 and 1360, as the study will show, remained inextricably linked throughout.

## Two

### **The Loyal Few: A reassessment of Edward I's army in Gascony**

This chapter will look to outline the composition of Edward I's army in Gascony by focusing on the more "professional" aspects of the force, that being the contracted and career soldier. The first part of the chapter will examine the core of the army through the military service of members of the royal household, before turning to the man-at-arms from England, Gascony, and in some instances, Northern Spain. The second part of the chapter will focus on a quantitative and qualitative assessment of this combined Anglo-Gascon force, aided by contemporary accounts from the likes of Peter Langtoft, as well as through the available evidence from the administrative records including the patent and Gascon Rolls, allowing for a more detailed evaluation of the army's composition. Finally, the overall impact of the Anglo-Gascon army — in terms of military effectiveness — will be compared to later English expeditions to the region, notably those between 1324-25 and 1355-56. This final section will aim to link the cold war conflict of the Anglo-French war to that of the war of St Sardos and even to its more famous successor, the Poitiers campaign, here highlighting the continual threat to the Angevin inheritance as well as a continuity in English military organisation and strategy.

#### **The Structure of the Anglo-Gascon Army**

The composition of Edward I's army in Gascony is a subject which needs further attention, if not to applaud its military accomplishments, then to at least mark it as a successfully stubborn defensive operation, one that united a body of troops from across several frontiers.<sup>1</sup> The Anglo-French war may not have had its stand-out moment like that of Poitiers in 1356, or even Castillon in 1453, yet this did not mean that the campaign was taken lightly by Edward I. And in fact, after the initial relief effort the Anglo-Gascon army had grown in significant scale and influence by the time of the resettlement of Blaye and Bourg in the winter of 1294, which was shortly followed by the capture of

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<sup>1</sup> See Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, chapter 6.2, 200-215; and Prestwich, *Edward I*, 381-386.

the strategically important port of Bayonne by January the following year. Consolidation of the coastline not only opened the way for further troops from England to arrive in the duchy, but it also helped to persuade the local nobility (and citizens for that matter) that the war-effort was being taken seriously by the English Crown. The expeditionary force subsequently grew in confidence with every stretch of land they recaptured, eventually reaching its military height upon the arrival of Edmund of Lancaster and the second expeditionary forces in early 1296.

In re-evaluating Edward's army in Gascony, it becomes clear to see that payment, in the form of one-off lump sums, were issued to the military command through letters of credit which had been drawn up prior to embarkation.<sup>2</sup> This allowed the likes of Edmund of Lancaster, for instance, to travel to Gascony without the added concern of transporting large quantities of money that could become the target of thieves or to have even ended up in French hands. Instead, the letter of credit could be deposited upon arrival in Gascony, either with a bank or the royal wardrobe. This form of remuneration differed from both *regard* (which was a bonus payment) and the increasingly used indenture (which stipulated the number of troops that had to be raised and the length of military service). During Edward's reign indentures were becoming more common; they were used for garrison service in Wales, and Robert Clifford had received a written indenture in April 1296 to recruit '100 men-at-arms and 500 footmen' for the forthcoming campaign in Scotland.<sup>3</sup> In the case of the earl of Lancaster, however, the line of credit would have been intended to supplement the wages of the earl's troops, as well as to aid the purchase of horses, victuals and supplies, or as a simple incentive for overseas service.<sup>4</sup>

Crown wages were allocated to all elements of the Anglo-Gascon army, regardless of whether they were from England, south-western France, or from across the Pyrenees. Moreover, county-wide commissions of array had also been a form of recruitment for Edward domestically, particularly during the recent Welsh rebellion in 1294, and by similar process infantry levies were raised from

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<sup>2</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 384; The National Archives C47/24/2/20 [hereafter, TNA]; *RG*, iii, 311; *Foedera*, 829.

<sup>3</sup> TNA C47/22/2/2; *Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland: From the Death of King Alexander the Third to the Accession of Robert Bruce*, vol. II, ed. Rev. J. Stevenson, (Edinburgh, 1870), 36-37.

<sup>4</sup> Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers*, 57.

1295 onwards for the war in Gascony.<sup>5</sup> With these factors in mind, three key categories can be identified as recruitment pools for the king's overseas army: the royal household, the English man-at-arms, and the king's continental troops (sometimes referred to as *forinsec*).<sup>6</sup>

### *The Royal Household*

The command force for Edward's relief of Gascony was drawn directly from the royal household (*familia regis*), and even included members of the king's immediate family. Edward's brother, Edmund of Lancaster, and the king's nephew, John of Brittany, were two such captains. Their presence in the relief effort was important as a 'stabilizing factor' in the king's absence: royal representation in the form of one of the king's relatives had aimed to legitimize and focus the military objective by encouraging local nobles to take up arms while also bestowing on the local population a sense of prestige.<sup>7</sup>

It was even recorded by the Chandos Herald that Edward of Woodstock, the Black Prince, had pleaded with his father, Edward III, at a banquet shortly after the defeat of the Spanish off the coast of Winchelsea in 1350 (*les Espagnols sur mer*) that 'in Gascony the noble and valiant knights cherish you so greatly that they suffer great pain for your war and to gain honour, and yet they have no leader of your blood. Therefore, if you were so advised as to send one of your sons they would be the bolder'.<sup>8</sup> In fact, neither king of England or France led a campaign in person to Gascony prior to Poitiers (1356), and therefore it became a common occurrence that the military command was distributed to close royal relatives. For example, Edward II appointed his half-brother, Edmund, earl of Kent, in the war of St Sardos in 1324, and in response Charles IV of France appointed his uncle,

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<sup>5</sup> M. Prestwich, 'Tam infra libertates quam extra': Liberties and Military Recruitment in *Liberties and Identities in the Medieval British Isles*, ed. M. Prestwich, (Woodbridge, 2008), 113; Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers*, 172.

<sup>6</sup> 'Introduction: Explanation of terms', in *Final Concords of the County of Lincoln 1244-1272*, ed. C.W. Foster, (Horncastle, 1920), xii, *British History Online* [www.british-history.ac.uk/Lincoln-record-soc/vol2/xli-xlvi](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/Lincoln-record-soc/vol2/xli-xlvi) [accessed 24 August 2021].

<sup>7</sup> M. McKisack, 'Edward III and the Historians', *History*, 45:153 (1960), 6; D. Green, 'Lordship and Principality: Colonial Policy in Ireland and Aquitaine in the 1360s', *Journal of British Studies*, 47:1 (January, 2008), 10; Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 421.

<sup>8</sup> *Chandos Herald, Life of the Black Prince*, eds., M.K. Pope and E.C. Lodge, (Oxford, 1910), 139.

Charles of Valois (veteran of the Anglo-French war), and Edward III, perhaps stirred by his son's pleadings, sent the Black Prince to the region in 1355.<sup>9</sup>

The military command for Edward I's two expeditions were drawn from the very top of the social hierarchy. These were 'trained and trusted captains', who were then paired together on each campaign; this included John of Brittany and John of St John for the first expedition, and for the second the earls of Lancaster and Lincoln.<sup>10</sup> The military captains were supported by household bannerets and knights who were accompanied by their own retinues or *comitivas* — the more significant retinues of leading bannerets could accommodate up to fifteen knights (*milites*), yet they could also include independently serving men-at-arms, cavalry (of the "heavy" type) and infantry troops.<sup>11</sup> Sergeants-at-arms are also mentioned within these *comitivas* yet the definition is unclear. It has been suggested by both Mollie Madden and Michael Prestwich that this could be another reference to a foot-soldier or a squire, while David Simpkin has argued that sergeants-at-arms tended to be Gascons in Edward I's armies; men such as Basculo and Paulin Balistar (most likely crossbowmen due to their surnames), and Arnaud de Podensac and Piers Lugar were deemed to be 'courageous warriors' who 'spearheaded' English campaigns whether in Gascony or Scotland.<sup>12</sup>

Amongst the nobility taking part in the campaign were some interesting additions, such as the banneret and naval commander John Botetourt — who had only recently risen the ranks from a royal falconer — to the financially troubled earl of Arundel and the ever-loyal Yorkshire knight, William Latimer, who according to the *Song of Caerlaverock* made a friend of prowess ('Prouesce ke avoit fait ami De Guilleme le Latimier').<sup>13</sup> T.F. Tout particularly admired the close-knit nature of Edward's

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<sup>9</sup> S. Phillips, *Edward II* (London, 2011), 464; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 229; Ormrod, *Edward III*, 342.

<sup>10</sup> Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, 543.

<sup>11</sup> M. Prestwich, 'Miles in Armis Strenuus: The Knight at War', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5 (1995), 216.

<sup>12</sup> Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée*, 55; M. Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages: The English Experience* (London, 1996), 16-17; D. Simpkin, 'The King's Sergeants-At-Arms and the War in Scotland, 1296-1322', in *England and Scotland at War*, 78, 81-84, 104.

<sup>13</sup> *Foedera*, 828; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 131-132, 384, 149-150; Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 282; *The Rolls of Arms of the Princes, Barons and Knights who Attended King Edward I to the Siege of Caerlaverock*, ed. T. Wright, (London, 1864), 19.

household-in-arms having suggested that it provided the king with a small army in times of war.<sup>14</sup>

According to Chris Given-Wilson the household-in-arms was predominately made up of retained knights, whether of baronial stock or of more humbler origins, yet what they all had in common ‘was that they were soldiers’, ‘they were the core of the king’s retinue, his nucleus of shock-troops, a force in itself, and capable of rapid expansion whenever necessary’.<sup>15</sup>

Prestwich has also written that Edward would not have been able to wage war without his household knights as they ‘provided the core of the royal army’ and were ‘paid through the wardrobe’.<sup>16</sup> Prior to this, J.O. Prestwich had drawn comparison to the primary function of the household knights of Norman kings, claiming that they ‘supplied the standing professional element, capable of acting independently’.<sup>17</sup> The presence of royal household captains, bannerets, and knights gave Edward I the basis for a relief force in the autumn of 1294, which was particularly useful when the king could no longer fully rely on the feudal muster.<sup>18</sup>

### *The Man-at-Arms*

The largest representation of troops within the expeditionary forces was that of the man-at-arms. These were distinguished by their class; an undubbed man-at-arms could earn around *12d.* per day (or sometimes *18d.* when serving in Gascony) while a knighted man-at-arms could earn more than this depending on the terms of service.<sup>19</sup> Equipment differed in accordance with the individual’s income as an un-dubbed man-at-arms was most likely fitted out in little more than a haubergeon, helmet, sword, and a single mount, and they could also be furnished with a lance or spear, a war-hammer, or mace.<sup>20</sup> This is an important distinction for it can be expected that the knightly man-at-

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<sup>14</sup> T.F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England: The Wardrobe, The Chamber and The Small Seals*, vol. II, (London, 1920), 131-132; M. Prestwich, ‘The unreliability of household knights in the early fourteenth century’, *Fourteenth Century England II*, ed. C. Given-Wilson, (Woodbridge, 2002), 1.

<sup>15</sup> C. Given-Wilson, ‘The King and the Gentry in Fourteenth-Century England: The Alexander Prize Essay’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 37 (1987), 88.

<sup>16</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 134.

<sup>17</sup> J.O. Prestwich, ‘The Military Household of the Norman Kings’, *The English Historical Review*, 96:378 (1981), 33.

<sup>18</sup> Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, 543.

<sup>19</sup> Bell et. al., *Soldier in Later Medieval England*, 101, 106.

<sup>20</sup> Prestwich, ‘Miles in Armis Strenuus’, 202; Denholm-Young, ‘Feudal Society in the Thirteenth Century’, 108; Bell et al., *Soldier in Later Medieval England*, 102-103.

arms bore greater equipment as a mark of their prestige and status; they would have certainly had more support staff and extra mounts and it has even been suggested that by the 1350s the knighted man-at-arms was travelling with as many as four horses.<sup>21</sup>

Although the knight and warhorse will be discussed in further detail in chapter six, it is key to the qualitative aspect of Edward's army in Gascony to look at the cavalry contingents. The heavy cavalry troops (the nobility and *scutiferi*) would have taken two or even three horses on campaign — a destrier or courser as a charger in battle, and a palfrey for travel and carrying equipment. There is even evidence to suggest that horses were bought on arrival in Gascony, or further afield in Spain, due to their quality.<sup>22</sup> The presence of horses on a campaign is important, as both Ryan Lavelle and Mollie Madden have noted, because a force of mounted warriors alone could travel at an average speed of around four miles per hour, covering an approximate distance of 25-30 miles a day; this distance, however, was dependent on the slowest aspects of a travelling force as a foot-soldier could do no more than 20 miles a day, and a pack-animal half of this at best.<sup>23</sup>

Precise infantry numbers are unknown yet, as will become clear, the quantitative aspect of this contingent was uncharacteristically low for one of Edward's campaigns. On the battlefield infantry divisions were organised into twenties and hundreds, and domestically Edward had introduced the units of thousand which were commanded by millenars (these were individuals of knightly status).<sup>24</sup> Longbowmen (using bows over six feet in length) were also placed alongside these units, yet they were not used as effectively as they were under Edward III, either in Scotland or France, and neither were they mounted but travelled to the battlefield on foot.<sup>25</sup> This is not to say that they were ineffective during the siege though. Marines should also be acknowledged here and as will

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<sup>21</sup> Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée*, 98.

<sup>22</sup> *CPR*, 1282-92, 11, 14; J.E. Morris, 'Mounted Infantry in Mediaeval Warfare', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 8, (1914), 78; M. Prestwich, 'Edward I's armies', *Journal of Medieval History*, 37:3 (2011), 236. In 1299 safe passage was provided for the keeper of three war-horses, 'one dappled ferrand, one clear bay and one liard, which are being brought for the king's riding from Bayonne to England'. See *CPR*, 1292-1301, 417.

<sup>23</sup> R. Lavelle, *Alfred's Wars: Sources and Interpretations of Anglo-Saxon Warfare in the Viking Age* (Woodbridge, 2010), 192; Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée*, 104-105.

<sup>24</sup> Prestwich, 'Edward I's armies', 238.

<sup>25</sup> Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers*, 217.

be explained in chapter three, some individuals who were well-suited for this role were recruited directly from the county gaols along the English south-coast.

J.E. Morris believed that the advancement of the Edwardian infantry, from the ‘ill-combined rabble’ that the king inherited in the 1270s, to the armies that were deployed throughout the British Isles later in the reign, had become far more organised but were still lacking the charismatic presence of a field commander.<sup>26</sup> Prestwich, on the other hand, has suggested that any ‘transformation of the infantry’ in Edward I’s reign ‘was at best limited’.<sup>27</sup> And, without the usual cohorts of the Welsh levies, the foot-soldiers and archers that did arrive in Gascony were far from the well-furnished troops that would later distinguish themselves during the Hundred Years War.<sup>28</sup> On a visual level alone, the Black Prince’s Cheshire archers were far-removed from their thirteenth century counterparts as they wore uniform green and white cloth tunics rather than the white jerkin, or *blaunchecote*, of Edward I’s armies.<sup>29</sup>



Image 1. A fourteenth century depiction of infantry troops in battle. (© British Library Board, The Holkham Bible Picture Book, Add MS 47682 f. 40r).

<sup>26</sup> Morris, *The Welsh Wars*, 95-99.

<sup>27</sup> Prestwich, ‘Edward I’s armies’, 239.

<sup>28</sup> Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers*, 194.

<sup>29</sup> Green, *Edward the Black Prince*, 42; Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare*, 141.

*Edward's Continental Troops*

One area in which Edward could rely on to enlist more recruits was from the duchy itself. However, such loyalty was not always a profitable venture, and many individuals were targeted for aiding the English war effort. On one occasion Bos de Caupenne was targeted during a night-time raid when French forces burnt his houses down.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, the Gascon preference for distant English rule compared to that of the imposing centralised power of Philip IV was clear from the widescale support Edward received. There was even a preference for the appointment of English officials because private feuds were an ever-present reality and neutrality could not be assured amongst Gascons.

In the immediate aftermath of the Anglo-French war, for instance, the burgesses of Libourne — whose town had been destroyed by the French army — requested the appointment of a provost who was loyal to both king and country ('le Roy e du pays').<sup>31</sup> This was a situation which continued into the 1350s as the burgesses and worthy men of St Macaire petitioned Edward III to appoint the English official, Hugh de Streatley, as castellan 'for the whole of his life' as opposed to any of the local barons who 'continuously act in warlike fashion'; the burgesses feared that 'if any of them should obtain the castellany of their town, they would require the burgesses and men of the town to favour them and support their men'.<sup>32</sup>

Throughout the Anglo-French war the recruitment from local towns provided Edward I's relief effort with additional military numbers. Men-at-arms such as Auger de Mauleon, Gailhard de Tilh, Garcie-Arnaud, lord of Navailles, as well as Pascal Valentin, the 'Adaliz' of Aragon, and his brother, Sancho, each mobilised forces throughout the conflict through the commission of array with the aid of English Crown wages (it is worth noting that the term 'Adaliz' denotes a military captain in this instance, although it could also be used to describe a type of light armoured infantryman or scout: see chapter eight for further discussion).<sup>33</sup> Although payment from the Crown was often less than

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<sup>30</sup> TNA SC8/291/14542; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 110.

<sup>31</sup> TNA SC8/313/E65.

<sup>32</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/62:166.

<sup>33</sup> RG, iii, 231-235; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 202; Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée*, 72.

forthcoming (a topic discussed in chapter six) Edward believed that he was purchasing another means in which to safeguard his inherited duchy.<sup>34</sup>

### **From Relief Effort to an Established Force**

In evaluating Edward I's overseas army, it is important to develop some understanding as to its scale and potential martial capabilities. This will be achieved by exploring the size of each expedition, and therefore estimating the strength of Edward's army; by acknowledging the steady influx of Gascon and Iberian troops; and through an analysis of the distribution of troops in the Gironde estuary and further south at Bayonne, certainly considering the Crown's *modus operandi* to maintain a foothold in the region.

#### *A Quantitative Approach*

It should be noted that the numbers at our disposal are vague and any real sense of the army's composition can only be gleaned from the letters of protection, of attorney, and of respite of debts, as pointed out by Reginald Lawton and David Simpkin.<sup>35</sup> What also makes the estimation of an army more difficult is that the knights 'tend to be over-represented', according to Simpkin, simply because they were 'more likely to obtain letters of protection' than an independent or un-dubbed man-at-arms.<sup>36</sup> And, as with any campaign during the Middle Ages, the chronicle evidence can often be retrospective and the size of armies inflated to suit the intended audience. A quantitative approach will therefore enable a realistic estimation of the Anglo-Gascon army by using current historiographical debate, along with contemporary accounts and administrative records, placing the English and Gascon troops against the backdrop of their own successes and limitations.

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<sup>34</sup> A. Goodman, 'England and Iberia in the Middle Ages', *England and her neighbours, 1066-1453: Essays in Honour of Pierre Chaplais*, eds., M. Jones and M. Vale, (London, 1989), 73.

<sup>35</sup> D. Simpkin, 'Total War in the Middle Ages? The Contribution of English Landed Society to the Wars of Edward I and Edward II', in *The Soldier Experience*, 72-73; R.P. Lawton, 'Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln (1272-1311) as *locum tenens et capitaneus* in the duchy of Aquitaine', (London Ph.D., 1974), 122-157. This thesis provides a valuable account of the individuals serving in each expedition based on letters of protection, letters of attorney, letters in respect of debts, letters in respect of pleas and pardons.

<sup>36</sup> Simpkin, 'Total War?', 72.

The contingent of men-at-arms for the first expedition has been estimated to be around 301 individuals.<sup>37</sup> This figure is certainly in keeping with the general consensus that the relief effort was small indeed.<sup>38</sup> However, there are suggestions by one historian in particular that the expedition may have been conducted by a force consisting of just 238 men-at-arms.<sup>39</sup> Yet, the limitations in these figures are that they do not take into consideration the independently serving men-at-arms, the archers and foot-soldiers, or the entourage of mariners, siege engineers, mercenaries, and royal purveyors; these were often individuals who had not obtained a letter of protection, or may have entered into a *comitiva* only once they had arrived in Gascony. Away from the more rigid calculations of modern-day historians, the chroniclers' accounts for the size of the relief effort offer a far more optimistic interpretation, yet the tendency of some of these chroniclers to provide highly inflated (and often rounded) figures can give way to a sense of exaggeration, particularly when describing the scale of the infantry forces.

For instance, the contemporary Worcester chronicler claimed that 700 armoured men-at-arms and 4,000 foot-soldiers ('septingenti loricati cum quatuor milibus peditum') set sail from Portsmouth, whilst Henry Knighton — although looking back on the Anglo-French war from the fourteenth century — remarked how Edward had sent 500 men-at-arms and 20,000 infantrymen.<sup>40</sup> Knighton's estimate for the size of the infantry force alone can almost certainly be viewed as a consequence of Edward's reputation for placing large numbers of infantrymen in the field. And, while writing his account at a time of heightened Anglo-French warfare, it may be expected that Knighton intentionally over-played previous military figures when it came to the composition of overseas English armies. This is particularly important as 'Edward I had indeed become the prototype for Edward III's monarchy', according to Ormrod.<sup>41</sup>

It does not seem that the full cohort of 137 magnates who were summoned to Portsmouth in preparation for the relief effort answered the king's demands first time around (most likely on account

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<sup>37</sup> Simpkin, 'Total War', 72-73; Lawton, 'Henry de Lacy', 122-127.

<sup>38</sup> *RG*, iii, cxxxviii.

<sup>39</sup> Lawton, 'Henry de Lacy', 127.

<sup>40</sup> 'Annales Prioratus de Wigornia, A.D. 1-1377', *Annales Monastici*, ed. H.R. Luard, vol. iv, (London, 1869), 519; *Knighton*, 340.

<sup>41</sup> W.M. Ormrod, 'The Personal Religion of Edward III', *Speculum*, 64:4 (1989), 871-872.

of the Welsh rebellion). Adam of Hudleston, William of Berningham, Ralph Gorges and Philip Mattesdon were just a handful of the summoned magnates who were present in Gascony after the arrival of the first expedition.<sup>42</sup> Others, such as John of Hudleston, William de Ros, Henry de Grey and Edmund Eyncourt, were also summoned in 1294 but did not go to Gascony until 1296, whilst heirs who were eager to follow in their father's footsteps, such as William Latimer the younger, entered the cavalry.<sup>43</sup> Only a very small contingent of English troops departed for Gascony in the summer of 1295, this time under the command of John Botetourt, yet it is quite reasonable to suggest that this retinue may have been of similar size to that led by John of St John the previous year.<sup>44</sup>

In John of St John's *comitiva* we can develop a clear picture of the effectiveness of military captains in forming a royal military corp. For example, John's retinue consisted of five retained knights: Thomas Paynel, John of Basings, William Gorges, Richard de Burhunte and Albert Fulbert, who in turn were supported by more than 200 men-at-arms, as well as a chaplain, a clerk, and a priest.<sup>45</sup> This made John's contingent the main body of the first expeditionary force (at around two-thirds of the relief effort) despite John of Brittany's assignment as the lieutenant for the campaign. The significance here is that, like Chris Given-Wilson and J.O. Prestwich have both suggested, the military captains were able to produce a shock-troop capable of undertaking its own military objectives. Further still, John of St John's retinue had expanded in anticipation of the overseas campaign, increasing from the normally accepted three knights' service (dating back to 1245) to five knights' fees in 1294.<sup>46</sup>

Like the relief effort, the exact size of the second expeditionary force is also vague. However, despite one estimation that the contingent of men-at-arms under Edmund of Lancaster and Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln, was smaller than that of the relief effort in 1294, there is a general understanding — throughout contemporary accounts and amongst historians — that it was a much

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<sup>42</sup> *Foedera*, 801-802.

<sup>43</sup> *Foedera*, 801-802, 828; Simpkin, 'Total War?', 72; Lawton, 'Henry de Lacy', 146-147.

<sup>44</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 384; *Foedera*, 802.

<sup>45</sup> *CPR, 1292-1301*, 27, 36; *RG*, iii, cxxxiv; Simpkin, 'Total War?', 73; Lawton, 'Henry de Lacy', 122-127.

<sup>46</sup> I.J. Sanders, *Feudal Military Service in England: A Study of the Constitutional and Military Powers of the Barons in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1956), 59-62; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 483-484.

greater expeditionary force than the first.<sup>47</sup> The Dunstable chronicler, for instance, recalled how the delayed force set sail with a great number of armed men to wage war on the French ('cum armatorum multitudine copiosa, ad Francos debellandum'), and in Worcester, the chronicler there recorded how the departing army consisted of 25 barons, 1,000 horses and 10,000 foot soldiers.<sup>48</sup>

The *Flores Historiarum* also claimed that 352 ships left Plymouth on the expedition which, in the expectation that the ships consisted of a mixture of 20 and 40 man crews, the maximum number that could be transported was in the region of 10,500 men — this certainly correlates with the Worcester account.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, Langtoft suggested that 26 bannerets were present in the force, accompanied by 'Knights and serjeants with their kindred', and 'People on foot without number'; whilst Knighton, reiterating Langtoft's suggestion that there were 26 bannerets present, offers a modest calculation of just 700 supporting men-at-arms, a slight increase of 200 men-at-arms from the first expedition.<sup>50</sup>

There does seem to be a clear understanding of the military hierarchy for the second expedition as Lawton, although suggesting that there may have been just 202 men-at-arms on the campaign, agrees with the chronicle accounts that under the captaincy of Edmund of Lancaster and Henry de Lacy there were 26 bannerets (this would mean that there were roughly around 7-8 men-at-arms under the command of each banneret).<sup>51</sup> If we are then to accept the reasonable figure of 1,000 horses for the campaign (1,537 had been mustered at Portsmouth in 1294) then there would have been between 3 and 4 mounts to each banneret and noble man-at-arms, a consistent figure in line with the prestige and status bestowed on a noble warrior during the later Middle Ages.<sup>52</sup>

Again, infantry numbers are unknown yet suggestions by the chroniclers are, in the instance of the second expedition alone, far more reliable, certainly given the previously excessive figures for

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<sup>47</sup> Lawton, 'Henry de Lacy', 154.

<sup>48</sup> 'Annales Prioratus de Dunstaplia, A.D. 1-1297', *Annales Monastici*, ed. H.R. Luard, vol. iii, (London, 1866), 397; *Foedera*, 833; 'Annales Prioratus de Wigornia', 525.

<sup>49</sup> *Flores Historiarum*, ed. H.R. Luard, 3 vols., (Rolls series, 1890), 283-284; S. Rose, 'Maritime Logistics and Edward I's Military Campaigns: What can be learnt from the surviving documentation?', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 99:4 (2013), 392.

<sup>50</sup> Langtoft, 231; Knighton, 360.

<sup>51</sup> Lawton, 'Henry de Lacy', 154.

<sup>52</sup> Hoskins, *In the Steps of the Black Prince*, 21.

the first expeditionary force. This is mainly because plans by the English Crown had been in place since 1295 to select (by commission of array) 22,000 men throughout the southern counties, and in addition 3,000 foot-soldiers, longbowmen and crossbowmen were also required, ‘furnished with suitable arms’.<sup>53</sup> Prestwich has agreed with this recruitment model having proposed that 25,000 infantrymen were raised in anticipation of the second expedition, whilst Vale has also suggested that there could have been as many as 40,000 infantry troops drawn from the southern shires; these recruits, as Vale argues, were joined by a contingent of Gascon crossbowmen.<sup>54</sup> The addition of these crossbow-wielding recruits is important for the impact of Gascon, as well as Iberian troops, was highly significant to the success of the English war effort. Maurice Powicke has shown how Edward made use of the ducal levies by highlighting the Crown’s immense wage bill at the end of the war; the English Crown’s payments to Gascon troops came to £137,595, compared to just £37,000 paid to English knights and men-at-arms, and less than £18,000 to the foot-soldiers and £17,000 to the mariners.<sup>55</sup>

The qualitative worth of the Gascon troops was a bonus in what was a very rare overseas campaign for one of Edward’s armies, yet their quantitative value is also perfectly clear to see. Many loyal lords who were supportive of the king-duke’s cause had either enlisted or proactively entered the contingents of one of the English military captains. For example, in 1297 Auger de Mauleon contracted with ‘eleven mounted men-at-arms and 140 foot-serjeants’, whilst Garcie-Arnaud mustered ‘sixteen men-at-arms and 111 serjeants’.<sup>56</sup> In the same year Pascal Valentin promised 300 foot-soldiers in contribution to the war effort.<sup>57</sup>

Considering the foothold initiative of 1294, it is important to gauge the movement of troops throughout the region. The first and second expeditionary forces brought fresh troops ready to occupy and garrison the small towns and fortifications along the Garonne valley, as well as further south in the Landes region. This, according to Anne Curry, was ‘a useful measure of defensive strategies’, and

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<sup>53</sup> *CPR, 1292-1301*, 150.

<sup>54</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 384; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 202; *RG*, iii, cxlix-cl; TNA E101/154/11.

<sup>55</sup> Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, 650; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 385.

<sup>56</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 202; TNA E101/14/4.

<sup>57</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 202.

one that was returned to during subsequent Gascon campaigns.<sup>58</sup> The means by which these towns and fortifications shaped the conflict in Gascony will be discussed in greater depth in chapter eight, yet before this a projection of the size of forces arriving in these areas must firstly be accounted for.

Knighton's impression of the first expeditionary force is particularly inflated, yet the chronicler attributes John of Brittany's defence of the Garonne River route to a force of around 300 cavalry and 7,000 foot-soldiers.<sup>59</sup> That would suggest that John of St John marched on Bayonne with around 13,000 infantrymen, however, caution should be taken in accepting these figures at face value. If we are to return to Lawton's more conventional estimates then this would suggest that around a third of the relief force (that consisting of the men-at-arms of John of Brittany's contingent) were left behind to defend the Garonne, whilst knights such as Geoffrey Rudelle, Ralph Gorges and John Giffard were appointed as castellans at Blaye, Rions and Podensac.<sup>60</sup>

Further south the capture of Bayonne was aided by the royal fleet under the command of the Gascon admiral, Barrau de Sescas. Here, Nicholas Trivet noted how the Anglo-Gascon sailors had managed to storm the city before John of St John's contingent had arrived.<sup>61</sup> Two French galleys were commandeered in the process which implies, on the premise once again that these were the larger 40 man crew vessels, that the occupying French garrison was no greater in size than 80-100 men.<sup>62</sup> Regarding the French defenders, the arrival of John of St John with 200 men-at-arms alone may not have been enough to encourage their surrender, yet an Anglo-Gascon infantry force, at two-thirds of the Worcester chronicler's projection (around 2,600 infantrymen) may have been enough to tip the balance, coupled with the fact that the Bayonnais citizens had turned on their French occupiers.

The second expedition followed a similar strategy, having landed at Blaye before engaging in an unsuccessful siege of Bordeaux — although its success is debatable as 300 of the French garrison

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<sup>58</sup> A. Curry, 'The Hundred Years War, 1337-1453', *The Practice of Strategy: From Alexander the Great to the Present*, eds., J. Andreas and C.S. Gray, (Oxford, 2011), *Oxford Scholarship Online*, [www.oxfordscholarship.com](http://www.oxfordscholarship.com), 84.

<sup>59</sup> *Knighton*, 341-342.

<sup>60</sup> *Calendar of the Charter Rolls: Henry III-Edward I, A.D. 1257-1300*, ed. H.C. Maxwell-Lyte, vol. II, (London, 1906), 465, [hereafter, *CChR*]; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 382.

<sup>61</sup> *Nicholai Triveti Annales*, ed. T. Hog, (1845), 334.

<sup>62</sup> 'Annales Prioratus de Wigornia', 519-20; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 382.

were reportedly killed by the English siege engines.<sup>63</sup> If we are to once again expect that the contingents left to refortify the Garonne equated to roughly a third of the entire force, then for the army that travelled to Bayonne under the command of Lancaster and Lincoln we are left with a projected force of around 17 bannerets, 210 men-at-arms, 660 horses (2-3 mounts per banneret and knight), and at its lowest estimate around 7,000 infantry troops.<sup>64</sup> The infantry element of this force, however, can be increased to around 16,700 troops with the addition of Gascon and Iberian foot-soldiers, as well as the pardoned criminal recruits from England.

### *The Qualitative Aspect*

A realistic projection of the size of the Anglo-Gascon army has been outlined, however, it is equally important to determine the qualitative aspect of this combined force. To do so three tactical features will be considered: the siege, the retention of strategically important landmarks, and the deployment of freely manoeuvrable task forces. In doing so we can see clear circumstantial evidence of Edward's military captains using tactics and strategies advocated by the fourth century Roman author Vegetius; according to David Green, compact versions of the military manual were produced so that commanders were able to consult it on campaign.<sup>65</sup> This is not to say that Edward's captains were turning to their classical manuals at every stage during a campaign (that is even if they owned one), but the text — translated into French for the first time during the thirteenth century — was one of the most widely recognised military tracts of the Middle Ages, and still exists today in at least 320 manuscripts.<sup>66</sup> It would be an injustice to both the intellect and the military acumen of Edward's captains, therefore, to assume that they were ignorant of such a revered military manual.

From the very first line of Vegetius' Book I, for instance, the Roman author had made clear that 'skill and training rather than numbers or inordinate bravery bring success', whilst 'small but well-trained forces were more effective than those which, for lack of preparation, exposed themselves

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<sup>63</sup> Flores, 285.

<sup>64</sup> The projection of infantry troops has been calculated against Flores' account of the number of ships present.

<sup>65</sup> Green, *Edward the Black Prince*, 45.

<sup>66</sup> Green, *Edward the Black Prince*, 45.

unnecessarily to the enemy'.<sup>67</sup> These fundamental points underpinned both the foothold initiative and the second expedition. Neither overseas force had the numbers, or military composition, to contend with an opposing army in the field, or to sustain a prolonged war of conquest further inland towards the Agenais for instance. Yet, a carefully coordinated sea-borne objective — as witnessed along the Garonne in 1294, and again in 1296 — suggests that the expeditionary forces could maintain a foothold in the region at the very least, even if the arrayed infantry were, in the words of Ayton and Prestwich, 'ill-equipped', 'undisciplined' and 'woeful'.<sup>68</sup>

Although the exact composition of the infantry is unknown, the use of river routes, and the ensuing successes of the Garonne sieges, indicate a clear presence of marines as well as the usual accompaniment of engineers and their siege equipment (a topic discussed in chapter eight). The difficulties of navigating the Garonne upstream between Bordeaux and St Macaire due to its tidal bore (*mascaret*) and its reduced depth may also indicate the use of locally sourced shallow keel ships in order to transport the siege weapons.<sup>69</sup> These most likely consisted of simple ladders and rams, as well as the more effective springald and *ballista*.<sup>70</sup> The relative speed with which towns and fortifications like Blaye, Bourg and Rions were captured points towards the use of scaling ladders in breaching the walls, rather than from the time-consuming mining or sapping of the walls (or even starvation) and rams were almost certainly used on city gates.

Archers provided the cover for the foot-soldiers scaling the ladders along the walls. Ayton has suggested that Edward's armies usually consisted of large numbers of foot-archers but, as they were not yet deployed in a 'coordinated fashion', they were less effective than the fourteenth century longbowman.<sup>71</sup> The concept of coordination, however, was relative to the theatre of warfare, and during the Garonne sieges the main duty for Edward's archers' was to provide covering-fire. A group

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<sup>67</sup> C. Allmand, *The De Re Militari of Vegetius: The Reception, Transmission and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2011), 17-18.

<sup>68</sup> Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare*, 133; A. Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses: Military Service and the English Aristocracy under Edward III* (Woodbridge, 1994), 15; Prestwich, 'Tam infra libertates quam extra', 113.

<sup>69</sup> The current geographical features of the Garonne tidal bore have been measured at a height of up to three metres, see 'French Waterways in Detail: River Garonne and Gironde Estuary', [www.french-waterways.com](http://www.french-waterways.com), [accessed 17 July 2020].

<sup>70</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 382; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 204.

<sup>71</sup> Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 18.

of ten archers, each with roughly twelve arrows, could have focussed their collective volley on a specific target, such as the men defending a tower or gate. The qualitative aspect is clear to see for within the first minute of attack around 120 arrows would have landed on, or close to, their intended target; it has even been estimated that an experienced archer could have potentially released up to twenty arrows per minute at 200-300 yards.<sup>72</sup> Yet despite this, the archer was only effective while he had arrows, and once the archer had spent his supply he was merely reduced to a bystander until he could retrieve more arrows, or was tasked with scaling the ladders with his fellow infantrymen. Other factors, such as poor accuracy or lack of skill, fatigue, the weather, and injury, as well as damage or debris on the arrow itself, should also be accounted for when determining the qualitative aspect of the archer.

These hit-and-run tactics were, however, far from novel and Edward's military captains were not rewriting the play-book of military strategy, nor were they asking more of their recruits than could be offered, or even expected.<sup>73</sup> Both Bernard Bachrach and Rutherford Aris have suggested, in their study of Anglo-Saxon military tactics, that this type of siege — the breaching of walls and the use of projectile weaponry — had been a common strategy during the early Middle Ages; they claimed that 'the men who orchestrated Anglo-Saxon military policy had a well-developed sense of strategy that may have been based on Roman ideas of the later empire', such as Vegetius.<sup>74</sup>

Although we are tracing the footsteps of military strategy back a further five centuries here, the fact that hit-and-run siege assaults were still in use by Edward's military captains suggests that it was, firstly, a highly effective tactic — one that could be carried out by even the most "ill-equipped" recruit — and secondly, it was a traditional method based on the 'element of surprise', as encouraged by Vegetius.<sup>75</sup> The soldier in the late thirteenth century may, therefore, have been accustomed to the idea of the siege as a result of their own personal experiences in conflict; although the wooden

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<sup>72</sup> Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare*, 131-133.

<sup>73</sup> Simpkin, *The English Aristocracy at War*, 1.

<sup>74</sup> B.S. Bachrach and R. Aris, 'Military Technology and Garrison Organization: Some Observations on Anglo-Saxon Military Thinking in Light of the Burghal Hidage', *Technology and Culture*, 31:1 (1990), 3; Lavelle, *Alfred's Wars*, 226.

<sup>75</sup> B.S. Bachrach, 'The Practical Use of Vegetius' "De Re Militari" During the Early Middle Ages', *The Historian*, 47:2 (1985), 247.

palisades of Anglo-Saxon fortifications had been replaced by taller and thicker stone walls, as well as an advancement in weaponry and armour, the same principle of attack was maintained.

Not all sieges were successful though, and Bordeaux managed to withstand the Anglo-Gascon attacks on two occasions, whilst St Macaire and Dax similarly held out.<sup>76</sup> This was most likely due to greater defences and larger garrisons at specific geographic (and economic) strongholds. The attacking forces may also have been numerically outnumbered or simply repelled by the impact of the defending garrisons' weaponry: a siege engine, almost certainly a trebuchet, had sunk one of the Anglo-Gascon ships in the Garonne in 1294.<sup>77</sup> Trebuchets were clearly a common form of siege equipment within Philip IV's forces as four types were recorded, ranging from the fixed counterweight to the man-powered type.<sup>78</sup>

The failure of the Anglo-Gascon forces to capture these fortifications may have been due to their numerical inferiority and to put it simply, not enough infantrymen were available to breach the walls or to focus enough firepower onto the defenders. In approaching a well-defended walled city or fortification it is expected that the attacking force needed a larger number of men than the defenders in order to gain the advantage. The Anglo-Gascon forces were clearly limited in this respect, and in the anticipation of heavy losses at some of the larger walled cities the risks outweighed the gains. Only a few men at a time could reach the top of a fortified wall, having avoided the defenders attempts to repel them — perhaps using arrows, crossbow bolts, heavy rocks, or boiling oil — and without the supporting manpower this could prove to be a futile exercise.<sup>79</sup>

Yet, if we are to accept that Anglo-Gascon infantry numbers were limited — and further reduced as troops formed garrisons throughout the duchy or succumbed to fatal injuries — then the capture of some of the more strategic sites in the region may suggest that the French garrisons at these locations were equally small and ill-prepared. Notably the Anglo-Gascon besiegers were aided in their attempts by the inhabitants who overthrew their Capetian occupiers from the inside, such was the case

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<sup>76</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 382-385.

<sup>77</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 382.

<sup>78</sup> J. Bradbury, *The Medieval Siege* (Woodbridge, 1992), 267.

<sup>79</sup> Bachrach and Aris, 'Military Technology and Garrison Organization', 4, 9-10.

at Bayonne.<sup>80</sup> Willing attempts from the inhabitants at Bellegarde was also well-known in 1297; the townspeople, on hearing of an approaching French force under Robert of Artois, had prepared their defences with beams and hurdles, as well as throwing stones ('lapides grandes') in preparation of a siege.<sup>81</sup>

Once the English expeditionary forces became the defenders of these sites the qualitative aspect changed; the Anglo-Gascon army went from a temporary hit-and-run relief force to a more permanent defensive unit. The infantry troops at the military captains' disposal (the archers and foot-soldiers) most certainly played a large role in the defence of walled strongholds, particularly in the Gironde estuary. To return to Bachrach and Aris, they termed the area close to the walls as the "killing ground", suggesting that the bow and the spear were 'consistent both with the demands of military architecture — fighting atop a wall on a narrow platform or shelf initially at a distance and then hand-to-hand — and with the typical demands of repelling attackers to storm the walls'.<sup>82</sup> It was within the "killing ground" where the archers could aim their volleys of arrows or engineers could focus their siege weaponry, whilst the men-at-arms and the foot-soldiers who were defending their own section of wall could repel any besiegers that were able to break through.

In assessing the defence of these sites, it is critical to the expeditions' military objectives to consider the terrain. The duchy was particularly notorious for its river crossings, diverse weather, and a lack of fresh water supplies; in the fourteenth century the Landes region was a sandy wasteland during the summer months, and a desolate marshland in the winter where it was not uncommon for widespread frosts and torrential rain from October onwards.<sup>83</sup> For this reason the retention of strategically located towns and fortifications ultimately led to territorial dominion. The capture of what can be described as a cluster of strongholds in the Gironde estuary — all within a ten-mile radius of one another between Blaye, Bourg and Macau (the latter situated on the opposite embankment) for example — and the vital occupation of the naval port at Bayonne which controlled the Adour River

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<sup>80</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 204

<sup>81</sup> Flores, 289.

<sup>82</sup> Bachrach and Aris, 'Military Technology and Garrison Organization' 5, 14.

<sup>83</sup> Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée*, 3, 109; Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 13.

route into the Atlantic, points towards a clear military objective. This was an operation dependent on sea and inland river routes, but also one built upon a system of strength-in-depth linking outlying possessions to the Plantagenet headquarters.

Control of the sea and inland river routes ensured that garrisons, according to Vegetius, ‘did not fall victim to famine’, simply because they preserved ‘lines of supply and communication’, ensuring victuals and troops from England always had a navigable route into the duchy.<sup>84</sup> The maritime aspect of the war is significantly highlighted here, and one of Edward’s ‘wisest acts’, according to Vale, was the appointment of Bayonne’s ‘captain and admiral’ Barrau de Sescas in the Anglo-Gascon fleet, alongside William Leyburne and John Botetourt; Vale states that the ‘defence of Bourg and Blaye throughout the war clearly owed much to his service there in preventing French occupation of these two fortified enclaves’, it was ‘a remarkable testimony to the effectiveness of English and Bayonnais seamanship’.<sup>85</sup> On the other hand the failure to re-take Bordeaux meant that another cluster of fortifications — between Rions, Podensac and Virelade — were effectively isolated from the Anglo-Gascon garrisons at the mouth of the Gironde and therefore became susceptible to counter-siege. Further south Capetian alliances close to Orthez, for instance, also prevented transportation along the River Ousse between Bayonne and Bellegarde.

The final qualitative feature of the expeditionary forces was its ability to cross the region at considerable pace. Two taskforces that particularly stand-out for this reason are the 1294 march towards Bayonne and the 1297 *chevauchée*. If we are to look at the march towards Bayonne in the context of a relief effort dependent on the elements of speed and surprise, then the military objective was a striking success. The circumstantial evidence, once again, points towards Edward’s military captains directly using Vegetius’ *De Re Militari* or having had direct access to a military tactician who had been educated in the art of war.

The 120-mile distance between Rions and Bayonne had taken the Anglo-Gascon force no more than four weeks and given the time of year (between October and January) and the ‘notoriously unhealthy environment’ due to aerial borne diseases and stagnating water, this was no small

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<sup>84</sup> Allmand, *De Re Militari*, 42; Bachrach, ‘The Practical Use of Vegetius’, 248.

<sup>85</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 204.

achievement.<sup>86</sup> The fact that the French garrison at Bayonne surrendered may once again point towards their lack of preparation. Undoubtedly, the participation of the inhabitants in overthrowing their occupants, and the blockade of the French galleys, contributed to the garrison's collapse and with the sudden arrival of John of St John's contingent in the region the balance of power was in favour of the Anglo-Gascons.

Yet the speed in which John of St John had reached the naval port was most likely due to the composition of the army. If we are to accept Lavelle and Madden's estimations of a travelling army, then a complete cavalry force could have travelled from Rions to Bayonne in around 4 to 5 days, accounting for rest and the difficulties of the terrain. Should the force have consisted of cavalry and infantry troops then this should be extended to around 9 days or more, and a much larger force of cavalry, infantry, and the baggage train, could have taken over two weeks to arrive.<sup>87</sup>

These are, however, simple projections provided the journey was unhampered by difficult weather conditions — and therefore avoiding any damage to passable routes — as well as limited rest time. Yet, given that John of St John was in the south of the duchy within a month of the expeditionary forces arriving in the Gironde, may also suggest that this was a freely manoeuvrable force. A mounted unit of scouts (the *Adalils*, for example: see chapter eight), would have travelled ahead, shortly followed by the cavalry forces with the infantry and baggage train in pursuit, perhaps as much as a week's march behind. And given that Bayonne finally surrendered to the Anglo-Gascon force in January it should also be expected that there was an intermittent arrival of Anglo-Gascon troops into the area from as early as the first week of December.

In similar fashion, the earl of Lincoln's scorched earth policy was also aided by its ability to move at high speed, as will be explored in greater detail in chapter five. As further evidence for the use of military manuals, Vegetius had advocated the use of 'indirect harassment', particularly if confrontation with a stronger opposing force seemed futile, and therefore 'famine, raids and terror are

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<sup>86</sup> W.O. Blanchard, 'The Landes: Reclaimed Waste Lands of France', *Economic Geography*, 2:2 (1926), 250. The march south clearly took its toll on the troops for one of John of St John's indentured knights, William Gorges, died on the journey, see *Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1272-1307*, 349, [hereafter, *CFR*].

<sup>87</sup> F.M. Stenton suggested that 20-30 miles a day was achievable and put this into context by claiming that it was possible to travel from London to York in little under five days, see F.M. Stenton, 'The Road System of Medieval England', *The Economic History Review*, 7:1 (1936), 16-17.

usually more effective than battle'.<sup>88</sup> Lincoln seems to have followed this guidance as 'great booty' was returned to Bayonne.<sup>89</sup> Lincoln's *chevauchée* almost certainly consisted of a complete cavalry force as its main objective was, as Peter Hoskins states, 'to keep moving', in the process causing as much damage as possible to Capetian occupied lands, 'it could not just sit and stay in anyone place for a long time'.<sup>90</sup>

The qualitative aspect of the troops who performed the raid under Lincoln did not have to be high, yet they clearly had to be in possession of a horse. However, the burning of crops and houses, the looting of settlements and the destruction of agricultural tools did not necessarily require the martial skills of the knight bannerets. The main objective of the raid was to invoke fear into those allied with the Capetian cause, and to waste an area occupied by, or supplying the French army. Although the direction of the raid is vague, it is highly likely that it was focussed on the region south of Bellegarde (given its retaliatory motives). On the principles of travel given above this would suggest that over a 5-to-6-day period Lincoln's raid would have entered the Béarn region, having covered an area of around 70 miles and therefore encompassing the settlements of Orthez and Pau. Although Artois' forces had returned north after the ambush, this would have left the lands of Roger-Bernard, count of Foix and *vicomte of Béarn*, an ally of the French regime, open to destruction.

### **Gascon Expeditions between 1324 and 1356**

Now that a clearer picture has developed through a qualitative and quantitative study of Edward I's army in Gascony a comparative commentary can be approached regarding the war of St Sardos and the campaigns of the first phase of the Hundred Years War. This will take into consideration the composition of Edward II and Edward III's expeditionary forces as well as their strategy and tactics. The aim will be to place the Anglo-French war at the head of a series of campaigns in the region, all of which followed the blueprint for Edward I's expeditions before developing — in both scale and military ambition — as Plantagenet dominance in France increased.

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<sup>88</sup> Bachrach, 'The Practical Use of Vegetius', 247; Allmand, *De Re Militari*, 40.

<sup>89</sup> *Guisborough*, 262.

<sup>90</sup> Hoskins, *In the Steps of the Black Prince*, 45.

*The War of St Sardos, 1324-25*

Although the causes of war between England and France in 1324 need not fully be addressed here, it is important to highlight that the road to war emanated, once again, from the issue of unfulfilled homage; Edward II failed to fulfil his duties as a vassal of the king of France, Charles IV.<sup>91</sup> According to Seymour Phillips, ‘The multitude of problems caused by the earlier war in the 1290s both within the duchy of Aquitaine and in the relations of the king-duke and his French overlord had never fully resolved, even when peace was made in 1303’; Vale has added to this by suggesting that the ‘French occupation of the duchy of Aquitaine... left a tenurial disarray that was never properly resolved and which contributed to Anglo-French tensions’.<sup>92</sup>

The resulting war was in many ways strikingly like that of Edward I’s campaigns. The war of St Sardos can be defined, like its forerunner has been, in its numerous expeditions: a relief effort in 1324 and a proposed *retinencia regis* for 1325; the military commanders’ use of the Gironde estuary and the Garonne in forming a defence in-depth strategy; and in the efforts to incorporate Gascon and Iberian allies into the ranks of English troops. In a series of events reminiscent of 1294, the war of St Sardos began on 13 August 1324; a French force under the command of the returning Charles of Valois — aggrieved by his 1295 failures in the duchy — assembled a force at Moissac, on the border between the Agenais and Quercy, consisting of 1,000 men-at-arms and 6,000 infantrymen.<sup>93</sup> The response from the English Crown was inferior in size yet the recruited troops were large enough to form defensive garrisons in the region as we have seen from the Anglo-French war.

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<sup>91</sup> The main area of contention focussed on the attempts to settle a French *bastide* on English Crown lands between St Sardos and Sarlat; this led to the murder of a French sergeant and, subsequently, the banishment from the duchy of Raymond-Bernard, lord of Montpezat, and Ralph Basset, the English seneschal, who were both accused of being complicit in the crime. Edward II had also used the “Scottish issue” as a matter in which to postpone the act of homage. See *The War of Saint-Sardos (1323-25): Gascon Correspondence and Diplomatic Documents*, ed. P. Chaplais, Camden, 3rd series, lxxxvii, (London, 1954); Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 227-244; Phillips, *Edward II*, 455-471; J.B. Henneman, *Royal Taxation in Fourteenth-Century France: The Development of War Financing, 1322-1359* (Princeton, 1971), 40.

<sup>92</sup> Phillips, *Edward II*, 455; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 228.

<sup>93</sup> Since 1295 Charles had resented the Plantagenet presence in south-western France, his replacement in the field by Robert of Artois had been a sign of military failure. Between the Anglo-French war and the war of St Sardos, however, Artois was killed at Courtrai, whilst Charles failed in his attempts to secure a crown further afield in Italy and the Holy Roman Empire. See Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 227-229; Phillips, *Edward II*, 464.

An initial force of 400 men-at-arms and 4,000 infantrymen were recruited from the surrounding area to form a resistance until the English expeditionary forces could arrive, such as the expedition of John of Brittany and John of St John; however, only 300 men-at-arms made the journey to the duchy by November.<sup>94</sup> A commission of array was announced from the beginning of August where it was hoped that an army of horse and foot, ‘armed with steel armour’, would assemble.<sup>95</sup> It does seem that Edward II had made firm plans to go to the duchy at the head of the army; according to Phillips, a ‘group of prelates and magnates was chosen to advise Edward [II] on his plans to go to Gascony, and they presented their recommendations to him at a meeting at Mortlake [Richmond upon Thames] on 1 November: at least 1,000 men-at-arms should accompany him, and 10,000 infantry, 6,000 from England and 4,000 Wales’.<sup>96</sup>

The large-scale plans to recruit a royal force of men-at-arms, archers, hobelars, and foot-soldiers was clear to see. With a general muster declared orders were also delivered to the sheriffs to proclaim throughout their bailiwicks that ‘all those knights, esquires, hobelars and foot soldiers who wish to go with the king in his service to Gascony at his wages, of 2*s.* for knights, 12*d.* for esquires, 6*d.* for hobelars and 3*d.* for foot-soldiers, should be at Portsmouth by 17 March’.<sup>97</sup> From Nottingham, between 22 and 23 December, commissioners were appointed to array in the region of 135 men-at-arms throughout the southern counties of England between Kent and Somerset; 2,000 archers from across the entire kingdom; 940 hobelars from Northumberland, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire; and almost 4,000 foot-soldiers from England and 400 foot-soldiers from Wales.<sup>98</sup>

However, Edward II failed to leave for Gascony, assigning the command of the army to John de Warenne, earl of Surrey; the expeditionary force, consisting of no more than 300 men-at-arms and 4,000 infantry arrived in Bordeaux on 11 May 1325.<sup>99</sup> Although the conflict had ground to a halt by the time of the arrival of this force, there was at least a significant Anglo-Gascon army in the region prepared for a renewal of the conflict. This was a contingent far better equipped than their

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<sup>94</sup> Phillips, *Edward II*, 464-465.

<sup>95</sup> *CPR, 1324-1327*, 8.

<sup>96</sup> Phillips, *Edward II*, 467.

<sup>97</sup> ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/36:171.

<sup>98</sup> *CPR, 1324-1327*, 77-80, 96, 97.

<sup>99</sup> Phillips, *Edward II*, 465; ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/36:303.

predecessors had been in 1294. For example, on 18 February 1325 the ‘bailiffs and good people of Canterbury’ had been ordered to equip their infantry recruits with ‘haketons, bacinets, haubergeons or plates, gauntlets of iron and whale-bone and other suitable arms’, a telling sign that the struggles of siege warfare and close-combat fighting were eagerly anticipated.<sup>100</sup>

Edward II’s attempts to raise an army had been a much greater enterprise than that of his father’s. However, despite these efforts the English forces that embarked for Gascony were generally of a similar size and composition to those of 1294. And, having arrived in the duchy after the ceasefire, their main duty was to supplement the garrisons already in place. Phillips has endeavoured to put a positive aspect on this part of Edward II’s overseas campaign, suggesting that ‘the English government had succeeded through a major administrative effort in mobilizing and transporting several thousand men, hundreds of horses, food supplies and munitions, but’, unfortunately for Edward II’s reputation, ‘all this took nearly a year to achieve’; Vale, in more direct terms, simply remarked how ‘the war of St Sardos had petered out’ by the time Edward II’s second expeditionary force was deployed.<sup>101</sup>

Despite this failure to engage the French, the Anglo-Gascon army that had assembled by 1325 seemed to have followed a strategy that had been recently deployed by Edward I’s forces; the second feature of the war of St Sardos was a strategy drawn straight from the military playbook of Vegetius and, as we have seen, it was a strategy the likes of John of Brittany and John of St John had particularly focussed on: a defence-in-depth policy. Siege warfare was less of a priority for the expeditionary forces in 1325, mainly since the war of St Sardos was centred further inland for just a few short months; Charles of Valois’ forces posed less of a threat to areas of Plantagenet power and commercial interest. For this reason, Bordeaux and Bayonne, Bourg, Blaye and Libourne remained safe in the hands of the English king-duke.<sup>102</sup>

Only La Réole succumbed to the French after a five-week siege, yet the besiegers had themselves suffered greatly, accumulating high casualty rates while also succumbing to dysentery and

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<sup>100</sup> ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/36:286.

<sup>101</sup> Phillips, *Edward II*, 465; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 241.

<sup>102</sup> Phillips, *Edward II*, 464.

typhoid caused by contaminated water and rotting food supplies.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, the strategy of retaining strongholds was achieved by Edward II who had placed great importance on the Gascon stronghold (see chapter eight for further discussion); the king of England had, quite importantly, advocated supplying the garrisons of all ducal castles in the region in 1323 to ensure their preservation during sieges. The strengthening of a network of defences throughout the duchy was most likely a lesson learned from his father's reign — as well as a scheme to mitigate any territorial losses considering the private feuds which had arisen in the Marsan war that same year. The loss of so many fortified towns, castles and ports prior to the Anglo-French war had put considerable pressure on the expeditionary forces during 1294, and it was not a scenario that Edward II could afford to repeat, certainly after his less than successful Scottish campaigns.<sup>104</sup>

According to Vale the most significant aspect of the success in the Garonne was the preservation of Bordeaux, 'the great majority of the city's ruling class... remained firmly in Edward II's allegiance'; the loyalty of Bordeaux's nobility stands in stark contrast to that during the Anglo-French war, yet the change of allegiance most likely stemmed from the effects of a series of successive sieges on the city since 1294 (which had resulted in its isolation) and almost certainly contributed to mercantile losses as it became cut-off from its greatest trading partner, England. The shipment of springalds to defend the city in mid-1325 highlights the importance placed in defending Bordeaux, whilst also pointing towards a continued use in Vegetian practice; catapults (*brides*), mangonels, trebuchets and belfries are all recorded, highlighting the Anglo-Gascon garrisons' intentions on keeping any French besiegers at a distance.<sup>105</sup>

The final feature of the war of St Sardos, and one that mirrored the efforts of Edward I in the region, centred on the use of Gascon and Iberian troops. The opening phases of the conflict had involved the retinues of more than a hundred Gascon nobles, whilst a grant of land to Arnaut Caillau, at 100 marks a year in Bordeaux, was intended to obtain his military support; a pardon was also

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<sup>103</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 238.

<sup>104</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 230.

<sup>105</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 238-239; 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/36:316.

distributed to Bernat de Durfot, lord of Flamarens, who, according to the English Crown, had given in to the 'lesser of two evils' by allowing the French forces to invade.<sup>106</sup>

Edward II also appealed to the rulers of Aragon and Castile for military aid against the French; the king of England proactively reached out to at least 17 high-ranking Iberian military commanders. These included Gonzalo García, the constable of the king of Aragon; the king's kinsman, Filippo de Saluzzo; and the king's son, Ramon Berenguer; Edward II even sent a letter of credence to Ramon Fole, the *vescomte* of Cardona, explaining how he 'cannot believe that it has escaped Cardona how the French are persecuting the king and his own in the duchy, so much so that he needs assistance in repelling them'.<sup>107</sup> Although attempts had been made to build a cross-Pyrenees coalition, the level of conflict in the war of St Sardos was minimal, certainly compared to the Anglo-French war, and the urgency in gaining the support of Aragonese nobles was far from pivotal to the outcome of the conflict.<sup>108</sup>

Despite this, the war of St Sardos can be seen as a continuation to the conflict which had emanated from the 1290s. Edward II, although quick to raise a large-scale Anglo-Gascon force, had followed the same process of military composition, strategy, and tactics as his father. It should be acknowledged that Edward II's position in Gascony was far healthier than Edward I's had been in 1294. The network of Plantagenet controlled towns, ports and fortifications were largely intact, and there was no need to undertake a series of sieges, or even to conduct a scorched earth policy. The lessons learnt from the Anglo-French war had secured the English Crown's interests in the region by laying down an effective strategy of defence that had been implemented thirty years earlier.

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<sup>106</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 237; Phillips, *Edward II*, 466; 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/36:134 and 203. Arnat Caillau was granted the forfeited lands of Amanieu d'Albret. Amanieu had allied himself with Edward I during the Anglo-French war but had exchanged his allegiances to the king of France during the war of St Sardos.

<sup>107</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/36:224, 243 and 245.

<sup>108</sup> W.R. Childs, 'England in Europe in the Reign of Edward II', in *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives*, eds., G. Dodd and A. Musson, (Woodbridge, 2006), 112-116.

*First Phase of the Hundred Years War*

If the war of St Sardos had been a continuation of past practices, then the Gascon expeditions in the reign of Edward III were a steady advancement in all three areas. The recourse to war in Gascony from 1337 — in light of the Valois confiscation of the duchy — coupled with Edward III's official claim to the French Crown in 1340, finally linked the 'cold war' conflicts of Edward I and Edward II's reigns to the first phase of the Hundred Years War.<sup>109</sup> Edward III's Gascon conflict, 'a product of the Angevin legacy', would remove the contentious question of homage completely (the main catalyst for war in 1294 and 1324) because the king-duke saw himself as the rightful heir to the French throne.<sup>110</sup>

However, there was no immediate military impact in Gascony under Edward III, and although the Valois confiscation of the duchy officially began on 24 May, resulting in French sieges at St Macaire and Marmande, as well as the loss of Bourq and Blaye in April 1339, there was no expedition from England until 1345.<sup>111</sup> This expedition, however, has been termed a success by Nicholas Gribit who has viewed it as 'the first blow to the flower of French chivalry', and ultimately setting in motion 'the highly effective multi-front warfare launched by Edward III in the mid-1340s', from Aquitaine to Scotland.<sup>112</sup>

The 1345 expedition was spearheaded by the king's cousin (and notably Edmund of Lancaster's grandson) Henry Grosmont, earl of Derby, who had entered into a written indenture with Edward III to take 500 men-at-arms, 500 Welsh infantry and 1000 archers (half on foot and half mounted) to the region for an initial period of six months.<sup>113</sup> Yet, as had previously been the case in Gascony, the English resistance to French strategy (which has effectively been compared to a

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<sup>109</sup> Maddicott, 'The origins of the Hundred Years War', 35; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 244-262. The Valois confiscation of the duchy incorporated past grievances; the question of homage and the making of alliances in the region, once again, lay at the heart of Anglo-French tensions. These were further exacerbated by Edward III's harbouring of Robert of Artois. Artois had supported Philip VI's election to the French throne, and in return expected Crown support to his claim over his grandfather's territory. Philip refused to back him, and Artois sought refuge at Edward III's court, see Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 108.

<sup>110</sup> Curry, 'The Hundred Years War', 86; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 264; J. Le Patourel, 'Edward III and the Kingdom of France', *History*, 43:149 (1958), 175.

<sup>111</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/57:31; Green, *Edward the Black Prince*, 32.

<sup>112</sup> N.A. Gribit, *Henry of Lancaster's Expedition to Aquitaine, 1345-46: Military Service and Professionalism in the Hundred Years War* (Woodbridge, 2016), 1.

<sup>113</sup> Gribit, *Henry of Lancaster's Expedition to Aquitaine*, 15, 17, 23.

‘medieval blitzkrieg’ by Anne Curry) came down to the defence of many of the region’s strongholds by the locally recruited contingents; John de Grailly, the captal de Buch, for example, was able to offer to the war effort 77 men-at-arms and nearly 700 foot-serjeants, while Bérard d’Albret, lord of Rions, also had a contingent at his disposal of around 8 knights and 76 mounted and unmounted men-at-arms.<sup>114</sup>

In comparison, the first phase of the Hundred Years War had predominantly focussed on the northern regions; from Flanders in the late 1330s through to the siege of Calais in 1346 around 32,000 soldiers had taken part in Edward III’s campaigns at varying times.<sup>115</sup> Edward III had focussed his primary military efforts on the north-east of the French kingdom before turning his attention to Gascony and, although this was a complete reversal of Edward I’s strategy, the English Crown’s ambition in the fourteenth century was still to form an alliance of northern European princes (see chapter seven for a more in-depth study on allegiances).<sup>116</sup>

When the defence of Gascony did take place, it is clear to see that the familiar pattern of siege, counter-siege, and defence-in-depth strategy was continued, and just as Edward I has been praised for his choice of Barrau de Sescas as admiral in controlling the Gascon coastline, Edward III also turned to a Bayonnais admiral, Pey du Vignau, having ordered him to ‘go to sea’ and ‘to fight and harass the king’s French enemies, both by land and at sea’.<sup>117</sup> The benefits here were most certainly down to ‘invaluable’ local knowledge; the prospect of sailing the Bay of Biscay or the Atlantic — as well as inland along the Garonne — was difficult enough for even the most experienced mariner, yet a familiar understanding of the coastline, of safe-harbours, and when and where to make landfall were crucial to an expeditionary campaign underpinned by the hit-and-run tactics.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Curry, ‘The Hundred Years War’, 85; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 262; Le Patourel, ‘Edward III and the Kingdom of France’, 175-177.

<sup>115</sup> Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers*, 62-68; Green, *Edward the Black Prince*, 47; J.H. Ramsay, ‘The Strength of English Armies in the Middle Ages’, *The English Historical Review*, 29:114 (1914), 224.

<sup>116</sup> Ormrod, *Edward III*, 325; M.G.A. Vale, ‘The Anglo-French Wars, 1294-1340: allies and alliances’, in *Guerre et Société en France, en Angleterre et en Bourgogne, XIV-XV Siècle*, eds., P. Contamine, C. Giry-Deloison, and M.H. Keen, (Lille, 1991), 15-35.

<sup>117</sup> ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/58:1.

<sup>118</sup> Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée*, 96.

The combined operations on land and at sea that have been discussed regarding the military strategies of 1294 and 1296 were once again a main priority for Edward III. For example, throughout April 1356 the king's serjeant-at-arms, Thomas Durant, was ordered to arrest 50 ships of a capacity of 30 tuns or more from all the ports in the kingdom and to bring them to Plymouth. It was here where the sheriff of Devon was waiting with four-hundred hurdles (*cleias*) in order to make the ships suitable for horse transportation.<sup>119</sup> At the same time Philip de Whitton was charged with taking into the king's hands all ships in the port of Bristol, whether English, Bayonnais or foreign, of a capacity of 40 tuns or more, and to send them to Plymouth in anticipation of the prince of Wales' expedition to the region.<sup>120</sup>

Naval superiority was very much at the forefront of English military objectives, and the Franco-Castilian alliance at sea still threatened the Gascon strategy as much in the 1350s as it had done in the 1290s. Yet, the previously mentioned victory over a hostile Spanish force off the coast of Winchelsea emphasised English control in the Channel (certainly considering the English victory at Sluys in 1340); and for a domestic audience at least it quickly 'took its place in the great and growing catalogue of Edward III's miraculous victories over foreign powers'.<sup>121</sup>

The period between 1349 and 1356 witnessed a series of successes for Edward III's war effort; the French lieutenant in the region, Guy de Nesle, was captured at Saintes whilst the earl of Stafford occupied a commanding position in the Gironde estuary.<sup>122</sup> In contrast to earlier Anglo-French wars, the Gascon expeditions of the 1350s would be marked for their development in military composition and tactics. The defining features came in the ability to strike deep into French territory, particularly during the Black Prince's *Grande Chevauchée*, as well as the rare occurrence of a pitched battle in the north of Gascony at Poitiers.

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<sup>119</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/58:12 and 33.

<sup>120</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/68:42.

<sup>121</sup> Ormrod, *Edward III*, 328.

<sup>122</sup> Ormrod, *Edward III*, 329-330; T.F. Tout, 'Some Neglected Fights between Crécy and Poitiers', *The English Historical Review*, 20:80 (1905), 728. It has been suggested that Stafford led a force of 25 bannerets, 119 knights, 1,117 men-at-arms and 1,328 mounted sergeants, along with 30 mounted archers and 1,096 foot-sergeants. See A.E. Prince, 'The Strength of English Armies in the Reign of Edward III', *The English Historical Review*, 46:183, (1931), 366.

In contrast to the limitations of the earl of Lincoln's *chevauchée* of 1297, which will shortly be discussed in chapter five, the expeditions of 1345-55 were able to extend their destructive reach. The former was under the command of the earl of Derby, who embarked on a winter raid with 350 bannerets and knights as far as Toulouse, before returning to refortify La Réole; while the Black Prince undertook a much larger *chevauchée* deep into the Toulousain at the head of an army of 2,000 English troops and 5,000 Gascons, including 800 men-at-arms and the earls of Warwick, Suffolk, and Oxford.<sup>123</sup>

The Anglo-Gascon forces were now, for the first time, in the vicinity of the Mediterranean, causing destruction to towns such as Seissan and Villefranche which had not previously been affected by the conflicts in Gascony. Yet, what made the raids so effective was that the Anglo-Gascon forces were now moving further distances over shorter periods of time. The main reason for this had been the introduction of the mounted archer, which had first seen conflict in Scotland at the battle of Halidon Hill in 1333.<sup>124</sup> The foot-soldier, which had previously featured so heavily in Edward I's armies, had now effectively become obsolete having been replaced by the far more manoeuvrable horse-archer, or what Morris would term, the 'finest fighting man of the middle ages'.<sup>125</sup> Such was the manoeuvrability of the Black Prince's army that in the build up to the battle of Poitiers the French king, John II, had paid some of his ill-equipped foot-soldiers to leave so that he could keep up with the Anglo-Gascon force.<sup>126</sup>

The mounted archer allowed for contingents to extend their reach, such as the 300-mile round journey from Bordeaux to Toulouse; the archer's firepower could then be used further afield rather than confined to the immediate vicinity of the Garonne. Their worth on campaign was not lost on Edward III, for on the 14 March 1356 the king's sergeants-at-arms were ordered to 'choose 100 archers mounted on horses from the best and the stronger archers of Gloucestershire in order to send

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<sup>123</sup> Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 227; Ormrod, *Edward III*, 325-342; Hoskins, *In the Steps of the Black Prince*, 21; Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers*, 70-72.

<sup>124</sup> Prince, 'The Strength of English Armies', 355.

<sup>125</sup> Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers*, 57, 76; Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 14; J.W. Sherborne, 'Indentured Retinues and English Expeditions to France, 1369-80', *The English Historical Review*, 79:313 (1964), 719; Morris, 'Mounted Infantry', 78; Gribit, *Henry of Lancaster's Expedition to Aquitaine*, 30; Ormrod, *Edward III*, 342.

<sup>126</sup> Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 431.

them to Gascony to serve in the retinue of Edward [of Woodstock], prince of Wales, at the wages of the king'.<sup>127</sup> And, less than a month later, orders were also distributed to the king's officers to buy 'war horses and other horses in various parts of the kingdom of England', with 'bows, arrows, strings for bows and all other necessary things' to be delivered to Gascony.<sup>128</sup>

The impact that the mounted archer had in the relief of Gascony was considerable.<sup>129</sup> In 1355 the large scale organisation of these troops was clearly visible; it has been estimated that there were between 11,000 and 13,000 horses amongst the expeditionary forces, yet given the stresses and strains in transporting horses by ship it was in all probability that most of these mounts were purchased in the duchy itself.<sup>130</sup> Such was the strategic importance of the mounted archer that in 1366 — in preparation for battle at Nájera in Northern Spain — orders were delivered to the sheriffs of the counties of England for almost two thousand of the 'strongest archers... suitably equipped with horses, bows and arrows'.<sup>131</sup> With campaigns moving further inland from Plantagenet centres in Gascony, military captains were beginning to see the benefits of mixed retinues of mounted men-at-arms and archers.<sup>132</sup> Whereas John of St John's march on Bayonne had witnessed an intermittent arrival of troops, contingents were now able to move in one cohesive unit at the quickest possible speed.

Prior to the campaign of 1355-56, Anglo-French warfare in the duchy often came to unsatisfactory conclusions, ultimately leading to a renewal of conflict. Yet, Edward III managed to finalise his overseas campaign with a decisive victory, albeit under the command of his son. The far more aggressive strategy in destroying the lands of rebellious lords and French loyalists — in the process demonstrating to the French occupants that John II could not defend them — had provoked

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<sup>127</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/68:10.

<sup>128</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/68:9, 7 and 35.

<sup>129</sup> There are claims that the mounted archer of the fourteenth century, commonly referred to as a *valetus*, was of a far greater social standing (a result of higher wages, an increased sense of professionalism, and the attainment of landed wealth) than that of the thirteenth century foot-archer; the ranks of mounted archers in Edward III's armies, for instance, included yeomen as well as the sons of the gentry, here bridging 'the chasm that had earlier divided the peasant foot-soldier from the genteel man-at-arms'. See A. Ayton, 'Military Service and the Dynamics of Recruitment in Fourteenth-Century England', in *The Soldier Experience*, 40-41, and Bell et. al., *The Soldier in Later Medieval England*, 145-152.

<sup>130</sup> Hoskins, *In the Steps of the Black Prince*, 21; Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 73-74; Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée*, 99.

<sup>131</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/79:69-69.14; 80-81.2. These mounted archers were paid by their retinue leader, which was either the Black Prince or Henry Grosmont.

<sup>132</sup> Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers*, 64.

the French army into the field, meeting an Anglo-Gascon force of around 6,000 men-at-arms and archers at Poitiers in September 1356.<sup>133</sup>

After a series of failed French attacks in the battle, the tactics employed by the Black Prince's army, from strategically positioned archers to small cavalry attacks from the surrounding wooded areas, eventually forced victory.<sup>134</sup> The Black Prince's army had overcome a larger French force and had taken politically important prisoners in the process, including the French king and the counts of Touraine and Ponthieu.<sup>135</sup> In the words of Adam Chapman, the battle of Poitiers was 'one of the great chivalric episodes of the entire Hundred Years War. Its conclusion, the capture of Jean II, was the most significant military coup of Edward III's reign and of the Black Prince's career', and according to Neil Murphy, 'While victory at Poitiers did not lead to an immediate expansion of Plantagenet lands in France, John II's capture changed the course of war'.<sup>136</sup> The Anglo-Gascon forces had strategically out-played their French counterparts and, after six decades, had turned the balance of power in the region. From hit-and-run relief efforts and defensive small-scale garrison units, the English expeditionary forces and local Gascon retinues had developed into a professional fighting unit capable of a decisive victory on the battlefield.

### Summary and Observations

The military composition, strategy, and tactics of the expeditionary forces in Gascony were evidently significant. Although the Anglo-French war has been dismissed as a futile exercise this was clearly not the case. On its own, Edward I's brief campaign in Gascony was a defensive success, underpinned by combined operations both on land and sea. But if the Anglo-French war is placed as the first in a series of Gascon expeditions between 1294 and 1356 then we can see that it was a milestone for subsequent kings of England and their military captains in how to wage a defensive —

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<sup>133</sup> Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 393, 432; Ormrod, *Edward III*, 347; E. Carpentier, 'L'historiographie de la bataille de Poitiers au quatorzième siècle', *Revue Historique*, 263:1 (533) (1980), 21.

<sup>134</sup> Green, *Edward the Black Prince*, 43; A.H. Burne, 'The Battle of Poitiers', *The English Historical Review*, 53:209 (1938), 27.

<sup>135</sup> Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 431-439; Ormrod, *Edward III*, 352.

<sup>136</sup> Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers*, 72-73; N. Murphy, *The Captivity of John II, 1356-60: The Royal Image in Later Medieval England and France* (London, 2016), 11-12.

and when occasion allowed — an offensive campaign against larger French forces. As Anne Curry highlights, both Edward II and Edward III managed to emulate Edward I's military policy in Gascony.<sup>137</sup>

We should note the continued importance in maintaining territorial dominion, securing the strength-in-depth strategy, and of conducting scorched earth policies whilst forming regional alliances either side of the Pyrenees. The decisive battle at Poitiers, however, although manipulated by the English military command through their strategy and tactics, was an exceptional episode in Anglo-French warfare in the duchy and would not be matched again in the region until the battle of Castillon.<sup>138</sup> Nevertheless, a continuity of Vegetian practice and a development in military composition had extended the boundaries of warfare for a sustained period beyond English Crown lands for the first time. Such was the impact of these far-reaching raids into the Toulousain that the French forces had no other option but to turn to the battlefield.

Perhaps then, it should be asked why Edward I did not take a more aggressive line during the Anglo-French war? Yet, an attempt to offer a simple answer here may be futile for it would place too much emphasis on the effectiveness of battlefield warfare. Edward I could not have known in June 1294 the timescale for the forthcoming campaigns in Gascony, and neither could his military objective advance any further than a holding operation due to his status as vassal to Philip IV (Edward II was similarly bound to his liegeman, Charles IV). Edward III, on the other hand, was able to remove the constraints of French overlordship and ultimately set-upon a war of conquest based on dynastic rights. Once the English king became a claimant to the kingdom of France the opportunity was then available to pour more resources into an offensive campaign in Gascony.

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<sup>137</sup> Curry, 'The Hundred Years War', 88.

<sup>138</sup> It has been suggested that Castillon solved very little because Bordeaux withstood French attacks for a further three months, and the French army became divided over the question of ransoms and booty. See M. Vale, 'The Last Years of English Gascony, 1451-1453: The Alexander Prize Essay', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 19 (1969), 133; M.H. Keen, *The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages* (London, 1965), 124-6; 131-3.

### Three

#### **Peace “to all who will come to pardon”: Criminals and outlaws in the English army**

The aim of this chapter is to form an in-depth study of Edward’s novel initiative to turn to the county gaols in his bid to raise an expeditionary force. As the Capetian army invaded the duchy, Edward issued a royal pardon to any criminal or outlaw — imprisoned or fugitive — who wished to fight overseas in return for payment. Around 300 criminals and outlaws were recruited in this way, contributing to a significant proportion of the fighting power of the relief effort in 1294, as previously outlined in chapter two. However, historians have often viewed this episode in English military recruitment during Edward I’s reign as setting a dangerous precedent, particularly as it became a re-usable method of raising troops throughout the Hundred Years War. Yet, with closer inspection of the administrative records — such as the patent, close, and Gascon Rolls — there is reason to believe that a more cautious approach was taken by Edward in replacing the absent feudal quotas with a body of capable felons, regardless of their criminal background.

#### **A Royal Act of Mercy**

The royal pardon gave Edward I direct access to the process of English common law as an ‘integral component of the royal prerogative’.<sup>1</sup> In its purest form the royal pardon was granted as an act of mercy, whether to right the wrongs of justifiable crimes or to absolve and excuse innocent individuals who, as Naomi Hurnard remarked, ‘thoroughly deserved clemency’.<sup>2</sup> This had often been the case when infants had committed homicide by mischance, or when an individual had killed another in self-defence; it was also reserved for crimes committed due to insanity (when an individual was deemed to be in a state of madness) or when divine intervention had seemingly interceded in the process of justice. This had been the case when Alice Nuce was detained for the ‘death of her son’,

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<sup>1</sup> L.J. Andrew Villalon, ‘“Taking The King’s Shilling” To Avoid “The Wages Of Sin”: Royal Pardons for Military Malefactors during the Hundred Years War’, in *The Hundred Years War (Part III) Further Considerations*, eds., L.J. Andrew Villalon and D.J. Kagay, (Leiden: Boston, 2013), 358-359.

<sup>2</sup> Hurnard, *The King’s Pardon*, vii.

only later released on account of her mental state, and Robert of Wyngham was also pardoned having survived the ordeal of hanging: a clear sign (in the medieval mind) of God's merciful intervention.<sup>3</sup>

Further still, it was not uncommon for the king to take a personal interest in select criminal cases, particularly those that had infringed upon the royal authority, either as a threat to the state or from within the royal household. The offer of a royal pardon in these instances could provide monetary benefits as a fine was often issued, but more importantly for Edward it could lead to the obtaining of fealty, either from a troublesome vassal or from a captive of a conquered land. A prime example of this occurred after the battle of Dunbar in 1296 when Edward offered pardons to at least 41 Scottish captives who had been taken from the battlefield as prisoners; the terms for their release clearly stated that they were to provide military service for the king in his overseas campaigns, either in Gascony or Flanders.<sup>4</sup> Yet, due to the contrasting nature of the royal pardon many historians are of the opinion that such a process could be easily manipulated, and therefore became detrimental to law and order. Many of these current understandings centre on the premise that it was simply *unavoidable* that the royal pardon should become susceptible to the authoritative abuse of either a king or noble.

Contemporary opinions have built upon William Stubbs' argument that 'this evil was not merely an abuse of the royal attribute of mercy,... but a regularly systematised perversion of prerogative', one which allowed the nobility 'to secure for their retainers, and those who could purchase their support, an exemption from the operation of the law'.<sup>5</sup> This inspired further studies, particularly from Stubbs' nineteenth century contemporary, Jean Jules Jusserand, before interest in the subject began to expand in the 1960s with works by H.J. Hewitt and Naomi Hurnard, followed by Richard Kaeuper in the 1980s and, more recently, with Krista Kesselring, Helen Lacey and L.J. Andrew Villalon in the decade between 2003 and 2013.<sup>6</sup> Besides Kesselring's early modernist approach, however, all of these contributions have focused on a more general exploration of the royal

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<sup>3</sup> *CPR, 1272-1281*, 356; *CPR, 1292-1301*, 147.

<sup>4</sup> *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1288-1296*, 480-484, [hereafter, *CCR*]; *CCR, 1296-1302*, 124-127.

<sup>5</sup> Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England*, 635.

<sup>6</sup> J.J. Jusserand, *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages: XIVth Century*, 4th edition, (London, 1961), originally published in 1889; H.J. Hewitt, *The Organization of War under Edward III* (Manchester, 1966); Hurnard, *The King's Pardon* (see above for full title); Kaeuper, *War, Justice and Public Order* (see above for full title); K.J. Kesselring, *Mercy and Authority in the Tudor State* (Cambridge, 2003); H. Lacey, *The Royal Pardon: Access to Mercy in Fourteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge, 2009).

pardon in later medieval England, either as a counter-intuitive process that impinged upon law and order, or as a regular occurrence that became part of everyday life throughout the Hundred Years War.<sup>7</sup> Quite understandably, Edward I's introduction of the royal pardon on 4 June 1294 has been the target for much of the widespread criticism.<sup>8</sup>

Despite this, there has only been a very brief discussion of the military impact of the criminal recruit during the Anglo-French war. The generally accepted "futility" of the conflict, coupled with an overriding sentiment that any criminal recruit must have lacked the discipline or skill to be fully effective in battle, has led to a clear oversight of this novel process of military recruitment.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately this has restricted any further analysis of Edward I's royal pardon from within a military context, either as a proactive or a positive step made solely in the defence of the king's lost inheritance. Given the initial successes for the relief effort between October 1294 and January 1295, this largely absent or negative reaction to Edward's recruitment policy is somewhat surprising.

Like Stubbs' argument, many contemporary responses have been made with law and order in mind, rather than with the military ambitions of Edward I. For example, Hewitt argued that once the felon had been offered a grant of a pardon in return for military service, then the criminal became immune from the process of English common law, simply because little remained to prevent the individual from acting against the law in the first place.<sup>10</sup> And Hurnard also felt that Edward had abused his powers through the overuse of the royal prerogative; Hurnard argued that the royal pardon became a 'disastrous expedient' once too many criminals were allowed to enlist in the expeditionary force, regardless of the weight of their crimes.<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, given Edward's keen interest in tackling rising levels of crime (particularly in the 1285 Statute of Winchester), Jusserand attributed the increase in brigands and highway robbers in the period to what had become a perceived immunity from the law.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Villalon, ' "Taking The King's Shilling" To Avoid "The Wages Of Sin"', 371.

<sup>8</sup> CCR, 1288-96, 349; Hurnard, *The King's Pardon*, 248.

<sup>9</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 381; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 202.

<sup>10</sup> Hewitt, *Organization of War*, 173.

<sup>11</sup> Hurnard, *The King's Pardon*, vii.

<sup>12</sup> *Statutes of the Realm*, Volume I, (Record Commission, 1810), 96-98, [hereafter, *SR*]; Jusserand, *English Wayfaring Life*, 167.

Kaeuper extended this argument by claiming that once the deterrents in place to prevent crime had been removed then nothing remained to halt the spread of disorder; the royal pardon, in Kaeuper's words, simply made a 'mockery of the king's justice' as criminals could potentially return from a short term of service in Gascony, to then enter back into the very same community that they had previously been removed from.<sup>13</sup> Lacey has also pointed to the corruptible nature of the royal pardon, suggesting that the grant of a pardon may have had 'political overtones', certainly when 'the petitioners were inhabitants of the king's territorial possessions overseas'.<sup>14</sup> Yet by focussing on the domestic legal aspects of the royal pardon, the pivotal (and rather successful) relief effort has been completely overlooked.

It should be acknowledged that the current study does not intend to defend the actions of the thirteenth century criminal, and neither does it wish to gloss over some of the more brutal aspects associated with crime in the late thirteenth century, such as the numerous cases related to attacks on women (particularly widows) as well as the Jewish community, which in most cases led to death or serious injury, as will be explained. It does, however, hope to re-evaluate the impact of the initiative, primarily in the Crown's efforts to wage a campaign in Gascony during the Anglo-French war, but also in its continued development as a key part of English military recruitment throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

To arrive at a conclusion the chapter will take a closer look at the type of criminal that was enlisted into the army, along with their potential martial capabilities, here showcasing a more selective and cautious approach taken by the king's justices throughout the realm. By utilising the available evidence, a detailed profile of a select few criminal recruits can be developed: the names of the recruits, the type of crime they were imprisoned for, the individual's connection to a mainpernor or military commander, and the terms of their military service, can all be extracted to some certain degree from the patent, close, and Gascon Rolls (these are the only forms of written evidence for the recruitment of criminals). What will become clear to see, however, is a defined process of

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<sup>13</sup> Kaeuper, *War, Justice and Public Order*, 103, 126-127. This later gave rise to clause 9 of the Stamford Articles (1309).

<sup>14</sup> Lacey, *Royal Pardon*, 2, 65.

recruitment, one that targeted specific criminals and outlaws who could demonstrate a particular skill-set or martial quality; the recruitment of the criminal — from as far north as York in some instances — will only further highlight the countrywide effort in delivering able-bodied recruits for the king's overseas campaign.

### **The Three Hundred**

The muster of the English forces in 1294 has already been addressed in chapter two, yet it is important to signal at this point the decision by the king and council to introduce the felon into the relief effort. The feudal quotas may have failed to turn up to the muster at Portsmouth, yet Edward's swift decision in June 1294 to enlist known felons and outlaws points towards a preconceived plan rather than an uncalculated and reactionary response to any unforeseen circumstance. Royal justices, such as Roger Brabazon and William Bereford, were charged with finding 'manucaptions of persons under indictments or appeals', while further proclamations had also called on felons to voluntarily turn themselves in, either in person or through an intermediary.<sup>15</sup> It was also decided that as an incentive the recruits would receive wages at around 3*d.* a day whilst on campaign, before being allowed to return to England and to stand trial, should anyone wish to press charges.<sup>16</sup>

Interestingly, Edward had even expressed his sadness within the royal commission for the felons' demise, here claiming that he had turned to this expedient of recruiting criminals through pity, 'because so many and such different kinds of men are frequently in danger of losing life or limb; some being charged, indicted or appealed by approvers, of homicides, robberies and other crimes against the peace; some wandering about the country for trespasses in the forest doing much mischief'.<sup>17</sup> Yet, whether Edward did indeed hold any sympathy for the criminal's condition remains highly questionable.

It is likely that the option to search the county gaols for willing recruits was discussed by the king and council at the Easter Parliament, if not before this date during the Michaelmas meeting in

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<sup>15</sup> *CPR, 1292-1301*, 289; *RG*, iii, 183; Hurnard, *The King's Pardon*, 248.

<sup>16</sup> Hurnard, *The King's Pardon*, 219, 314.

<sup>17</sup> *CPR, 1292-1301*, 107.

late 1293.<sup>18</sup> Edward may have viewed the criminal and the outlaw as valid recruits for some time for the initiative to enlist them into the expeditionary force was enacted in little over two weeks from the confiscation of the duchy. Yet, to understand why Edward was so keen to turn to the county gaols in 1294, it is imperative to look at the response from the feudal levies when they were summoned for military service.

Despite the immediate threat to the king's inheritance there was less than full domestic support for an overseas war. The causes that lay behind this failure to gain popular support mainly focused on the question of overseas military service (an issue which had also caused some resentment amongst the nobility, such as the earl of Arundel who only conceded to the Crown's military demands when Edward threatened to 'collect all his debts').<sup>19</sup> The shire levies held similar reservations in committing to a foreign campaign, perhaps because extensive war taxation had exhausted many localised communities, but also because the arrival of the harvest season (between the end of September and early October) persuaded those of an agricultural background in Hampshire and the surrounding regions to stay at home.

To put it simply, voluntary military service did not carry the same obligatory measures outside of England. Prestwich has highlighted how the Crown had to abandon its attempts to 'obtain unpaid feudal service', instead offering payment to the would-be recruit as an inducement to enter the retinue of one of the leading knights.<sup>20</sup> Yet, quite significantly, from 1295 onwards the infantry recruits intended for Gascony were now arrayed by men with extensive 'military experience', such as Robert FitzPayn and William Mortimer; a more efficient system of recruitment was adopted for the Gascon campaign in order to avoid a repeat of the fiasco of 1294, but also with the intention of selecting infantrymen that were both willing and able combatants.<sup>21</sup>

At the start of the war the complete absence of the shire levies must have been disappointing for Edward. Yet, given the sudden introduction of the criminal and the outlaw, there is reason to

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<sup>18</sup> 'Edward I: Easter 1294', in *PROME*, [accessed 7 March 2019]; 'Edward I: Michaelmas 1293', *PROME*, [accessed 7 March 2019].

<sup>19</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 384.

<sup>20</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 381; Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare*, 74.

<sup>21</sup> Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 100.

believe that their absence may have been foreseen. In simple terms, the quota of feudal troops had fallen far short of previous musters during the first two decades of the king's reign, certainly when they are considered alongside the armies that had fought in Wales between 1277 and 1283: for example, 15,500 foot-soldiers had received the king's wage during the first Welsh war and 7,000 to 8,000 feudal recruits were drawn from Lancashire and Derbyshire alone for the war in 1282; while in early 1283 around 5,000 recruits were levied throughout England, as well as 6,000 from Wales itself.<sup>22</sup> Only a fraction the size of these recruits would ever muster for the war in Gascony leaving Edward with no immediate alternative recruitment policy other than to look to the county gaol for able-bodied individuals. According to Langtoft, Edward had now thought it wise to offer peace 'to all who will come to pardon'.<sup>23</sup>

The recruitment of criminals and outlaws proved a significant contribution to the relief effort as around 300 enlisted and assembled at Portsmouth.<sup>24</sup> The recruitment policy had also formed a timely contingency plan as the Welsh rebellion, which officially began on 30 September, prevented the earl of Lancaster's retinue of 278 men-at-arms from joining with the expeditionary fleet, instead being diverted to the Welsh March; the Welsh rebellion also extracted over £50,000 from the war-chest which had previously been assigned to the relief effort in Gascony.<sup>25</sup> The decision to remove the retinue of the king's brother certainly depleted Edward's army of experience and martial prowess, however, the arrival of the criminal and the outlaw allowed for a relatively significant contingent of armed men in its place.<sup>26</sup>

Although Edward's determination to enlist felons for the relief effort has been viewed in a negative light, it must be considered that in little over twelve weeks (from the announcement of the royal commission to the date of embarkation), *only* 300 criminal recruits were pardoned in this way. Furthermore, this was a heterogeneous group of recruits, one which mainly consisted of the hardened

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<sup>22</sup> Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare*, 116-117.

<sup>23</sup> Langtoft, 219.

<sup>24</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 202; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 381.

<sup>25</sup> C. Burt, *Edward I and the Governance of England, 1272-1307* (Cambridge, 2013), 178.

<sup>26</sup> Davies, *The Age of Conquest*, 382; Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 63; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 381; *Calendar of Chancery Rolls Various: Supplementary Close Rolls, Welsh Rolls, Scutage Rolls, 1277-1326* (Public Record Office: London, 1912), 356, [hereafter *CChRV*].

criminal — those accused and convicted of blatant transgressions or repeated crimes — but also the lesser criminal who had either committed a petty crime; had acted as an accomplice or abettor; or was simply innocent. Alone, 300 criminal recruits do not constitute any wide-scale abuse of the legal system, from either king or nobility, and neither does it suggest that Edward was undoing all the hard work that had previously taken place in the first decade of the reign, certainly regarding the reform of law and order in England.

Here, for instance, Edward had implemented a series of inquests and statutes upon his return to England in 1274; a telling sign that Edward had in fact learnt from the communal grievances that were levelled at his father during 1258, and the ensuing decline towards civil war that followed in the early 1260s.<sup>27</sup> Edward I's Hundred Rolls inquired into law and order, feudal tenure, Crown rights and the maladministration of royal officials, particularly focusing on the behaviour of the king's servants such as the sheriffs and bailiffs.<sup>28</sup> What then followed on from this was a series of statutes that utilised the justices' findings.

The Statute of Westminster I (1275), announced new measures in categorising and preventing certain criminals. Bailing prisoners and wardship was a key issue, and so too was trespass, one clause stated that 'no lock, door, window or any sort of fastening to be opened or broken', in an attempt to prevent theft and murder.<sup>29</sup> A decade later, the Statute of Winchester also aimed to tackle crime in the localities because 'from Day to Day, Robberies, Murthers, [Burnings, and Theft] be more often used than they have been heretofore'.<sup>30</sup> New methods were introduced, such as the setting up of watch and wards at night, the closing of town gates between 'the Sun-setting until the Sun-rising', as well as the widening of highways through the removal of trees and bushes 'whereby a Man may lurk to do hurt'.<sup>31</sup> However, although there was still a need to tackle crime head on, the efforts made by the

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<sup>27</sup> For an extensive background to the Provisions of Oxford and the road to civil war, see J.R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, 1994), and A. Jobson, *The First English Revolution: Simon de Montfort, Henry III and the Barons' War* (London, 2012).

<sup>28</sup> H.M. Cam, *The Hundred and the Hundred Rolls* (London, 1930), 30, 36.

<sup>29</sup> Burt, *Edward I and the Governance*, 86.

<sup>30</sup> *SR*, I, 96.

<sup>31</sup> *SR*, I, 96-98; *English Historical Documents, 1189-1327*, ed. H. Rothwell, (Camden Series, 1957), 397-399, 460, [hereafter, *EHD*]; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 280.

Crown in addressing these issues do not correspond with the impression that Edward was, at the same time, willing to manipulate the course of justice by releasing known felons for military service.

In contrast to the general belief that Edward was manipulating the judicial process, Kesselring has provided a revisionist approach, voicing her concerns that many of the current opinions regarding the abuse of the pardon are merely the result of modern day preconceptions; the understanding that the royal pardon was ‘corrupt’ or ‘counterproductive’ are solely based on *contemporary* values alone.<sup>32</sup> This would certainly seem to be the case, yet to add to Kesselring’s argument it is also important to remember that Edward stood to gain very little by jeopardising his own reforming agenda, certainly by provoking a backlash which could quite easily have led to a civil war scenario akin to that of the 1260s. What should also be considered is that there was an insurance clause at hand, one which stipulated that should the criminal return to a life of crime, then the option to revoke the pardon and to place the individual back in gaol was freely available.

Therefore, Edward’s military pardon should be viewed as a prudent — if not beneficial — military policy for two main reasons. The criminal or the outlaw was, in the first instance, removed from England completely, transported to a foreign land far away from the society where they had committed their crimes. And in the second instance, the recruitment policy had introduced to the expeditionary forces an individual who was a willing participant of the king’s campaign (particularly as monetary reward was available), but also because redemption for past sins was widely recognised. Yet, given the dangers encountered in any type of warfare during the Middle Ages, it must also be considered that although Edward was gaining a foot-soldier for each pardoned criminal recruit, there was no guarantee that the same individual would survive the campaign, or even return to England. For this reason, it should also be accounted for that Edward was freeing England of individuals who could not conform to societies expectations. By doing so Edward was able to effectively assemble an army which was competent, but also one which could be relied upon to fulfil some of the more merciless acts that were inherent with siege warfare and in the ensuing economic destruction of the *chevauchée*.

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<sup>32</sup> Kesselring, *Mercy and Authority*, 17.

### **Homicide, Larceny and Forest Trespass**

During the relief effort, the pardoned contingent was almost of equal size to that of the experienced men-at-arms in the campaign, yet despite this the military effectiveness of the criminal recruit has often been downplayed. Malcolm Vale, for instance, has suggested that both the ‘professionalism and quality’ of the criminal recruit ‘cannot have been high’, and although this is understandable given that the only weaponry available for these recruits would have been at best a knife or bow, and at worse a simple stave, it simply fails to consider the qualitative worth of the new recruits.<sup>33</sup>

It must also be remembered that during the late thirteenth century there was very little to distinguish between a feudal recruit (often armed with little more than agricultural tools turned into weaponry during Edward I’s reign) and the recently enlisted criminal recruit armed with a knife or bow.<sup>34</sup> The English Crown made no full-scale attempt to supply recruits with weapons or armour — whether of a feudal nature or criminal — and even the best prepared foot-soldier carried little more than a sword or a spear.<sup>35</sup> In considering this, perhaps it should be asked whether the criminal and the outlaw was as equally prepared for conflict as the shire recruit? A shire recruit, recently remunerated for their military service, could quite easily have been inexperienced in warfare (and certainly would not have witnessed an overseas campaign before), while they may also have lacked the physical capabilities needed for battle. It seems perfectly acceptable that the chosen pardoned recruits must have displayed some individual value otherwise there was very little need to release, transport, and provision at great cost, 300 ineffective troops: their presence on the campaign would have become a burden within a matter of days.

There was quite clearly a specific targeting of three main criminals within the royal commission (those accused or sentenced for homicide, larceny, and forest trespass) which may point towards a certain requirement for a particular skill set whilst on campaign. There was no shortage of readily available criminals and the Gascon Rolls alone account for over 200 recruits taken on in this

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<sup>33</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 202; M. Prestwich, *Plantagenet England 1225-1360* (Oxford, 2005), 332; Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare*, 133-134.

<sup>34</sup> Strayer, ‘The Costs and Profits of War’, 280.

<sup>35</sup> Prestwich, ‘Edward I’s armies’, 238; Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 15-18.

way between 16 June and 28 October 1294.<sup>36</sup> There were what could rightfully be termed “career criminals” such as Adam Russel of Bradewell who was pardoned for ‘homicides, larceny, robbery and other felonies’, along with Roger de Bosevile who had not only committed larceny himself, but was found to be harbouring fellow fugitives near his home in Doncaster.<sup>37</sup> There were individuals who had been captured for murder and ‘diverse robberys’, such as John Rachel, and those who had been imprisoned for murder but had later escaped; this had occurred when Adam Le Warrener escaped from ‘the king’s prison at Warwick for the death of William de Beghun’ only to become an outlaw until he accepted a pardon.<sup>38</sup> And John de Bradele was pardoned the day before the embarkation of the first fleet, having committed trespass in the king’s forest of Rockingham.<sup>39</sup>

The process of selection, release, and enlistment was orderly, and it followed strict guidelines before a final decision on the individual’s freedom was made; a warrant was sent to the chancery to confirm the pardon. It was at this point that the pardoned criminal’s details were then entered onto the patent roll. The process began with the appointment of sureties, or mainpernors, who could vouch for the criminal’s good behaviour whilst on campaign, such as when Ralph Gorges petitioned for the release of Gilbert Appeltrefeld and William Insula, both having been locked up in the king’s prison in Bristol for the robbery of Henry Tilshed.<sup>40</sup> The negotiation regarding their release would have taken place between Gorges and the local sheriff before the petition was then delivered to the king or his chancellor for final approval.<sup>41</sup>

Kent was one of the first counties to be searched for willing and able-bodied criminal recruits, in-keeping with the threat of naval attacks from Normandy. Stephen of Pencestre, as warden of the Cinque Ports from September 1294, had received a writ ordering the recruitment of criminals for service in the royal fleet.<sup>42</sup> The first to be offered terms for naval service was William Fykyn of

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<sup>36</sup> *RG*, iii, 186-205.

<sup>37</sup> *RG*, iii, 193.

<sup>38</sup> *RG*, iii, 200, 203.

<sup>39</sup> *RG*, iii, 203.

<sup>40</sup> *RG*, iii, 186. There were two other individuals involved in the robbery of Tilshed (Richard Grisel and Roger Payn), yet their grant of a pardon came some time later and it is unclear whether Ralph Gorges played a part in the process. See *RG*, iii, 188, 194.

<sup>41</sup> Lacey, *Royal Pardon*, 101; Hurnard, *The King’s Pardon*, 236.

<sup>42</sup> *RG*, iii, 213. The Cinque Ports consisted of Dover, Sandwich, Romney, Hythe, and Hastings, as well as the ancient towns of Winchelsea and Rye; these ports contributed 57 ships for the defence of the kingdom for a period of fifteen days without pay. See Rose, ‘Maritime Logistics and Edward I’s Military Campaigns’, 390.

Faversham, a repeat offender who had been imprisoned for ‘divers robberies and harbourings of thieves’.<sup>43</sup> Fykyn’s release, however, was promoted through the evidence given by an accomplice in the royal prison at Canterbury, John Fordwyn; in this instance Fordwyn had turned king’s evidence (a process understood to have eased the prisoner’s troubled conscience) having confessed both his and Fykyn’s guilt.<sup>44</sup>

This, however, was nothing out of the ordinary as criminals regularly turned king’s evidence. In some instances the prisoner’s confession to a crime (whether true or not), along with the naming of any accomplices, was forced through torture and although the Crown ‘was not prepared to tolerate systematic use of torture’, writes Musson, it was not unheard of to find prisoners hanged by their feet or hands; kept naked in gaol without food or drink for several days; or even to have had their hands tied behind their backs for a prolonged period of time in order to force a confession.<sup>45</sup> However, turning king’s evidence also had its benefits for the prisoner as it increased the possibilities of reducing or delaying sentence, whilst it also allowed for the opportunity of early release and even to escape.<sup>46</sup>

Although Fykyn was offered a pardon if he ‘go to sea on service with the king’s men of the sea-coast’, there is no suggestion that the individual had any form of maritime experience (although it is highly probable that Fykyn did have some experience at sea, particularly as Faversham itself was a port town).<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, this does not seem to have been an issue as criminal recruits were most likely recruited for their marine-like capabilities in combat, rather than for their naval skills, having been expected to act in hand-to-hand combat either during an encounter with enemy vessels in the Channel or once the ship had made landfall in the Gironde: whether they were accustomed to maritime life was beside the point.<sup>48</sup> That being said, in 1342 royal pardons were issued to members of the English fleet going to Brittany on condition of sufficient ‘performance of naval service on

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<sup>43</sup> *CCR, 1288-1296*, 349.

<sup>44</sup> A.J. Musson, ‘Turning King’s Evidence: The Prosecution of Crime in Late Medieval England’, *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 19:3 (1999), 467-474.

<sup>45</sup> Musson ‘Turning King’s Evidence’, 470.

<sup>46</sup> Musson, ‘Turning King’s Evidence’, 472.

<sup>47</sup> *CCR, 1288-1296*, 349.

<sup>48</sup> Rose, ‘Maritime Logistics’, 392; C.L. Lambert, *Shipping the Medieval Military: English Maritime Logistics in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2011), 17.

board the *Margarete*, here either suggesting that combat at sea was highly anticipated or there was a lack of experienced deck-hands available prior to embarkation.<sup>49</sup>

Although there was a very real possibility that Fykyn had been to sea at some point in his life, his primary responsibility would have been to engage the enemy in combat first and foremost. And, having previously been charged and sentenced for a series of robberies — and therefore most likely having used a club or a knife to commit those crimes — it is not unreasonable to suggest that to wield a similar weapon in combat, against Norman sailors or Capetian land forces, would not have proven too challenging.

On 8 July another repeat offender, John of Odiham, was delivered from prison at Marlborough Castle by the sheriff of Wiltshire.<sup>50</sup> This pardoned recruit had been imprisoned for committing several homicides and robberies but had then willingly accepted a royal pardon (and with it the added incentive of crown wages) to go and fight in Gascony. Again, given the seriousness of Odiham's crimes it must be expected that this criminal recruit was more than familiar with the most basic of weaponry and could have proven to be an effective recruit in the skirmishes that were anticipated. Odiham was a typical representation of a hardened criminal, yet he was not alone as 40% of all felonies in the region related to armed theft during the period.<sup>51</sup>

Quite clearly Odiham was one of the more “undesirable” members of society, and if Edward had been pursuing a policy of freeing England of its more callous individuals, then Odiham would have certainly made it into that category. Yet it is important to remember that although this individual could not conform to the expectations of society, or within the confines of English common law for that matter, this did not make him an ineffective recruit. Odiham certainly held some specific skill set or martial quality that would have made him an added benefit on campaign for he was enlisted into the retinue of the recently appointed banneret, and member of the royal household, Eustace Hatch.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> C. Lambert and A. Ayton, ‘The Mariner in Fourteenth-Century England’, *Fourteenth Century England VII*, ed. W.M. Ormrod, (Woodbridge, 2012), 162.

<sup>50</sup> *CCR, 1288-1296*, 356.

<sup>51</sup> J.G. Bellamy, *The Criminal Trial in Later Medieval England: Felony before the Courts from Edward I to the Sixteenth Century* (Stroud, 1998), 81.

<sup>52</sup> Eustace Hatch had risen the ranks to banneret having previously overlooked the building works at Caernarfon castle and acted as guardian of the king's daughters between 1286 and 1289. See *CCR, 1279-1288*, 341; *CCR, 1288-1296*, 341; *CCR, 1296-1302*, 289; M. Prestwich, ‘Royal Patronage under Edward I’, *Thirteenth Century*

This is an intriguing example of criminal recruitment as Eustace — the constable of Marlborough Castle in 1294 — would have most likely had some sort of knowledge of his prisoners, and may even have been acquainted with some on a first term basis.

Should Eustace and Odiham have met one another, the banneret would have been more than aware of the qualities and abilities Odiham possessed and could therefore offer to the forthcoming expedition. There was simply no other reason to have enlisted such a hardened criminal knowing that they would be uncooperative or lacked the skills required at sea or during the siege. This provides a clear example of what can only be termed as a carefully considered recruitment policy, one in which the felon was hand-picked by the military commander based on their qualitative worth.

It should be noted that the usual terms of military service had to be adapted to meet Edward's military demands in Gascony. The former acceptance of voluntary domestic service, at around 40 days, was insufficient for an overseas campaign — certainly as the sea-passage could take anywhere between 10 days to a month depending on the weather — and therefore the pardoned recruits were enlisted for at least a year; this ensured that an army could be kept in the field over-winter and into the following summer. Coincidentally, King John had similarly altered the terms of military service to a year in 1215 when he had assembled 300 knights for an overseas campaign.<sup>53</sup>

There are few remaining examples of returning pardoned criminals, but for those where there is evidence there are clear terms for their military service: the pardoned recruits were not expected to stay in the region for much longer than a winter campaign. For example, both William le Fevre and John Semot received pardons, having previously been imprisoned for larceny, but had then gone to Gascony and returned to England by the summer of 1295. And similarly, Roger of Penteneye, who was part of the campaign in 1294, returned to England within the year having previously been imprisoned for murder.<sup>54</sup>

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*England I, Proceedings of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Conference 1985*, eds., P.R. Coss and S.D. Lloyd, (Woodbridge, 1986), 43; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 150, 214; M. Morris, *Castle: A History of the Buildings that shaped Medieval Britain* (London, 2003), 95.

<sup>53</sup> Denholm-Young, 'Feudal Society in the Thirteenth Century', 109.

<sup>54</sup> *CPR, 1292-1301*, 224.

The relatively quick turnaround in overseas military service may suggest that Edward expected the war to be a short one or that diplomatic efforts between Westminster, Paris and Rome may have still been the preferred option in ending the conflict. However, the terms of military service may also have acted as an insurance policy, one which prevented large scale desertion whilst overseas. This had been a particular issue amongst the feudal recruits who had fought in Wales, and Edward's expeditionary forces in Gascony were far from immune from the same tendencies.<sup>55</sup> Desertion could permeate all levels of the military hierarchy and in one instance during December 1295 William FitzWarin, a household knight, was summoned to 'answer for the contempt that he is said to have committed in leaving his service in Gascony and coming to England without permission of the captain'.<sup>56</sup>

Nevertheless, although the tenure of military service may have been short, certainly given that in hindsight the conflict lasted for another three years, the recruitment of individuals deemed dangerous to the preservation of society were ultimately viewed to be of better use in the expeditionary force rather than imprisoned or fugitive in England. It would have been entirely impractical to expect a contingent of recently released criminals to conform to battlefield tactics, but it could be expected of them to besiege city walls, attack enemy garrisons, scale siege ladders, and even burn crops and plunder towns. This was warfare at its most merciless, attacking the social and economic structure of a society. It involved high risk tactics, certainly as arrows and other unpleasanties rained down on the besiegers, but also the use of belfries, *ballista*, springalds and mangonels. Siege equipment like this was suited for the foot-soldier (and the pardoned recruit) rather than the knight banneret.<sup>57</sup>

It may seem that the English Crown specifically targeted the criminal previously imprisoned for homicide or larceny for this very reason, on account of their potential ruthless capabilities in combat. Moreover, the hardened criminal was also likely to have been highly dispensable, the "cannon fodder" of the Anglo-French war. However, there was a third targeted group which offered

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<sup>55</sup> Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare*, 128.

<sup>56</sup> *CCR, 1288-1296*, 502.

<sup>57</sup> Bradbury, *Medieval Siege*, 241, 250-252, 308.

vitally different attributes: the forest trespasser. This criminal had been charged and sentenced for encroaching upon an area of land that was protected by a certain law or custom: a right the English Crown ‘jealously guarded’.<sup>58</sup> This was often land owned by the king or land that had been gifted by the king to an earl, and as a result it was designated for the sole use of that lord, ensuring that whatever beasts resided within the bounds of the forest belonged entirely to the owner.

This, ultimately, made it a criminal offence to hunt or poach without the lord’s permission. It could even prove to be a criminal offence to stray away from the king’s highway and enter a forest — carrying bow and arrows — regardless of whether the individual did indeed intend to hunt within the protected bounds.<sup>59</sup> The resulting penalty was often a heavy fine or the forfeiture of property possession but, in the most extreme instances, it could quite possibly lead to the loss of a hand, an eye, and even the individual’s life.<sup>60</sup> However, with the arrival of the commissioners into the shires a new purpose for the forest trespasser was found.

In one case alone the wide-scale effort behind Edward’s recruitment policy is showcased at its most effective. Here, royal justices were found as far north as York (the furthest they had travelled in the recruitment process) charged with offering grants of pardons to a gang of eleven men who had been detained in Davy Hall prison, the first prison of its kind to accommodate those accused and convicted of forest trespass.<sup>61</sup> The individuals in question had already been imprisoned for three years up until this point, having been caught poaching on the royal fishpond within the town walls. Yet, the arrival of the royal justices beyond the Trent for the first time in the recruitment process not only highlights the countrywide scale of the initiative, but the selective nature of the pardon.

Certainly, these potential recruits — as foragers and foot-soldiers — made for important additions in the campaign in Gascony, and as fishermen they could help to sustain the army as it moved across the Garonne region and into the Landes. Notably, fish made for a large part of the medieval diet, the Church setting specific days of the week when fish should be consumed instead of

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<sup>58</sup> W.E. Rhodes, ‘Edmund, Earl of Lancaster’, *The English Historical Review*, 10:37 (1895), 37.

<sup>59</sup> *Select Pleas of the Forest*, ed. G.J. Turner, (London, 1901), viiii-x, 64.

<sup>60</sup> *Select Pleas*, 63.

<sup>61</sup> *CFR, 1272-1307*, 342; *A History of the County of York*, ed. P.M. Tillot, originally published by Victoria County History, (London, 1961), 491-498.

meat, and although the king was absent on the campaign the military command would have still expected to maintain this routine.<sup>62</sup> The Davy Hall prisoners would have been expected to provide the captains with eels, salmon or lamprey, which were readily available fish in Gascony, in turn becoming key additions within the logistical aspect of the expeditionary force.

Furthermore, the recruitment of the Davy Hall prisoners highlights a clear disregard for social distinction within the pardoned contingents. Whereas hardened criminals constituted a significant proportion of the first expeditionary force, there were also recruits who may have been first time offenders, having found themselves at the bottom of Fortune's wheel during the summer of 1294. This was almost certainly the case for John of Warthill (who seems to have been the ringleader of the Foss gang) as he was both a burgess of the City of York, as well as the brother-in-law of the retired mayor, Gilbert Louth; Warthill, from a social perspective, was far removed from the enlisted robbers and murderers like Fykyn and Odiham, although this had not prevented him from falling on the wrong side of the law.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, although this was most likely Warthill's first experience of overseas warfare this did not mean it had to lead to complete ruin, and in fact the Yorkshireman survived the Anglo-French war, later returning to York to work as a husbandman in nearby Newton.<sup>64</sup>

In the final days before the embarkation of the first expeditionary fleet forest trespassers were still being recruited. In two closely related incidents both Matthew Gorges and John Hauvill were issued pardons for committing trespass on Thomas le Butiller's park in Gloucestershire.<sup>65</sup> It is difficult to determine whether there was any co-operation between the offenders, and therefore any organised or pre-empted crime at play, yet what is important to the grant of a pardon was that Ralph Gorges had acted as the mainpernor once again, only this time for Matthew Gorges, most likely a close relative.<sup>66</sup> With this familial relationship in mind, it is difficult to imagine that Ralph Gorges

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<sup>62</sup> Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 185.

<sup>63</sup> *Yorkshire Inquisitions*, ii, ed. W. Brown, (Leeds, 1898), 129; *CPR, 1281-1292*, 301; for an account of Gilbert Louth, see *The Survey of the County of York, taken by John de Kirkby, commonly called Kirkby's Inquest*, ed. R. Scaife, (London, 1867), 76; and E. Miller, 'Rulers of Thirteenth Century Towns: The Cases of York and Newcastle upon Tyne', *Thirteenth Century England I*, 132.

<sup>64</sup> *A History of the County of York North Riding: Volume 2*, ed. W. Page, Victoria County History, (London, 1923), 273-276; J.S. Bothwell, *Falling from Grace: Reversal of Fortune and the English Nobility, 1075-1455* (Manchester, 2008), 2-4.

<sup>65</sup> *CCR, 1288-1296*, 367, 369.

<sup>66</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 382.

would have been obstructed in his ambition to win the king's grace, but if he was then Gorges' position of power in Gascony (as marshal of the expeditionary forces) may have occasioned for some degree of manipulation or persuasion in the granting of a pardon. This case alone supports Lacey's argument that the royal pardon was open to corruption, however, it is important to remember that the granting of a pardon was not made as a reward in which to by-pass judgement, it was granted in the singular ambition to raise a competent relief force. It is also important to add that this was just one case amidst hundreds of similar grants.

With these examples in mind, what qualities could the forest trespasser contribute to the expeditionary forces? It is important to recognise that this type of recruit demonstrated certain abilities that benefitted both the logistics and strategy of the army. For example, the forest trespasser would have been proficient with both the hunting bow and the knife, tools of the trade when catching and preparing animals, and they would have also been familiar with spending long periods of time living out in the open or frequently on the move, during which time they would have used hunting nets, snares or traps, adapting to life through foraging techniques which allowed them to live off the land.

On this basis, the forest trespasser could have proven to be a vital asset. In their most basic form, they allowed for a body of archers, yet during more settled periods they could act alone or in groups, foraging and hunting to provision the expeditionary forces. This was important to the survival of the army in Gascony as the Landes region was a relatively inhospitable environment due to its sandy dunes, woodland, marshes, and waterways; the forest trespasser could have helped to ease provisioning issues by acting as satellite groups alongside the main host as it moved across the region.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 13; C. Cobb, 'The Landes and Dunes of Gascony', *Journal of Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society*, 26:3 (1910), 82-84; Blanchard, 'The Landes', 249-250.

## Legacy

It has been estimated that a total of 2,000 felons were pardoned because of war (either in south-western France, Flanders, or Scotland) during the latter stages of Edward I's reign.<sup>68</sup> Yet, compared with English armies of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries this process was still very much in its infancy. For example, between 1337 and 1353 royal pardons were offered to around 3,500 criminal recruits, such as Nicholas de Brighton who was released from Nottingham Castle in 1342 having been imprisoned for hunting the king's venison in Sherwood Forest.<sup>69</sup> And as Villalon shows, the war years of 1346-47 and 1360 were 'key pardoning years', often giving way to "pardon clusters" where royal clerks lumped together several entries in one go.<sup>70</sup>

In 1344 around 8% of the infantry derived from Edward I's method of 'emptying the county gaols', whilst a further 1,800 pardons were also distributed to willing criminals who took part in the Crécy campaign from 1346.<sup>71</sup> Between September that year and January 1347, the Black Prince sought pardons for 1,237 individuals in one single "cluster", while on the first day of the siege of Calais (4 September 1346), Edward III pardoned 1,138 individuals, which also included 50 knights and an earl.<sup>72</sup> These were significant contingents of criminal recruits as the entirety of the English army for the Crécy-Calais campaign consisted of around 8,000 foot-soldiers and 3,000 mounted archers and hobelars.<sup>73</sup> If the number of pardoned recruits is considered alongside the infantry, then the total composition of that force to have had a criminal background was around 22%; a significant contribution from the county gaols, but more importantly, a manageable quota for the military command to maintain some level of martial order.

Criminal recruitment continued throughout the 1350s and into the 1370s. The English military leaders in France — Henry Grosmont, duke of Lancaster, and the Black Prince — recruited the same number of criminals into their own individual retinues as had previously enlisted in the first expedition of 1294 alone. Amongst these recruits were Stephen Hykelot, who had been outlawed for

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<sup>68</sup> Kaeuper, *War, Justice and Public Order*, 126.

<sup>69</sup> Lacey, *Royal Pardon*, 181-186; *CCR, 1341-1343*, 357.

<sup>70</sup> Villalon, ' "Taking The King's Shilling" To Avoid "The Wages Of Sin"', 360-361, 374-375.

<sup>71</sup> Prestwich, *Plantagenet England*, 332.

<sup>72</sup> Villalon, ' "Taking The King's Shilling" To Avoid "The Wages Of Sin"', 375-376.

<sup>73</sup> Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare*, 117.

murder, and John Peveril who had killed a chaplain; the former was paid wages for a year ‘on condition that he goes to Gascony’ with the duke of Lancaster, whilst the latter was pardoned for ‘good service’ and returned to England.<sup>74</sup>

Interestingly, amongst these pardoned recruits was one Robert Darcy, knight, who had received a pardon from the duke of Lancaster in September 1360 ‘for good service in the war in France’.<sup>75</sup> Social distinction had, however, failed to separate those on the receiving end of a pardon and in fact many of Darcy’s crimes were far more reprehensible than some lower-born criminal recruits. For instance, Darcy had terrorised the local populations in eastern Lincolnshire, initially through extortion, but had then pursued a series of violent murders; Darcy then went on to assault a royal justice who had been sent to the area to investigate local felonies and trespasses, and even ‘besieged the town of Louth [with his retainers] and made ambushes against the men and merchants thereof so that none dare go about his business unless he made fine with them’.<sup>76</sup> This clearly did not matter much to the duke of Lancaster though, who acknowledged Darcy for his martial worth rather than his unsavoury actions back home.

The length of military service overseas was also something that developed during the mid-fourteenth century. The Black Prince was also able to extend the length of the criminal's military service from one to three years in 1357, ensuring a more extensive and destructive campaign could be achieved. Moreover, criminal recruits began to contribute to retinues of captains below the rank of earl, such as Robert Knolles who enlisted 61 pardoned criminals into a force of 3,000 men-at-arms and mounted archers in 1370.<sup>77</sup> Knolles was able to recruit pardoned criminals mainly due to his previous military engagements. In the 1360s, for instance, Knolles had led a contingent of Anglo-Breton mercenaries and free companies.<sup>78</sup> This almost certainly gave Knolles the abilities to command the renegade tendencies of the soldier of fortune, the hired-hand, and the recruits who had previously deserted from English armies in the hope of remaining in France.

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<sup>74</sup> ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/58:7 and 8.

<sup>75</sup> *CPR, 1358-61*, 463-464; Villalon, ‘“Taking The King’s Shilling” To Avoid “The Wages Of Sin”’, 396.

<sup>76</sup> *CPR, 1358-61*, 463-464.

<sup>77</sup> Lacey, *Royal Pardon*, 47-48.

<sup>78</sup> Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 457.

By the start of the fifteenth century the use of the royal pardon was still seen as a highly effective policy, albeit one that began to transition away from the simple recruitment of able-bodied criminals — supplementing the relief effort as Edward I had intended — to a political instrument utilised by the Crown to gain wide-support, particularly amongst the nobility. Henry IV (r.1399-1413) had offered royal pardons to Ricardian rebels, either for their part in the Battle of Radcot Bridge or their proximity to the Appellant Lords. As many as 70 men-at-arms were pardoned, along with Sir Payn Tiptoft who had previously been interrogated by Richard II's council.<sup>79</sup>

Henry V followed his father in this policy. Although the judicial investigations of 1414 returned some 5,000 pardons it was amongst the grants distributed to select individuals of the aristocracy where the policy worked most effectively, certainly in cementing royal authority.<sup>80</sup> For instance, in the aftermath of the Lollard Revolt leading earls such as Arundel, Percy, and Despenser (all recently accused heretics) were now offered a way back into the king's grace through military service overseas in the Agincourt and Normandy campaigns between 1415 and 1418.<sup>81</sup> As the earls were once again keen to offer their 'fidelity and service' Henry obtained the leverage to recruit them as military captains for the entirety of the war.<sup>82</sup>

However, unlike Edward I, Henry V did not have to rely on criminal recruits to campaign overseas. Henry V's 'authority and abilities', according to Edward Powell, simply meant that most of the aristocracy were supportive of the king's French campaigns.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, Henry was present at the head of the English army in France whereas Edward I had been absent on both expeditions between 1294 and 1296. Nevertheless, despite the king's absence (and the failure of the feudal levy) Edward was able to achieve a remarkable feat during the initial months in Gascony with half an army that had, until recently, been languishing in a gaol or outlawed.

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<sup>79</sup> A. Curry, A. Bell, A. King and D. Simpkin, 'New Regime, New Army? Henry IV's Scottish Expedition of 1400', *The English Historical Review* (2010), 1405.

<sup>80</sup> E. Powell, 'The Restoration of Law and Order', *Henry V: The Practice of Kingship*, ed. G.L. Harriss, (Oxford, 1985), 67.

<sup>81</sup> G.L. Harriss, 'The King and his Magnates', in *Henry V: The Practice of Kingship*, 34-39.

<sup>82</sup> E. Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society: Criminal Justice in the Reign of Henry V* (Oxford, 1989), 236; Harriss, 'The King and his Magnates', 40.

<sup>83</sup> Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, 236.

Although there is a general understanding that the military organisation, strategy, and tactics of Edward I's armies had, in fact, very 'limited' impact upon those of Edward III or Henry V, the recruitment of criminals and outlaws did, quite clearly, remain an ever-present feature.<sup>84</sup> And such was the success of Edward's novel process of military recruitment that many subsequent monarchs not only re-introduced it, but adapted certain aspects to suit their own needs. The parliament of 1351 was used to voice concerns that 'good citizens feared to indict malefactors when such men, having won easy pardons, could come back and harm them', yet this did little to stem the tide; the royal pardon weathered many attempts between 1311 and 1390 to reduce its wide-scale usage, yet by the end of the fourteenth century almost 40,000 pardons had been granted.<sup>85</sup>

### Summary and Observations

Edward I's recruitment of the criminal and the outlaw seems to have been a masterful stroke. The recruitment policy had ensured there would be an expedition, before contributing to a relatively successful defensive war, one in which the sea-routes between England and Gascony remained open and vital strongholds and ports were back under Plantagenet control by the end of the year.<sup>86</sup> The process of selection, release and enlistment had also proven efficient as pardoned criminals — hand-picked for their qualitative worth — were recruited into the gap in the expeditionary forces, a result of the failed feudal muster and the untimely Welsh rebellion. The prioritisation of criminals previously charged with homicide, larceny, and forest trespass, in this instance, emphasised the type of recruit Edward wanted in Gascony. The likes of Fykyn and Odiham, as well as Warthill and Gorges, could be merciless, whilst they may also have relished the prospect of the siege and the promise of plunder that followed.

It is also important to acknowledge that many recruits had committed crimes against women and Jews, a reminder of the vulnerability of women in society (particularly widows) as well as

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<sup>84</sup> Prestwich, 'Edward I's armies', 244.

<sup>85</sup> Villalon, ' "Taking The King's Shilling" To Avoid "The Wages Of Sin"', 390; Lacey, *Royal Pardon*, 1, 23, 48, 181; Kaeuper, *War, Justice and Public Order*, 127; Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society*, 84.

<sup>86</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 204.

growing anti-Semitic sentiments in the years leading up to the expulsion of the Jews in 1290.<sup>87</sup> Amongst the first expeditionary forces were George Le Carpenter and Geoffrey Payn, the former having been imprisoned for the death of Alicie of Warwick, the latter for the murder of John Ketel's widow, Cecilie.<sup>88</sup> There was also Richard and John Boloyne, Richard de Cumbe, William Baron, William Hachefreyns and John Le Westerne, just a handful of individuals who had either killed or robbed members of the Jewish community.<sup>89</sup> It is likely that these individuals had been emboldened by claims that Jews still continued to practice usury even after it had been abolished in 1275, and may have also acted upon the widespread yet groundless stories that 'ritual child-murder and torture' had been conducted by Jews in Lincoln and Northampton.<sup>90</sup> Eleanor of Provence, Edward I's mother, even went as far as to prevent Jews from dwelling or staying in any town 'which she holds in dower'.<sup>91</sup>



Image 2. A mid-fourteenth century depiction of an attack on Jews prior to their expulsion from England in 1290. Note the badge of two tablets on the individuals' garments; this was a form of visual distinction that each Jewish person above the age of seven had to wear according to the Statute of Jewry (1275).<sup>92</sup> (© British Library Board, The Rochester Chronicle, Cotton MS Nero D II f.183v).

Quite clearly, the commissioners cared little for the gender or religion of the criminal recruit's victim. Yet, what was important was their compliance and their versatility on campaign. There was

<sup>87</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 344-346; P. Brand, 'Jews and the Law in England, 1275-90', *The English Historical Review*, 115:464 (November, 2000), 1138-1158.

<sup>88</sup> *RG*, iii, 187, 193.

<sup>89</sup> *RG*, iii, 187-188, 191.

<sup>90</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 345-346; Brand, 'Jews and the Law in England, 1275-90', 1140.

<sup>91</sup> *CPR*, 1272-81, 76; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 346.

<sup>92</sup> Brand, 'Jews and the law in England, 1275-90', 1140-1143.

simply no reason to pardon and enlist large swathes of uncooperative and ineffective criminal recruits, in the process jeopardising the expedition's strategy and military order. Therefore, rather than categorising the entire contingent of pardoned recruits as an untrained, low-skilled, and ineffective fighting force, it is more important to view the addition of a *controlled* cohort as both a valuable and strategic asset for the king in his overseas campaign. Furthermore, by providing wages and setting the length of military service to a single year the expedition was able to maintain its primary objective while avoiding a mass desertion of troops back to England as well as preventing recruits from turning their attentions to looting and pillaging loyal Gascon towns. Therefore, if it is to be considered that the pardon was a preconceived form of military recruitment, then what were the influences behind Edward's decision making?

It stands to reason that the martial capabilities of the criminal recruit must have been considered, along with any other skills that aided the logistics of the army, otherwise there was very little to prevent Edward from simply releasing all known felons. And once in Gascony, an armed criminal recruit could quite easily have inflicted the same amount of damage on a fortification, an enemy soldier, or on the surrounding landscape as that of a feudal recruit. It should also be considered that the royal pardon was introduced to aid the king's attempts to reduce crime and disorder — a policy that Edward had been waging since 1274 — proving to be an opportunity to remove some of the more undesirable members of society from England completely.

There is also reason to believe that Edward was inspired by the classics in his decision to turn to the county gaols; the king almost certainly owned a specially commissioned translation of Vegetius' account on warfare, *De re militari*, and as previously suggested, military captains were provided with 'small, compact versions' in which to consult while on campaign.<sup>93</sup> Within the account the Roman author had suggested that in raising an army the most uncompromising of recruits were those 'unaccustomed to the life of luxury', simply because they 'feared death less than those who were'.<sup>94</sup> The criminal recruit who had been imprisoned for a long period of time, or the fugitive forced into a life on the run, fitted into this category quite well. Granted that it is impossible to tell whether

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<sup>93</sup> Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 100; Green, *Edward the Black Prince*, 45.

<sup>94</sup> Allmand, *De Re Militari*, 19.

Edward did indeed consider the text in such detail yet interest in the Roman art of war would not have been too out of character for the king. For example, Edward's armies had mirrored the logistics of the Roman general Paulinus in Wales throughout the 1270s and 1280s; ambitions to replicate the legionary fort at Segontium led to the construction of Caernarfon Castle; and it was also at this site where Edward claimed to have discovered (and immediately re-buried) Emperor Maximus, the great-grandfather of King Arthur, if Geoffrey of Monmouth is to be believed.<sup>95</sup>

Edward's motive behind the recruitment policy does seem to incorporate all these aspects, from martial skill and qualitative worth, to the reforming agenda of the king's early years in power, along with classical guidance in the art of war. And as a collective they all suggest that the recruitment policy had been an initiative contemplated for some time and not just an impulsive decision taken with little thought for the welfare of state or society. From a military perspective alone, however, it must be considered that Edward was simply in need of a capable body of troops that could secure a foothold in Gascony. And if the shire levies were unwilling to muster for an overseas campaign, the criminal recruit was ready to replace them.

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<sup>95</sup> M. Prestwich, *The Three Edwards: War and State in England, 1272-1377* (London, 1980), 17; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 228; Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 191-192.

## Four

### **‘Suffer not to perish the great nobility’: John of St John and the ambush at Bellegarde**

The experience of a prisoner of war throughout the later Middle Ages traditionally followed a pattern of surrender on the battlefield, transportation to a prison or place of residence far away, with the promise of safe release only once a ransom had been paid; this was a routine process which, as will be demonstrated, had developed out of the cultural norms of tenth and eleventh century Northern France. Therefore, when John of St John was captured in the ambush at Bellegarde by Robert of Artois, it was expected that the English seneschal’s life was assured in return for an economic profit. Later claims that England, France, and the papacy came to an agreement to *exchange* the captive former King of Scots, John Balliol, with John of St John only further underlines the value of Artois’ English prisoner. Little attention has been paid to the personal experiences of the English captives after the ambush at Bellegarde, yet by taking a closer look at the events that unfolded the lucrative business of ransoming prisoners of war can be further developed: this will also enhance the study of chivalric practice and the “theoretical” laws of war between Christendom’s warrior elite in combat. John of St John’s imprisonment alone showcases how there was still an opportunity for honourable surrender between the English and French nobility, as well as a sense of a brotherhood in arms, prior to some of the more notorious examples of absent chivalric practice on the battlefield during the Hundred Years War.

### **Capture**

On 2 February 1297 an Anglo-Gascon supply-train en route to the English held bastide at Bellegarde was ambushed by a significant Capetian force; this was a force that consisted of nearly 1,500 men-at-arms under the command of Robert of Artois.<sup>1</sup> Prior to their departure from Bayonne the Anglo-Gascon supply-train had been arranged into three customary units; the vanguard was led by

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<sup>1</sup> Bellegarde (modern day Bonnegarde), is situated in the Landes region of south-western France. *RG*, iii, ciii, xii; *Langtoft*, 283; *Knighton*, 363; *Vale, Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 206-207; *Prestwich, Edward I*, 385; *Labarge, Gascony, England’s First Colony*, 71.

John of St John and the following two units by Edward's nephew, John of Brittany, and also the earl of Lincoln, Henry de Lacy (both were experts in military affairs, according to the contemporary chronicler, Nicholas Trivet).<sup>2</sup>

The route towards Bellegarde took the Anglo-Gascon contingent through allied territory along the Adour as far as Peyrehorade, yet as they approached a wooded area three miles short of Bellegarde, at around mid-afternoon, they were ambushed by Artois and his forces.<sup>3</sup> The Anglo-Gascon vanguard was outnumbered and outflanked and as the number of casualties grew both the earl of Lincoln and John of Brittany turned in retreat to Bayonne.<sup>4</sup> John of St John was taken prisoner in the encounter along with eleven other notable knights including William Mortimer, William Sully, John of Ros, Adam of Hudleston and William of Berningham (who, it was later reported, had their weapons thrown into the river by the French forces).<sup>5</sup> Other members of the Anglo-Gascon train were not so fortunate; Philip Mattesdon lost his life in the skirmish, whilst Alan de Tuycham, along with his sons and their squires, had all drowned.<sup>6</sup>

The chroniclers in England expressed their grief at the loss of the vanguard. Bartholomew Cotton reported how 'the army of the king of England in Gascony was attacked by the army of the king of France while taking victuals from one place to another, some being captured, some killed, some drowned, while the rest with victuals escaped by flight'.<sup>7</sup> Peter Langtoft, although writing his account in hindsight, had urged the king to 'Suffer not to perish the great nobility', before rebuking both the earl of Lincoln and John of Brittany for what, in Langtoft's own opinion, was a dishonourable retreat to Bayonne.<sup>8</sup> Yet this was to misinterpret the expedition's greater strategy; a strategy that was fully focused on preserving the king of England's territorial inheritance and living to fight another day. In returning to Bayonne both the earl of Lincoln and John of Brittany had ensured

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<sup>2</sup> *RG*, iii, cliv; Trivet, *Annales*, 331,

<sup>3</sup> *RG*, iii, cliv-clxv; Trivet, *Annales*, 353-354.

<sup>4</sup> *Langtoft*, 283

<sup>5</sup> Some of these captives are named on the king's military summons for the first expedition. The summons was distributed to around 130 magnates, each with orders to assemble at Portsmouth on 4 June 1294 with horses and arms, 'cum equis et armis'. See *Foedera*, 801-802; *RG*, iii, clxv.

<sup>6</sup> *EHD*, 1189-1327, 204.

<sup>7</sup> *EHD*, 1189-1327, 204.

<sup>8</sup> *Langtoft*, 236.

that the war effort could continue for at least another summer campaign, if not longer. Still, their survival was crucially important for it ensured that the king of France held captive just one of Edward's military commanders, and therefore helped to deter any immediate plans for a complete Capetian invasion of the duchy.

As the news of the ambush began to reach England many were quick to associate the event with Edward's seemingly underhanded approach with the Church. The Bury St. Edmunds chronicler provided a damning verdict on how 'many of the nobles' in Edward's army had fallen in the skirmish because the king had demanded a tax on the clergy at £100,000 so he could pay for the war effort.<sup>9</sup> But again, this is wide of the mark for it places too much emphasis on Edward's quarrels with the Church, giving way to religious hysteria rather than to the realities of warfare. Still, the most vivid account of the ambush was later recalled by Henry Knighton who referred to Bellegarde as 'Helregard'.<sup>10</sup> According to Knighton few in the Anglo-Gascon train had actually fallen by the sword but, as nightfall had covered them like a mist, the English knights were captured and marched away from the scene of the ambush for a further four leagues.<sup>11</sup> This narrative was built upon the contemporary account by Trivet who wrote that the captives were taken from Bellegarde to Paris in a triumphal parade.<sup>12</sup> According to the Gascon Rolls it was even recorded that John of St John was taken captive to Paris ('emmené captif à Paris'), most likely carried there in a cart 'like a common criminal' in a similar manner to the earl of Suffolk, Robert Ufford, forty years later.<sup>13</sup>

In France the chroniclers were far more enthusiastic about Artois' ambush. The *Chronique Artésienne*, for example, recalled how John of St John had been taken ('Et fu pris mesire Jehan de Saint-Jehan') along with a further 300 knights and esquires.<sup>14</sup> Quite naturally though, it seems that the chronicler — presumably due to their geographical base in the Artois heartland — got too carried away in the lieutenant's achievement and quite clearly over-estimated the size of the vanguard.

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<sup>9</sup> *EHD, 1189-1327*, 213; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 404.

<sup>10</sup> *Knighton*, 363.

<sup>11</sup> *Knighton*, 364. It is also noted in the Gascon Rolls that nightfall had played a major factor in the outcome of the skirmish, *RG*, iii, clxv.

<sup>12</sup> Trivet, *Annales*, 354.

<sup>13</sup> *RG*, iii, lxxii; R. Partington, 'The Nature of Noble Service to Edward III', in *Political Society in Later Medieval England: a Festschrift for Christine Carpenter*, eds., B. Thompson and J. Watts, (Woodbridge, 2015), 80.

<sup>14</sup> *Chronique Artésienne*, 9-10.

However, the ambush had only resulted in a small morale boosting victory for Artois as it had simply failed to materialise into anything more than a chanced hit-and-run tactic: there was, quite significantly, no territorial gain for the French forces. Moreover, Artois was reluctant to venture further into Angevin territory as Edward's control of the duchy avoided complete collapse with the survival of Lincoln, Brittany, and their combined troops. And given the pattern of warfare, from an English perspective at least, the ambush had only served to reinvigorate the earl of Lincoln who embarked on a series of sieges and raids in the immediate aftermath.<sup>15</sup>

Ultimately this raises some important questions, such as: what was Artois' motive in preserving John of St John's life? What can this tell us about the state of imprisonment for the warrior elite during the late thirteenth century? And, perhaps more importantly, what did the ambush achieve in the increasingly entrenched war in Gascony? The ambush was quite clearly a chanced opportunity and if there had been a military strategy to defeat the entire train and escort then this had simply failed as only one third of the contingent was defeated. Yet, by exploring the captivity of John of St John at the hands of Robert of Artois a clearer picture develops regarding the motives that underpinned the imprisonment of the nobility, along with the interpersonal basis of power between a prisoner and captor of similar cultural backgrounds in the late thirteenth century.<sup>16</sup>

This chapter will develop the wider picture surrounding noble imprisonment by highlighting the "artificial" victory that Artois had created on returning the Anglo-Gascon captives to Paris. In preserving John's life, Artois' actions more importantly point towards the fundamental economic incentives that encouraged many cases of noble imprisonment during the later Middle Ages. Yet, the chapter will also demonstrate that despite the immediate public displays of victor and vanquished — as well as the pending financial profit — there was also a widely acknowledged chivalric code of conduct at play between the English and French nobility (particularly when the nature of warfare allowed) that was advanced and supported by contemporary theological teachings.

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<sup>15</sup> *Guisborough*, 262-264.

<sup>16</sup> C. Given-Wilson and F. Bériac, 'Edward III's Prisoners of War: The Battle of Poitiers and Its Context', *The English Historical Review*, 116:468 (2001), 808-809.

In this instance it will be appropriate to view the teachings of the contemporary Catalan author Ramon Llull (1232-1316) whose account, *The Order of Chivalry*, aimed to inspire Christendom's knightly warriors to act with 'justice, wisdom, charity, loyalty, truth, humility, fortitude, hope and prowess'.<sup>17</sup> It is important to remember though, certainly in the development of Anglo-French warfare, that these "theoretical" guidelines in good Christian knightly conduct would only remain relevant while warring opponents were obliging. John of St John's capture and ransom marks an important stage in Anglo-French relations in war (amongst the nobility at least) for it shows that there was an appetite for restraint in victory and honour in defeat on the eve of the Hundred Years War.

### **Incentives**

Despite the ambush being a chanced event — most likely dependent on the reports of spies working from within the English camp, or from French troops who were stationed along the Adour who were able to provide Artois with an update on the Anglo-Gascon supply-train's progress — what followed was a clear demonstration of political power and military authority by the French captain. In an attempt to garner public support, as well as to demonstrate to the king of France just how effective his lieutenancy had been in the region, Artois paraded the English prisoners through the streets of Paris.<sup>18</sup> According to one contemporary chronicler the arrival of the noble captives was simply humiliating, and the Parisian crowds were so joyous to see their prisoners of war that the scene could only be compared to the biblical passage of Samson's capture at the hands of the Philistines.<sup>19</sup>

The victory parade was no mere coincidence, however, but a preconceived ceremonial entry. For the Parisians, Artois' public display of the enemy captives signalled a crucial victory for the Capetian forces in the Anglo-French war. It was a politically motivated act that allowed Artois the chance to display his martial superiority over the enemy within a civic setting; this would have served

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<sup>17</sup> Ramon Llull, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, trans., N. Fallows, (Woodbridge, 2009), 1, 47. Llull's *Order of Chivalry* was widely circulated throughout the Iberian Peninsula, Gascony, France and the Holy Land.

<sup>18</sup> The hostages' most likely destination was the *Châtelet* in Paris. From Bellegarde, this was a 430 mile march north-east into the Capetian heartland. See J. Dunbabin, *Captivity and Imprisonment in Medieval Europe, 1000-1300* (Basingstoke, 2002), 38.

<sup>19</sup> *Flores*, 100.

to further emphasise the military authority of the Capetian forces in south-western France, a symbolic event that, undoubtedly, won the hearts and minds of the locals. For Artois, on a personal level, it was also certification of his own individual prowess in battle, even though Langtoft had given credit for the success of the ambush to French spies who were reportedly working from within the Anglo-Gascon camp.<sup>20</sup> This was not the first time that the Anglo-Gascon forces had been infiltrated by French spies though. In 1296 during the English attack on St Macaire, a premonition by the earl of Lincoln that a relief force under Robert of Artois was soon approaching led to a hurried search of the camp and the discovery of three individuals who were reported to have been in league with the king of France.<sup>21</sup>

It is important to note, however, that although the addition of this information in Langtoft's account regarding the ambush at Bellegarde aimed to discredit Artois' actions as "un-chivalric" or dishonourable (from an English perspective), John Gillingham has shown how even the most renowned warriors of the Middle Ages (such as William Marshal, and even his father, John Marshal) were nearly always involved in warfare that was 'characterised by watchfulness, deviousness and sudden swoops'.<sup>22</sup> Deception, Gillingham argues, was far from dishonourable and in fact the obtaining of as much information on your enemy marked the good military commanders out from the bad: reconnaissance was key to this, certainly if you wanted to 'catch your enemy offguard', and therefore if Artois had used spies, then this would have proven to be a highly effective way of gathering crucial information on the whereabouts of the Anglo-Gascon force.<sup>23</sup>

What motivated Artois to go to these lengths was the individual worth of the noble English captives, both politically and economically. Yet an elite prisoner of war, such as John of St John, was only of any value if they were both alive and visible to the public; this Artois knew, proving capable of the act of political showmanship. However, it was far from a novel scenario amidst Anglo-French

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<sup>20</sup> Langtoft, 283; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 215.

<sup>21</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 384.

<sup>22</sup> J. Gillingham, 'War and Chivalry in the *History of William the Marshal*', in *Thirteenth Century England II: Proceedings of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Conference, 1987*, eds., P.R. Coss and S.D. Lloyd, (Woodbridge, 1988), 12. For instance, William Marshal ordered his men to throw chalk-dust in the eyes of his French adversaries when they attacked his ship off the coast at Sandwich in 1217, while his father was successful in ambushing his enemy (Patrick of Salisbury) outside Winchester in 1141. See pages 8-9.

<sup>23</sup> Gillingham, 'War and Chivalry', 9, 12.

relations during the later Middle Ages. For example, in one of the most celebrated cases of noble imprisonment the Valois monarch, John II (1350-64) — having been captured on the battlefield at Poitiers in 1356 by the Black Prince — was taken on a procession through Gascony before being shipped to England where he eventually landed at Plymouth in early May 1357. From there John II who, as Neil Murphy writes, became ‘the chief benefit of the Black Prince’s victory’, was taken to Salisbury and then on to Winchester where ceremonial entries awaited him, before finally reaching London on 23 May.<sup>24</sup> The propaganda value in holding the king of France prisoner was so great that Edward III had even ordered a group of knights, dressed as woodsmen (most likely in relation to the growing interest in the Robin Hood legends), to stage a mock ambush of the French king on the road.<sup>25</sup>

The defeat of the French at Poitiers — and the subsequent capture and captivity of John II — was celebrated throughout England, just like the Parisians had celebrated John of St John’s capture sixty years earlier. Yet, unlike John II’s captivity — which had confirmed Plantagenet military supremacy over their Valois counterparts — the imprisonment of John of St John did not break the deadlock in the Anglo-French war, and for that reason it had simply failed to reach the same political and military heights. Therefore, the preservation of the English seneschal’s life, both in the ambush and in the ensuing captivity, should be viewed in terms of the fiscal benefits of not only holding captive a key member of Edward I’s royal household, but also an important administrative figure in English held Gascony.

For the captor (Robert of Artois in this instance) the economic motives that underpinned elite imprisonment were often greater than either the civic adoration or even the recognition from the king, particularly as the anticipated ransom of a valuable prisoner could equate to a knight or lords’ yearly wage.<sup>26</sup> John II’s ransom was set at a staggering thirty million gold crowns, yet this was an exceptional circumstance of royal imprisonment set against the backdrop of a war that had originated

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<sup>24</sup> Murphy, *The Captivity of John II*, 12-15.

<sup>25</sup> Murphy, *The Captivity of John II*, 15.

<sup>26</sup> Keen, *Laws of War*, 158; A. King, ‘According to the custom used in French and Scottish wars: Prisoners and casualties on the Scottish Marches in the fourteenth century’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 28:3 (2002), 272.

out of the claims for sovereignty over the French kingdom.<sup>27</sup> And, quite clearly, the hierarchical aspect of elite imprisonment in the comparison between John of St John and the French king, John II, were astronomical; there was simply no equal comparison between the two prisoners from either a political, military, or financial viewpoint.

Yet, the importance of elite imprisonment can only be gauged in relation to the conflict, and while the Anglo-French war became more stifled as each side established themselves behind their castle walls, any advantageous move was seen as a small victory; the ambush and capture of the English seneschal proved to be both a fortunate and a lucrative possession for the French regime. Therefore, in considering the ransom value of John of St John, it is important to understand the individual's worth, firstly as a longstanding member of Edward's military ambitions (both domestically and overseas), but also as a major office holder in Edward's administration in Gascony.

To begin with, it must be stated that John of St John, a Hampshire baron, had both a long and an illustrious career prior to the Anglo-French war, both as a soldier and as legal counsel to the king: by 1297 John was certainly seen as a veteran in Edward's *familia regis*.<sup>28</sup> For example, John of St John's social status began to rise in the later 1260s when, after his father's death, he became governor of Portchester Castle, in the process receiving livery of lands throughout six counties which included Hampshire, Warwickshire and Kent: the family's chief seat was at Basing, followed by Halnaker in Sussex, where John owned four manors.<sup>29</sup> And in 1269 John and his household received a pardon from the Crown 'in consideration of the services of John de Sancto Johanne to the king and his faithfulness to the king and Edward his son [the future Edward I] in the whole time of the disturbance' (due to the timing of the pardon it should be expected that the mentioned "disturbance" most probably relates to the Second Barons' War).<sup>30</sup> While in June 1270 John received four years protection to

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<sup>27</sup> Curry, 'The Hundred Years War', 83; Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 400. It has been suggested that between 45 and 55 percent of this ransom was actually paid.

<sup>28</sup> *A History of the County of Hampshire: Volume 4*, ed. W. Page, (London, 1911), *British History Online*, [www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk), 115-127; *A History of the County of Sussex: Volume 4, the Rape of Chichester*, ed. L.F. Salzman, (London, 1953), *British History Online*, [www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk), 91-94; M. Burrows, *The Family of Brocas of Beaurepaire and Roche Court, Hereditary Masters of the Royal Buckhounds, with some account of the English Rule in Aquitaine* (London, 1886), 364-367.

<sup>29</sup> Burrows, *The Family of Brocas of Beaurepaire and Roche Court*, 364; *CPR, 1281-92*, 67.

<sup>30</sup> *CPR, 1266-1272*, 401.

accompany the then Lord Edward on crusade.<sup>31</sup> On his return he would with almost immediate effect take part in the Welsh wars between 1277 and 1282.<sup>32</sup>

Further to John of St John's participation on the battlefield, the baron's advice was also sought by Edward — as King of England — in his struggle to obtain the homage of the self-proclaimed Prince of Wales, Llywelyn ap Gruffydd; it was later agreed by the king's council that Edward should 'go against Llywelyn as his rebel and as a disturber of the peace'.<sup>33</sup> John's legal advice was not only confined to matters of war though, and in 1289 (the year Edward returned from a long visit to Gascony) the Hampshire baron was appointed to a legal commission charged with investigating the abuses of the common law in England by provincial sheriffs and coroners, bailiffs and escheators.<sup>34</sup> This was part of a continuation of the Hundred Rolls, one of Edward's first acts of his reign; the Hundred Rolls had inquired into feudal tenure and Crown rights, almost mirroring the process begun by William the Conqueror in 1086, commonly known as the Domesday Book.<sup>35</sup>

John of St John's reputation was not only built upon his domestic endeavours, and in fact his status had gained considerable fame both north of the border and on the continent. For instance, John of St John replaced the under aged earl of Fife in his hereditary position at the coronation of John Balliol in 1292, highlighting Edward I's position as supreme overlord.<sup>36</sup> This was only a few short months after John had travelled to the papacy to propose the king's crusader tenth. And in 1294 John was once again leaving for the continent where his military prowess preceded him. On arriving with the first expeditionary force in Gascony many local nobles and Catalan foot-serjeants actively sought John to join his *comitiva*, having set-out from pro-Angevin townships at St. Sever, Hagetmau and

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<sup>31</sup> *CPR, 1266-1272*, 479-80. Notably William Latimer, Ralph Gorges, and Roger Leyburn were all part of the company of household knights who journeyed to the Holy Land with the Lord Edward, here highlighting the longevity of military service shared between household knights throughout the king's reign.

<sup>32</sup> *RG*, iii, lxi.

<sup>33</sup> *CCR, 1272-79*, 359-61; *PROME, British History Online*, [www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk), [accessed 3 October 2019]. Prestwich, *Edward I*, 101, 106, 174-176; Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 139-140. Llywelyn's persistence in failing to perform liege homage was, ironically, Philip IV's main point of contention with Edward in the build-up to the Anglo-French war.

<sup>34</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 153; Burt, *Edward I and the Governance of England*, 86.

<sup>35</sup> Cam, *The Hundred*, 30, 36; S. Raban, *A Second Domesday? The Hundred Rolls of 1279-80* (Oxford, 2004), *Oxford Scholarship Online*, [www.oxfordscholarship.com](http://www.oxfordscholarship.com). The commission had specifically targeted the corruption of royal judges, those individuals who had previously targeted the landowning classes through the unpopular *Quo Warranto* proceedings; *Quo Warranto* had consisted of a summons to request by what warrant an individual held franchise of land, either from 'their ancestors or predecessors'. See *EHD, 1189-1327*, 464.

<sup>36</sup> *Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland*, vol. i, 371; *RG*, iii, lxi; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 370.

Roquefort-de-Marsan; these retinues included the likes of Devot de Peyre and Sanche-Loup de Poyloaut, as well as Arnaud-Guillaume de Marsan, the elder brother of Piers Gaveston.<sup>37</sup>

From an administrative perspective, John's individual worth could not have been greater, and as Edward never personally set foot in Gascony during the Anglo-French war it ultimately fell to John to implement the king's demands there.<sup>38</sup> In the capacity of seneschal John was primarily responsible for fulfilling the English Crown's interests in the region, from implementing royal orders to appointing subordinates to administrative roles. And, as the main representative of English royal authority in the duchy, the role required both a deep understanding of the political frailties in the region, as well as a preparedness for military duty.<sup>39</sup> It is important to note at this point that John's involvement in the Anglo-French war was one entirely based on the political and military ambitions of the king of England, an important issue that will be returned to when determining the terms of the seneschal's surrender.

Even though John must have been in his fifties during the Anglo-French war (a similar age to Edward) given that — in the absence of birth records — he was a present combatant in the Second Barons' War, the seneschal undoubtedly proved to be a highly lucrative prisoner of war for Artois. Not only did the seneschal hold a great deal of landed wealth in England but he had also proven to be a key military and administrative member of Edward's household both in England and Gascony. It was unavoidable, therefore, that the capture of such a pivotal figure would have caused a certain degree of concern and disruption to the Anglo-Gascon war effort (although this was quickly mitigated by the earl of Lincoln's appointment to seneschal in the region). But what was perhaps most important for Artois and the French regime was that this elite prisoner now offered a unique chance to recuperate some of the financial losses that they had incurred in the war so far.

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<sup>37</sup> 'Regesta 46: 1291-1292', in *Calendar of Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland: 1198-1304*, ed. W.H. Bliss, volume I, (London, 1893), *British History Online*, [www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk) [accessed 5 March 2019]; Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 67; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 382; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 204; M.G.A. Vale, 'The Gascon Nobility and the Anglo-French War, 1294-98', *War and Government in the Middle Ages*, eds., J. Gillingham and J.C. Holt, (Cambridge, 1984), 137-138.

<sup>38</sup> John of St John was lieutenant from 12 July 1293 - 22 March 1294, before his appointment to the post of seneschal on 1 July 1294.

<sup>39</sup> The title of seneschal translates as office of the steward. This position came with the responsibility of governing one or more dioceses in the king's name.

It must be stated that for both Edward I and Philip IV the Anglo-French war had become a costly experience. The conflict was one that significantly focused on the siege and for that reason fortifications had to be continually repaired and garrisons re-enforced (see chapter eight for a more detailed discussion of the king's policy of fortification in Gascony), whilst siege equipment and food provisions, horses and armies all had to be paid for. It has been estimated that Edward spent just under £175,000 on wages alone to both Gascon and English knights and men-at-arms, while for the French the war had extracted around £86,500 of the Crown's annual expenditure, equating to over 60% of the total estimated annual income.<sup>40</sup>

The costs of war were also similarly burdensome for the military captains. For instance, a knight might purchase or repair heavy armour, which included *chausses*, hauberk or haubergeon, gambeson and surcoat, a great- or pot-helm, and plate or mail (for both man and warhorse); these were requirements that could total anywhere from £20 to £100. A *destrier* alone was usually priced between £40 and £80, which was a heavy financial sum for a knight earning no more than 4s. per day in the service of the king of England (the warhorse is discussed in greater depth in chapter six).<sup>41</sup> One significant method of redeeming some of these heavy financial losses, however, could be found in the capture of prized individuals and the setting of a high ransom in return for their release.

According to Andy King, 'ransoms were based on a rough guess at the absolute maximum the captive would be able to scrape together', yet not so ambitious that the prisoner (or more accurately, the prisoner's household) was unable to pay, in turn, becoming financially burdensome for the captor due to their upkeep.<sup>42</sup> In John of St John's case the financial bounty was so large that it took over two years to raise. Clearly the French regime intended to keep the English seneschal captive until the war in Gascony was over, yet the capture of such an esteemed prisoner also proved to be an opportunity to recover a large proportion of the financial losses that Artois had accumulated prior to the conflict itself.

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<sup>40</sup> Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, 650; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 203, 281.

<sup>41</sup> Prestwich, 'Miles in Armis Strenuus', 207; N. Denholm-Young, *History and Heraldry* (Oxford, 1965), 19-20; Denholm-Young, 'Feudal Society in the Thirteenth Century', 115; Prestwich, 'The Military Household of the Norman Kings', 1.

<sup>42</sup> King, 'According to the custom', 272; Keen, *Laws of War*, 158-9.

Artois had placed the Calais garrison on a war footing since mid-1293 during the “merchant navy war” (an interesting insight into the provocative nature of Philip IV’s council) and continued to make significant payments until June 1294 in order to keep the garrisoned soldiers in paid employment, as well as to ensure provisions and victuals were in plentiful supply.<sup>43</sup> The cost of maintaining the Calais garrison could become financially exacting — as the English would later find out when they captured the port town in 1347 — costing anywhere between £8,000 and £10,000 a year to maintain its defences.<sup>44</sup> With this in mind, it is unsurprising that the ransom sum for John of St John was set at £5,000; this was a significant amount when it is considered that Edmund of Lancaster received an annual wage of somewhere in the region of £6,000 to £8,000, whilst those lower down the social hierarchy, such as John of Brittany and Henry de Lacy, could expect to earn no more than £2,000 and £5,000.<sup>45</sup>



Image 3. A sixteenth century image of the port town of Calais, a significant outpost of English rule in France between 1347 and 1558. (© British Library Board, BL Cotton MSS Aug. I ii 70).

What also compounded this issue of finding the sums for the ransom demand was that there was simply no financial support from the English Crown; quite understandably the personal financial

<sup>43</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 200.

<sup>44</sup> Ormrod, *Edward III*, 323.

<sup>45</sup> R.W. Kaeuper, *Bankers to the Crown: The Riccardi of Lucca and Edward I* (Princeton, 1973), viii. For ransom sum see M. Vale, ‘St John, Sir John de’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, [www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com), [accessed 28 May 2020]; and Watson, *Under the Hammer*, 99.

losses attributed to the ransom were disastrous. Yet, to counteract this lack of Crown support many elite prisoners turned to their own households to provide the ransom, which often meant entering into an agreement with one of the large Italian banking firms that dominated the financial market.<sup>46</sup> The Frescobaldi's of Florence or the Bonseignori of Siena often stepped in to provide monetary support to English nobles, but of course, at high pay-back rates.

It was the latter of these two firms that the St John household turned to in raising the sums for John's ransom and by December 1299 (thirty-three months after the ambush at Bellegarde) a confirmation of a grant was finally reached. Agreements with banking firms, however, had their own pitfalls, as the St John household found out, and in return for the merchants' cooperation in raising the ransom it was agreed that several key manors that belonged to the St John estates, such as Bernham, Walberton and Woodcote in Surrey, as well as Sherborne Saint John in Hampshire, were to be handed over to the Bonseignori. The Italian merchants were to receive all the profits from these manors 'saving knights' fees, advowsons of churches, wards, marriages, escheats, venison, and sale of great wood' for the following sixteen years in order to recover their own debts in supporting the ransom (significantly, this was an agreement that was to outlast John's own lifetime).<sup>47</sup>

Nevertheless, when Crown financial support was occasionally offered it could prove just as challenging to escape the inevitable debt. During 1348 for instance, Alixandre de Caumont, having been made a prisoner of war after leading an Anglo-Gascon sortie against the French besiegers at Aiguillon, was granted a Crown loan through Henry Grosmont, then earl of Derby, of around 14,000 gold florins in which to pay towards his ransom demand. The rest of the ransom, it was explained, had to be raised by Caumont himself through the transportation of 50,000 tuns of wine between 'the regions dominated by the king's adversary to the regions dominated by the king'. By 1349, however, Caumont had died and Grosmont was able to recover some of the 'great sums of money' loaned to the Gascon knight from Caumont's 'lands and tenements'.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare*, 340.

<sup>47</sup> *CPR, 1292-1301*, 482.

<sup>48</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/60:253 and 6; C61/61:19; Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, 488; R.L. Alis, *Histoire de la ville d'Aiguillon* (Agen-Sainte-Radegonde, 1895), 155.

Access to Crown funds to pay for ransom demands only really began to change during the reign of Richard II (1377-1399) when the king took the new position of making ‘direct contributions’ to noble prisoners.<sup>49</sup> However, Edward I’s avoidance in making financial contributions in the form of a ransom demand directly into the coffers of the king’s enemies was a theme that continued throughout the Anglo-French war. For example, the English knight, Hugh Audley, was indebted to the Frescobaldi of Florence at around 2,000 *livres tournois* for his ransom from prison in France, whilst the Gascon knight, Oger Mote, had to pay back to the merchants of Lucca the sum of £1,000 for his early release.<sup>50</sup> And, although on one occasion Edward had alleviated Raymond de Campagne’s concerns that reparations would be made “when God granted a more favourable situation”, this quite clearly meant a long wait for Raymond until he was released from captivity.<sup>51</sup>

It is worth noting though, that Edward I did intervene on one occasion for the debt owed by John de Havering (the former seneschal of Gascony), here recompensing him personally for the exact sum of £297 13s. 4d. as a result of his ‘praiseworthy service’ during the conflict, yet this was more than likely the result of a politically motivated stunt by Edward.<sup>52</sup> Havering’s debt had been owed to the recently collapsed Riccardi banking firm (the king of England’s creditors prior to the Anglo-French war) but when the merchants had failed to provide the king with the financial support needed for the overseas campaign Edward was left with little option but to pursue other alternatives, much to his annoyance. Subsequently, Edward showed little sympathy for the merchants’ lack of capital resources and, it what must have been an act of “revenge” in Edward’s mind, simply pardoned many of the Riccardi’s debtors, including the earls of Lancaster, Warwick, and Roger Mortimer: the voided debts exceeded £1,000.<sup>53</sup>

It was not until Bannockburn in 1314 that the king of England actually acknowledged a ransom demand face-on, and even then that was the ransom that belonged to the king’s brother-in-

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<sup>49</sup> King, ‘According to the custom’, 274.

<sup>50</sup> *CPR, 1292-1301*, 429, 449-50.

<sup>51</sup> *RG*, iii, 370, no. 4474; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 219.

<sup>52</sup> *CCR, 1296-1302*, 431; A.M. Spencer, ‘Royal Patronage and the Earls in the Reign of Edward I’, *History*, 93:1 (309), (2008), 25; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 207. John de Havering left the post of seneschal for a lieutenancy in Wales during the 1294-95 revolt.

<sup>53</sup> Kaeuper, *Bankers to the Crown*, 224-225.

law, the earl of Hereford.<sup>54</sup> It was most likely due to the unpredictability of the Scottish captors that prompted Edward II to pay the ransom.<sup>55</sup> The battle of Bannockburn had witnessed a significant lack of chivalric convention (not too dissimilar to the conflicts of the Hundred Years War) as 27 English barons and bannerets, along with 33 knights, had been killed on the battlefield.<sup>56</sup> The *Annales Londoniensis* had even estimated as many as 40 knights amongst the dead that day.<sup>57</sup>

Yet, it must be said that not all elite prisoners during the Anglo-French war were fortunate enough to survive the ordeal, even if their captors were intent on keeping them alive. For instance, the English marshal in Gascony, Ralph Gorges — who had played a key part in the ultimately failed defence of Podensac during the siege of 1295 — was presumed to be alive shortly after the ambush at Bellegarde in May 1297, a writ preventing the confiscation of wool and hides from his estates in Somerset merely stated that he was ‘detained’ in a French prison.<sup>58</sup> However, a week later Malcolm de Harlewe, escheator south of the Trent, was informed of Gorges sudden death, and was given orders that executors ‘should have and hold all his lands’.<sup>59</sup> Whether Ralph Gorges died of mistreatment at the hands of his captors or of sustained wounds in the skirmish is difficult to judge by such little evidence, yet what is clear from these accounts is that there was a certain degree of communication making its way back into England from France regarding English prisoners.

It would certainly make sense to ensure that there were open lines of communication, particularly between the captors and the prisoners’ households in England. And it is most likely that messages were able to reach their intended audience via special envoys or even returning soldiers and newly released prisoners. In one instance it was even confirmed that John de Creting — who was thought to have died while imprisoned in France — was later announced as alive through ‘sufficient testimony’.<sup>60</sup> For the captor, it was important that the prisoners’ households knew that their lord or family member was still alive to maintain the push for the ransom demand, and therefore it was

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<sup>54</sup> Phillips, *Edward II*, 234.

<sup>55</sup> Prestwich, ‘Royal Patronage under Edward I’, 46; Spencer, ‘Royal Patronage’, 25.

<sup>56</sup> King, ‘According to the custom’, 265.

<sup>57</sup> *Annales Londoniensis*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, i, ed. W. Stubbs, (London, 1882), 231; Phillips, *Edward II*, 234.

<sup>58</sup> *CCR, 1296-1302*, 103.

<sup>59</sup> *CCR, 1296-1302*, 28.

<sup>60</sup> *CCR, 1296-1302*, 175.

imperative that these messages (or messengers) made their way to England safely. There must certainly have been some anxious moments for the households awaiting any news, but what was perhaps comforting was the knowledge that important individuals, like John of St John, were seen to be more profitable alive and ransomed during the late thirteenth century, than indiscriminately slaughtered on the battlefield, or left for dead in captivity.

Furthermore, the benefits for the captor, such as Artois, were two-fold: the capture of John of St John not only meant that Artois was within his rights to either confiscate or sell the seneschal's armour and horse, but the ransom alone allowed Artois to recover some of the military expenses accumulated in the war, particularly as it was often the case that more money was actually spent on besieging a stronghold than the site was actually worth.<sup>61</sup> But despite the symbolism behind the capture of the English seneschal — as well as the fundamental economic motives for holding to ransom a prestigious individual — there was also a chivalric code of conduct at play; this code of conduct dictated to some degree the parameters of combat on the battlefield, along with the terms of surrender between two knights of equal standing and of the Christian faith.

### **Precedence**

In removing John of St John from any further harm during the ambush Robert of Artois had fulfilled the first step in ethical warfare between two equals under the chivalric code of conduct. Artois may have accepted one of John's gauntlets as a sign of subjugation, making the status of prisoner and captor contractual, or alternatively, John may have actively sought out Artois — to become Artois' prisoner — when it became apparent that the Anglo-Gascon vanguard was unable to extricate itself from the skirmish.<sup>62</sup>

Inevitably, certain cases of honourable surrender were recounted with such enthusiasm that they have developed a sense of legend about them, particularly at the hands of Jean Froissart. For

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<sup>61</sup> P. Dubois, *Summaria brevis et compendiosa doctrina felicis expeditiones et abbrevacionis guerrarum ac litium regni Francorum*, ed. H. Kampf, (Berlin and Leipzig, 1936), 2-3; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 203. Both Ralph Gorges and John de Creting were named by Henry Knighton as hostages taken by the French, see *Knighton*, 344-345.

<sup>62</sup> Keen, *Laws of War*, 165-166.

instance, at the siege of Caen in 1346 the constable of France, Raoul II, count of Eu, and the lord of Tancarville, Jean de Melun — fearing slaughter at the hands of the English archer — were reported to have called down from the Great Tower to the Garter knight Sir Thomas Holland (who they had fought alongside in the *winterreyse* in Prussia during 1340-41), and in the words of Froissart, ‘asked if he would take them as his prisoners?’<sup>63</sup> Holland duly obliged and the two knights, along with a further twenty five individuals, became prisoners of war.<sup>64</sup>

Of course, the ransom rested entirely on the customs found in the chivalric code of conduct, yet the theoretical laws that defined ethical warfare and honourable surrender were not totally set in any sort of binding legal code.<sup>65</sup> They were in fact, advanced by allegorical texts and theological teachings, such as Lull’s *The Order of Chivalry* which promoted good habits and good manners amongst Christendom’s knightly classes; in the text the knight was deemed to be the ultimate defender of the Christian faith, of his temporal lord, and the weak in society. Lull’s account, written in the Catalan dialect between 1274 and 1276, was particularly influential throughout the Iberian Peninsula, as well as in neighbouring Gascony and France, and it is most likely that it was encountered in the crusader lands of the Middle East and Granada.

The text proposed that a knight should ‘defend the Holy Catholic Faith’ and always ‘support and defend his temporal lord’, whilst also ensuring that justice was upheld at all costs; it even went as far as to compare the knight’s sword to Christ’s crucifix for the sword preserves both ‘Chivalry and justice’, whilst the knight’s lance embodied truth, ‘for truth is straight and does not bend’.<sup>66</sup> *The Order of Chivalry* was particularly influential as it was wholly accessible to all knightly classes, most importantly those knights who were not able to understand Latin, the most common form of written language amongst chivalric texts. For John of St John and Robert of Artois, therefore, Lull’s allegorical text would have almost certainly been encountered at court in France, or amongst the households of nobles throughout Gascony, and it is not too fanciful to imagine that the more

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<sup>63</sup> Sir John Froissart, *Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the adjoining countries, from the latter part of the reign of Edward II to the coronation of Henry IV*, trans., T. Johnes, volume I, (London, 1848), 155; Bradbury, *Medieval Siege*, 156.

<sup>64</sup> Froissart, *Chronicles of England*, 155; Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 388.

<sup>65</sup> Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 405-406.

<sup>66</sup> Lull, *Order of Chivalry*, 44, 46, 66.

prominent sections from within the account would have been passed between the warrior elite at the very least, by word of mouth whilst on campaign.

Yet, even though both John of St John and Robert of Artois may have felt encouraged by the very current chivalric teachings (in order to fulfil their individual purposes as loyal servants to their liege lords) the unwritten laws of honourable conduct, according to Richard Barber, also ‘restrained the aggressor from overstepping certain limits, and provided some relief to those who were on the losing side’.<sup>67</sup> This balance of righteousness and restraint within the psyche of the warrior elite was, in theory, to preserve honour on the battlefield between Christian opponents. This, however, was only to last while warfare between two or more opponents remained within a state of public or open war (*bellum hostile*).

For this reason, there was small consolation for the vanguard in the ambush; the Anglo-French war was still set firmly within the state of a *bellum hostile*, even though Anglo-Gascon and Capetian forces had been at war with one another for little under three years. It is likely that the conflict remained within these bounds because of the nature of warfare; there had been no pitched battles in Gascony and for this reason there was still a relative degree of clemency to be found when hand-to-hand combat did occur between the nobility: mercy was duly handed out to the losing combatant. On the other hand, when the nature of the war did degenerate into war to the death (*guerre mortelle*) the practice of chivalry — and with it, ethical warfare — became obscured, ultimately leaving little room for the taking of prized individuals.

Maurice Keen has suggested that by the end of the thirteenth century it was widely understood that knightly soldiers involved in their own sovereign’s conflict (like John of St John) were protected from the brutalities of warfare and captivity; the formalities of battlefield conduct were still relatively intact during the Anglo-French war.<sup>68</sup> Further still, the vanquished noble’s sensitivity in defeat, notes Andy King, was catered for as the contemporary chivalric ethos ‘dictated opponents

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<sup>67</sup> Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 406.

<sup>68</sup> Keen, *Laws of War*, 104.

should be allowed to surrender, and to ransom themselves, without dishonour'.<sup>69</sup> For this reason the nobility on either side expected a certain degree of honour in defeat.<sup>70</sup>

What further eased this process, particularly between John of St John and Robert of Artois, was the interpersonal basis of power between two knights of equal status. It is very possible that had the circumstances been different the role of prisoner and captor may have been reversed, or they may even have found themselves fighting side-by-side in the Holy Land as Edward had planned prior to the outbreak of the Anglo-French war. Therefore, somewhat inevitably, there was a certain degree of mutual respect between a nobility that shared a culturally similar background and outlook, even if Artois had been a key advocate of Philip IV's confiscation of the duchy in 1294.<sup>71</sup> The shared culture of these two individuals was built upon the same set of chivalric conventions and Christian principles which Lull had categorised as: faith, hope and charity; justice, prudence, fortitude, and temperance.<sup>72</sup>

Further still, Jean Dunbabin has emphasised that the "brotherhood-in-arms" amongst the nobility was a defining factor 'in the conditions of captivity', as the individual's rank determined the terms of their imprisonment.<sup>73</sup> King has also stated that due to chivalric conventions the men-at-arms, the nobles and lords, and even the monarch, were 'spared, taken prisoner and ransomed' when defeated in battle (as we have seen with both John of St John, and John II, king of France).<sup>74</sup> Rémy Ambühl has also acknowledged that if combatants were taken alive on the battlefield then they fully expected the status of 'prisoner of war', a term which ultimately guaranteed their freedom through the payment of a ransom.<sup>75</sup> These ideals of a chivalric code of conduct do certainly fit within John's experience as a prisoner of war; the English seneschal had simply been 'participating in his lord's feud' — a war between two sovereigns and not for individual gain — and therefore anything less than an honourable surrender in the aftermath of defeat would have been contrary to the contemporary

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<sup>69</sup> King, 'According to the custom', 264; A. King, 'A helm with a crest of gold: the order of chivalry in Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica*', *Fourteenth-Century England I*, ed. N. Saul, (Woodbridge, 2000), 34-5.

<sup>70</sup> R. Ambühl, *Prisoners of War in the Hundred Years War: Ransom Culture in the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2013), 31.

<sup>71</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 196-200.

<sup>72</sup> Lull, *Order of Chivalry*, 71; M.H. Keen, 'Brotherhood in Arms', *History*, 47:159 (1962), 1.

<sup>73</sup> Dunbabin, *Captivity and Imprisonment*, 1.

<sup>74</sup> A. King, 'Then a great misfortune befell them': the laws of war on surrender and the killing of prisoners on the battlefield in the Hundred Years War', *Journal of Medieval History*, 43:1 (2017), 107.

<sup>75</sup> Ambühl, *Prisoners of War*, 1.

understanding of good knightly conduct.<sup>76</sup> As Sean McGlynn writes, the ‘development of the chivalric code meant that these highly trained elite warriors were reluctant to kill each other’.<sup>77</sup>

Yet, besides the religious aspects that can be found in Lull’s allegorical text, the Christian church also played a much more prominent, hands-on role, in dictating the parameters of battlefield conduct and elite imprisonment. The unlawful slaying of a Christian of noble blood, for instance, would have undoubtedly gained the unwanted attention of the papal curia; the Church had set firm guidelines on this matter drawing parallels between the status of noble prisoner and captor to that of a vassal and lord. The former, it was said, was never intended to be a slave of the latter during their captivity — and neither were they to be killed or injured for that matter — but instead they should be pledged for the price of their ransom which was seen as an act of mercy in the eyes of the Church. Furthermore, in fulfilling this Christian obligation, the captor was absolved of any crime or sin in taking valuable prisoners as they had, in theory, saved a fellow Christian knight from what could have been almost certain death at the hands of a low-born infantryman.<sup>78</sup>

However, this was an ever developing practice that was by no means guaranteed as ethical warfare — and the chivalric code of conduct — were both influenced by the level of hostility during the conflict.<sup>79</sup> In 1295, for example, Charles of Valois hanged fifty Gascon inhabitants of the Podensac garrison in retribution for their allegiance to Edward I and their stubborn defence of the town; this was despite the fact that a dozen English knights were captured and ransomed.<sup>80</sup> There is, however, a clear distinction between social classes at play here; the common soldier, although representing little to no financial value, was also removed from chivalric convention entirely, and therefore there was little contemporary expectation of the French attackers to preserve the lives of the socially perceived low-born Gascon as there was for the English warrior elite. By the opening phase of the Hundred Years War, however, the terms of imprisonment reserved for the warrior elite had

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<sup>76</sup> Ambühl, *Prisoners of War*, 3; Dunbabin, *Captivity and Imprisonment*, 10, 86.

<sup>77</sup> S. McGlynn, ‘Pueri Sunt Pueri: Machismo, Chivalry, and the Aggressive Pastimes of the Medieval Male Youth’, *Historical Reflections*, 42:1 (2016), 96-97.

<sup>78</sup> Keen, *Laws of War*, 157-158; Ambühl, *Prisoners of War*, 1-2.

<sup>79</sup> G. McKelvie, ‘The Royal Prisoner of Henry IV and Henry V: James I of Scotland, 1406-24’, *Medieval Hostageship, c.700-c.1500*, eds., M. Bennett and K. Weikert, (Abingdon, 2017), 158.

<sup>80</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 382; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 198.

again developed in response to the nature of the conflict. As the war in France during Edward III's reign was, from an English perspective, waged over sovereignty (in contrast to Edward's defence of the Angevin inheritance) the boundaries of ethical war and honourable surrender began to move once more.<sup>81</sup>

According to Chris Given-Wilson and François Bériac the normal conventions previously followed in the aftermath of battle between western Christian kings and their armies collapsed entirely during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They have suggested that 'Wherever one looks — almost without exception — the story is the same. The predictable fate of a soldier, noble or otherwise, who, finding himself on the losing side of a fourteenth-century battle, failed to make good his escape, was not to be taken prisoner. It was to die'.<sup>82</sup> This, undoubtedly, came because of a series of national humiliations for the French regime (starting with defeat to the Flemish infantry at Courtrai in 1302) which then led to little quarter being given on the battlefield and, ultimately, the introduction of *guerre mortelle*.

The nature of the renewed aggression between England and France throughout the Hundred Years War induced the deterioration in chivalric conduct. Now it was deemed that any foreign soldier (English, Flemish, Gascon, or any other) who waged war against the French king on French soil was guilty of *lésé-majéste* and could therefore be summarily executed.<sup>83</sup> This had come as a result of the 'gruesome massacres of a nobility' cut-down by low-born Flemish peasants at Courtrai, before further losses to socially inferior English and Welsh infantrymen at Crécy (1346), Poitiers (1356), and perhaps most famously at Agincourt (1415).<sup>84</sup> The absence of ethical warfare, however, prompted a revision of Lull's chivalric and theological treatise, this time by an individual who had witnessed first-hand the fighting in France: that was Honoré Bonet and *The Tree of Battles*.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Green, *Edward the Black Prince*, 26-27, 31.

<sup>82</sup> Given-Wilson and Bériac, 'Edward III's Prisoners of War', 808.

<sup>83</sup> Ambühl, *Prisoners of War*, 8.

<sup>84</sup> Given-Wilson and Bériac, 'Edward III's Prisoners of War', 802.

<sup>85</sup> *The Tree of Battles of Honoré Bonet*, ed. G.W. Coopland, (Liverpool, 1949).

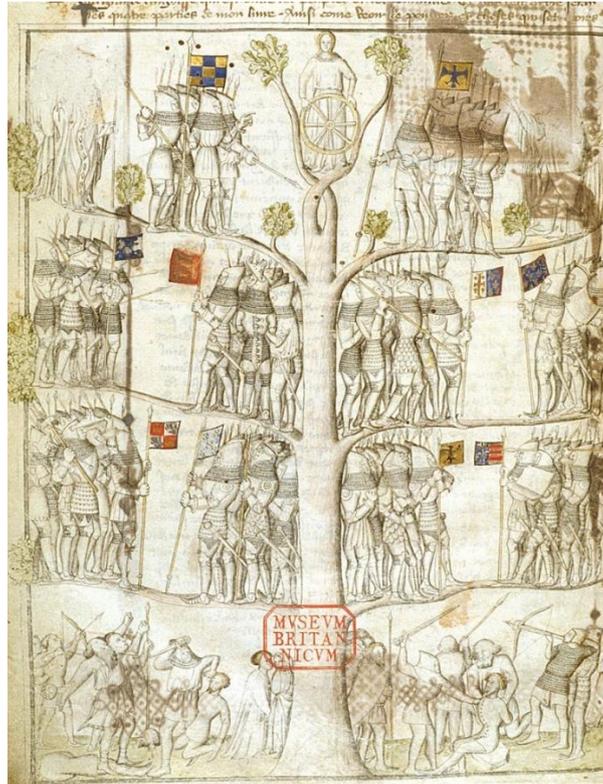


Image 4. Bonet's depiction of the *Tree of Battles* ('arbre de dueil'), surmounted by Fortune with her wheel. Note the beheading of hostages at the base of the tree. (© British Library Board, BL Royal 20 C. VIII, f. 2v.)

Mercy became the focal point for Honoré's works, the contemporary author questioning whether it should be offered to a noble, a duke, or a marshal who was taken prisoner in battle. Honoré seems to wrestle with his conscience within the text, explaining quite openly how natural law, up until this point, had dictated that 'a thing contrary to another will kill', and for that reason mercy must be removed, yet also explaining how civil law had decreed that 'he who is taken in battle is serf or slave of him who takes him' (although this is contradictory to the Church's understanding in the thirteenth century). Honoré ultimately arrived at a conclusion, turning to the law of theology — perhaps in light of Lull's statement that 'Chivalry must coexist and interface with theology' — here delivering his final verdict that 'he who in battle has captured his enemy, especially if it be the duke or marshal of the battle... should have mercy on him, unless by his deliverance there is danger of having greater wars'.<sup>86</sup> This statement though, certainly leaves room for interpretation, and the merciless killing of influential individuals who may have been judged to be potential troublemakers could still be pursued.

<sup>86</sup> *Tree of Battles*, 134; Lull, *Order of Chivalry*, 9.

Nevertheless, Honoré's plea for mercy was most likely in response to some of the more disastrous battles for the French nobility throughout the first phase of the Hundred Years War. At Crécy, for instance, Anglo-French warfare had truly entered into *guerre mortelle* as Philip VI displayed the *oriflamme* to signal no quarter, whilst Edward III retaliated with his own "no quarter" standard 'showing a dragon clothed in the king's arms'.<sup>87</sup> In the aftermath of the battle the French forces had accumulated between 2,000 and 4,000 fatalities as ethical warfare and honourable surrender was quite obviously absent from the minds of those involved in the engagement.<sup>88</sup>

A telling depiction of the events has been portrayed by the St Omer chronicler who described how mercenaries within Edward III's army, solely 'interested in the profits of war', remonstrated with the king to prevent the shedding of 'so much noble blood', simply because they were interested in the economic benefits of ransoming such prized individuals (and not for any conscientious motive).<sup>89</sup> Jean le Bel even put pen to paper to express his regret at how Sir Reginald Cobham was charged by Edward III to take a herald and 'go among the dead and record the names of all the knights they could identify, and to have all the princes and magnates carried to one side with each man's name written down and laid upon him'.<sup>90</sup> Clearly, the eradication of the enemy force was the sole ambition that day, and economic incentives were but a minor thought.

Honoré's suggestion that there could be greater wars should a prisoner be released may go some way to explaining the decline in the taking of prisoners of war during the fifteenth century. At Agincourt, for instance, the breakdown in ethical warfare — particularly in the merciless killing of the unarmed French prisoners — has led to what Christopher Allmand termed the one 'black mark' on Henry V's victory that day.<sup>91</sup> However, Henry had credible reason to suspect a late attack by the counts of Marle and Fauquembergue — and with it the prospect of losing the valuable French prisoners — and therefore ordered two hundred archers to execute them on the spot. Allmand suggests that in this one act Henry gave little thought for Christian or chivalric convention, in the

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<sup>87</sup> Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 242.

<sup>88</sup> Given-Wilson and Bériac, 'Edward III's Prisoners of War', 804-805; Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 220.

<sup>89</sup> Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 242.

<sup>90</sup> Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 242-243.

<sup>91</sup> Allmand, *Henry V*, 93-94.

process forfeiting the financial gains of some of the more noble prisoners. Yet, despite what was quite clearly a frantic episode amidst the massacre of the French nobility, none of the contemporary French chroniclers condemned Henry's actions that day, suggesting that they were familiar — at this stage of the Hundred Years War — with the dishonourable but perhaps routine conduct of *guerre mortelle*.<sup>92</sup> In contrast, John of St John had narrowly avoided the uncompromising nature of fourteenth century Anglo-French warfare.

This was perhaps fortuitous for the French Crown though, for in one final caveat to John of St John's release from captivity it has been proposed by Charles Bémont that the seneschal was exchanged with the English-held and recently dethroned King of Scots, John Balliol ('il ne fut libéré qu'après le traité de Vyve-Saint-Bavon, en échange de Jean de Bailleul, prisonnier du roi d'Angleterre').<sup>93</sup> Bémont has drawn on the *Flores* account here, which alone briefly mentions how Edward I agreed to allow John Balliol to leave his imprisonment in England under the condition that the king of France released John of St John with almost immediate effect.<sup>94</sup> This would certainly make for a plausible argument, particularly as John Balliol arrived on the continent in papal custody in the summer of 1299, just a few months before John of St John returned to England.<sup>95</sup> If this was the case, and John of St John was directly used as leverage by the French Crown to obtain the release of the claimant to the Scottish throne, then it would set John of St John's imprisonment within the bounds of hostageship.

Hostageship, however, was a complex affair that transitioned through many stages during the Middle Ages. According to Matthew Bennett and Katherine Weikert, hostageship had occurred on an almost daily basis as 'surety for various reasons'.<sup>96</sup> These reasons could be financial or chivalric, but they could also be a way to improve diplomatic relations; to act as validity in an agreement; or even to exact control over a people and their society.<sup>97</sup> For example, as far back as 878 hostages (or *foregislas*) were offered by the Viking leader Guthrum in the aftermath of his defeat at Edington to

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<sup>92</sup> Allmand, *Henry V*, 93-94; Keen, *Laws of War*, 104-105.

<sup>93</sup> *RG*, iii, lxii.

<sup>94</sup> *Flores*, 299.

<sup>95</sup> *Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland*, vol. ii, 384, 390.

<sup>96</sup> Bennett and Weikert, *Medieval Hostageship*, 1-2, 9.

<sup>97</sup> Bennet and Weikert, *Medieval Hostageship*, 3-4.

King Alfred; Alfred accepted the hostages on the condition that the great heathen army ‘would [go] from his kingdom’.<sup>98</sup> During the succession crisis to the English throne in the 1060s two contemporary Norman historians, William of Jumiéges and William of Poitiers, argued that hostages (in the form of the son and grandson of Godwine of Wessex) had been offered to William of Normandy as mutual agreement of the duke’s position as heir apparent to Edward the Confessor.<sup>99</sup> And, quite notably, it had also included high profile individuals such as Richard I, king of England, who was famously captured on his return from the Holy Land in 1192 by Leopold, duke of Austria, and later ransomed by the German emperor, Henry VI, for 100,000 marks.<sup>100</sup>

In comparison though, the evidence to suggest that John of St John was held as a hostage by the French Crown in Paris is, however, limited; the personal experience of the English seneschal tends to point towards that of a prisoner of war associated with the cultural practices of Northern France of the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>101</sup> This, as both Matthew Strickland and John Gillingham have highlighted, linked the imprisonment of nobles with financial profit, particularly as a ransom proved to be a lucrative boon for the captor who, in obtaining the sum, could then spend it on repairing and provisioning castles and garrisons, raising armies and buying armour, or even on the repair of their own manors: it is difficult to imagine that Robert of Artois did not follow the customs and practices of his homeland. Moreover, the possible “exchange of prisoners” was hardly a well-orchestrated deal for either Edward or the St John household; not only was Edward swapping a valuable prisoner for the ageing seneschal, but Artois was also substantially remunerated for his efforts, plunging the St John’s into years of debt.

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<sup>98</sup> Lavelle, *Alfred’s Wars*, 179-180; R. Lavelle, ‘The use and abuse of hostages in later Anglo-Saxon England’, *Early Medieval Europe*, 14 (3), (2006), 2.

<sup>99</sup> D. Bates, *William the Conqueror* (London, 2016), 110-112; *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumiéges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni*, ed. and trans., Elisabeth M.C. van Houts, 2 vols., OMT (Oxford, 1992-95); *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers*, ed. and trans., R.H.C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall, OMT (Oxford, 1998).

<sup>100</sup> Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, ed. W. Stubbs, iii (1868-87), 195-196; J. Gillingham, *Richard I* (London, 1999), 222, 235-238; Dunbabin, *Captivity and Imprisonment*, 4-5.

<sup>101</sup> M. Strickland, ‘Slaughter, Slavery or Ransom: The Impact of the Conquest on Conduct in Warfare’, *England in the Eleventh Century*, ed. C. Hicks, (Stamford, 1992), 41-60; J. Gillingham, ‘1066 and the Introduction of Chivalry into England’, *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy: Essays in Honour of Sir James Holt*, eds., G. Garnett and J. Hudson, (Cambridge, 1994), 21-55.

This is not to say, however, that Edward's nobility were unfamiliar with the process of hostageship. John of St John, for instance, had played the role of hostage prior to the ambush at Bellegarde, only this time at Canfranc in 1288 as part of a diplomatic process to encourage peace between the French and the Aragonese. In this instance alone it is clear to see how John's position at Canfranc largely differed from his experience after Bellegarde. Leading up to Canfranc, the source of contention between France and Aragon had come as a direct result of the rightful claim to the Sicilian throne, which had played out in the war of the Sicilian Vespers in 1282 when the nephew of the king of France, Charles of Salerno, was captured by Aragonese forces.<sup>102</sup> As a result, Edward was appointed by the papacy as arbiter in the dispute, charged with appeasing the situation between his liege lord (and recently crowned) Philip IV, and Edward's Aragonese allies.

As the terms for the peace were agreed, it was decided that John of St John and a further 76 English and Gascon knights were to enter hostageship in Aragon, before 30,000 marks could be raised and handed over to Alfonso III five months later. The Anglo-Gascon hostages, which included the likes of Otto de Grandson, one of Edward's most renowned Savoyard supporters; the Yorkshire knight William Latimer, who would later go on to fight in Gascony from 1294; and Hugh Audley who, as mentioned, was ransomed from a French prison, were all later granted their freedom in place of French Provençal hostages.<sup>103</sup>

At Canfranc John of St John and his fellow knights had acted as conduits in their sovereign lord's diplomatic efforts, and in the process, Edward was able to reverse the previous subordinate status of English kings to their French counterparts, becoming the more dominant of the two. Interestingly, the reversal of order after Canfranc laid the groundwork for the breakdown in royal relations between Edward and Philip in the build-up to the Anglo-French war. At Bellegarde, on the other hand, John held no influence and was left to the designs of his captor. What is clear to see from

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<sup>102</sup> *RG*, iii, lx; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 318; A.J. Kosto, *Hostages in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2012), 177; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 178.

<sup>103</sup> Otto de Grandson later visited the papal curia where he expressed his concern that Edward, and the Anglo-Gascon hostages, had 'worked so much for him [Charles of Salerno] all in vain'. See *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections*, Historical Manuscripts Commission, volume I, (1901), 253-256; also Prestwich, *Edward I*, 325-326; Kosto, *Hostages in the Middle Ages*, 178.

both these instances, however, is that captivity for the warrior elite was an ‘occupational hazard’, and a familiar part of life in the late thirteenth century.<sup>104</sup>

### Summary and Observations

The ambush at Bellegarde did not prove to be the complete and pivotal military objective that Artois may have hoped for. It was a chaotic event that produced no French territorial gain, only serving to renew the English war effort out of Bayonne. The earl of Lincoln immediately replaced the captured seneschal and was given orders to ‘command and ordinance’ in his place; his first appointment was to wage a lengthy siege on the French held castle at Dax before conducting the first extensive *chevauchée* into mainland France by an English force.<sup>105</sup> By 1297, however, the Anglo-French war had descended into military stalemate as both sides were having to deal with heavy financial losses.<sup>106</sup> When this is taken into account it is clear to see that the transfer of valuable elite prisoners four-hundred miles north to Paris not only represented a victory of great visual importance for Artois, but one that was based on the anticipated economic gains.<sup>107</sup>

The return of a sizeable ransom — one that equated to roughly John’s annual income — was the main cause for celebration amongst Artois and his supporters. Yet, the payment of this large sum by the St John household two years later meant that the fiscal resources gained in this transaction would not be used against the English forces in Gascony (or, indeed, against Edward’s army in Flanders). Moreover, despite the English Crown having kept a distance from offering to cover the costs of the ransom demand, Edward did aim to ease some of the personal financial losses of his close friend and ally by granting John of St John lands and titles on the Scottish border on his return from captivity (although John, and his heirs, did remain indebted to the Bonseignori for a further sixteen years).<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> King, ‘According to the custom’, 287.

<sup>105</sup> *CPR, 1292-1301*, 247; Guisborough, 262; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 385.

<sup>106</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 201.

<sup>107</sup> Dunbabin, *Captivity and Imprisonment*, 38.

<sup>108</sup> Spencer, ‘Royal Patronage’, 25.

In January 1300, John of St John returned to England and was appointed as ‘king’s captain and lieutenant in the counties of Cumberland, Westmoreland and Lancaster, of Annandale and the marches, as far as the bounds of the county of Rokesburgh’.<sup>109</sup> John was also named keeper of Galloway and sheriff of Dumfries, having been granted lands, farms and rents in the region totalling 1,000 marks per annum.<sup>110</sup> This was a genuine effort by the English Crown to restore some of John’s finances, yet it was also a strategic appointment, one that positioned the king’s most trusted military and legal servant in a position of power within the Bruce territories.<sup>111</sup>

However, by holding to ransom a key member of Edward’s military enterprise, the French regime was sending out a clear message. Quite obviously, it was far more profitable to remove individuals like the English seneschal from the conflict in Gascony, and to then offer them safe release in return for a large sum, rather than to kill them and then to risk the same fate at another point in the conflict. It was certainly more beneficial for Artois — from an economic viewpoint — than it would have been to indiscriminately slaughter an opponent of noble lineage on the battlefield. Throughout the Anglo-French war there was a strong understanding between the nobility on either side of the expectations of ethical warfare and honourable surrender. This was underpinned by a chivalric code of conduct as well as the current theological teachings. And despite the personal grievances, or even individual ambitions, there was a sense of a brotherhood-in-arms which provided the guidelines in how to treat an opponent of equal title, whether on the battlefield or in captivity.

Undoubtedly for Christendom’s nobility there was more glory to be found in dying on the battlefield than leaving it alive, defeated, and in chains, yet there was certainly room for honourable surrender when the nature of the conflict allowed. Experiences of imprisonment, whether as a prisoner of war or as a hostage, became a natural part of the careers of many nobles. John of St John’s role, both as a prisoner of war in the aftermath of Bellegarde, and as a hostage during the Canfranc agreement, highlights this routine process. And, as was custom in Northern France, the events that

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<sup>109</sup> *CPR, 1292-1301*, 484; *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland*, eds., J. Bain, G.G. Simpson and J.D. Gailbraith, ii, (Edinburgh, 1881-), 290, [hereafter, *CDS*]; Simpkin, *The English Aristocracy at War*, 46.

<sup>110</sup> *CPR, 1292-1301*, 484; Prestwich, ‘Royal Patronage under Edward I’, 46; Watson, *Under the Hammer*, 98.

<sup>111</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 485, 517; *The Rolls of Arms*, 248-249. John of St John served as guardian of the king’s sixteen year old heir, Edward of Carnarvon, at the siege of Caerlaverock in 1300.

followed on from the ambush at Bellegarde demonstrate a preferred focus on the monetary reward over indiscriminate slaughter, a traditional and cultural norm that had been in place for around two centuries. More importantly for this study, there was still an appetite for mercy during the final months of the Anglo-French war which becomes particularly significant when it is considered that the collapse in ethical warfare during the Hundred Years War was not too far over the horizon.

## Five

### **In the Manner of Thieves: Scorched earth and revenge for the Earl of Lincoln**

The *modus operandi* of Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln, in the summer of 1297 would suggest that a renewal of war — leading to direct conflict with Robert of Artois' army — was at the forefront of any military initiative, certainly in response to the calamitous events at Bellegarde as discussed in the previous chapter. For this reason, the chapter will address the implications of the earl's *chevauchée* through the lands of nobles who were known allies of Philip IV and Artois, here placing the scorched earth policy within the *battle-seeking* category. To do so the chapter will explore the objectives and strategy of Lincoln's *chevauchée* by providing a novel interpretation of the possible route taken by the Anglo-Gascon force, as well as the intended scale of its destruction. Lincoln's *chevauchée* has quite rightly been recognised by Malcolm Vale as the first of many scorched earth policies conducted by English military commanders — in either France or Scotland — during the fourteenth century, and it is for this reason that the chapter will highlight the legacy of the earl's tactics with some of the more infamous occurrences in economic warfare. Overall, the chapter will emphasise the importance of scorched earth tactics as a proactive form of warfare, while developing our understanding of the social and economic effects that it could have on a wider and in most cases an innocent civilian population.

#### **Ambitions of War**

For over a century, historians have been concerned with the military objectives of the *chevauchée*.<sup>1</sup> Whether there was a fundamental strategy intended on drawing an opposing force to the battlefield has, in most instances, become obscured by the socio-economic damage brought upon an unarmed and innocent civilian population that found itself in the path of a raiding force, whether by misfortune or as the intended target of an unscrupulous military commander. The earl of Lincoln's

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<sup>1</sup> Oman first penned his thoughts on military strategy and the *chevauchée* in the late nineteenth century, which led to further studies and revisions by Hewitt and Rogers, to name a few, in the twentieth century. See below for works.

*chevauchée* in 1297, like that of Edward III's pre-Crécy scorched earth policy and the Black Prince's raid into Languedoc prior to the battle of Poitiers, amongst others, has inevitably fallen into this category. Yet, unlike its successors, Lincoln's *chevauchée* has received far less attention even though it was deployed in retribution for the ambush at Bellegarde, and despite Vale highlighting it as one of the original English *chevauchée*'s; the English were to become adept at the *chevauchée*, developing the strategy into an effective tactical weapon during the Hundred Years War.<sup>2</sup>

Given that many chroniclers commented on the depredations committed by both English and French armies during the Hundred Years War — from Jean Froissart and the Chandos Herald to Geoffrey le Baker and John of Reading — there is a surprising absence from chroniclers of the late thirteenth century to either glorify or reproach the earl of Lincoln for his actions. This is most likely because many Northern chroniclers, such as Langtoft, Guisborough and Lanercost, had turned their attentions to the king's war with the Scots from 1296, where scorched earth policies were becoming an increasingly common tactic with very visible consequences on either side of the border.

We are simply left with a vague summary by Walter of Guisborough — perhaps having encountered an individual that had witnessed first-hand the fighting in Gascony — who recalled how the earl of Lincoln's men overthrew the land ('*Oppressio terre*') by burning villages and towns, before returning to Bayonne in the winter with what were presumably cartloads of possessions ('*preda magna*'); William Rishanger, like Guisborough, also recorded how the earl's *chevauchée* had burned and spoiled the lands towards the Toulousain, close to an area called '*Sancti Kitermi*'.<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting for the interpretative purposes of the earl's route that Sancti Kitermi was, most probably, a mispronunciation for either Ste-Christie, which was close to Auch, or Ste-Quitterie near to Aire; but in either case the two towns were within a day's ride of one another and both were likely to have felt the full force of the earl's raid into the region. Nevertheless, Lincoln's *chevauchée* failed to grab the attention of the chroniclers, most likely due to more pressing matters with Scottish reprisal attacks,

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<sup>2</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 211; A. Goodman, *John of Gaunt: The Exercise of Princely Power in Fourteenth-Century Europe* (Harlow, 1992), 235; A. Curry and M. Hughes, eds., *Arms, Armies and Fortifications in the Hundred Years War* (Woodbridge, 1994), 36.

<sup>3</sup> *Guisborough*, 119, 262, 264; *RG*, iii, clxv; *Willelmi Rishanger, Chronica et Annales*, ed. H.T. Riley, (Rolls series, 1865), 177.

and even with the growing cases of localised raids throughout the lawless Pennines. Here, banditry had become a particular scourge of local life in the northern counties and has been attributed to the arrival of the Irish hobelar (see chapter eight for a more detailed discussion of this topic).

Besides Vale's comments, historians have added little to, and in some instances even failed to mention the earl's *chevauchée* let alone the objectives, strategy, or achievements, of Lincoln's scorched earth policy. Marc Morris briefly noted how the earl was 'pinned down in Gascony', after returning to Bayonne in the wake of the ambush; Powicke also claimed that the earl 'held on, almost deserted'; whilst Prestwich, reiterating both Guisborough and Rishanger's accounts, recorded that the earl 'was able to take advantage of the withdrawal of the French army, and conducted a successful raid into French territory, towards Toulouse, burning and plundering as he went'.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, Prestwich's claim that the earl of Lincoln was able to "take advantage" of Artois' absent French force, and therefore deployed a *chevauchée*, would suggest that this was a battle-avoiding tactic. This inference, despite doing little justice for Lincoln's military capabilities as commander-in-chief, gives the impression that the earl was, in all eventualities, aiming to avoid a second confrontation with the French within the space of a few months. This is to overlook the fact that since retreating to Bayonne after the ambush at Bellegarde, the earl had continued to increase and re-supply the Anglo-Gascon force — in anticipation of a renewal of the conflict — and to also disregard the revisionist approach surrounding the military objectives of the *chevauchée*.<sup>5</sup>

In Clifford Rogers' 1994 article, 'Edward III and the Dialects of Strategy', the concept of the *chevauchée* as a strategy deployed by capable military commanders to bring an opposing army to battle was proposed.<sup>6</sup> Rogers based his argument on Edward III's tactics in Northern France, here explaining how the king had obtained such military insight on the Anglo-Scottish border; it was a strategy based on ravaging the land itself, attacking a significantly important landmark, and therefore bringing a reluctant but duty bound enemy into battle: a battle not of their own choosing.<sup>7</sup> This re-

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<sup>4</sup> Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 295; Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, 649; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 385.

<sup>5</sup> 'Cependant Henri de Lacy ne cessa d'accroître et de ravitailler son armée', *RG*, iii, clxv.

<sup>6</sup> Rogers, 'Edward III and the Dialects of Strategy', 83-102.

<sup>7</sup> Rogers, 'Edward III and the Dialects of Strategy', 88-89; J.R. McNeill, 'Woods and Warfare in World History', *Environmental History*, 9:3 (2004), 388.

evaluation of the Vegetian art of war challenged the current understandings — particularly those upheld by Oman and Hewitt — that the *chevauchée* never intended to provoke the enemy into the field but, instead, was solely focused on an uncoordinated destruction of the surrounding environment.

As early as 1885 Charles Oman had suggested that military strategy amongst the medieval elite ‘was absolutely non-existent’, and when deployed the *chevauchée* had no greater intention than ‘merely to burn and harry the land’.<sup>8</sup> Hewitt seconded this opinion, firstly claiming that the *chevauchée* ‘was not, as might have been supposed, to seek out the enemy and bring him to decisive combat’, but it was in fact for the military commanders to ‘work havoc’ by inflicting ‘damage, or loss or ruin or destruction on the enemy and his subjects by devastation’; Hewitt later suggested that although older knights may have developed field strategy through their experiences on campaign, the *chevauchée* still had ‘no clearly defined objective’.<sup>9</sup>

As Rogers emphasised, these opinions became ‘dominant’, influencing successive studies of scorched earth policies.<sup>10</sup> Allmand, for instance, termed the fourteenth century English *chevauchée* as ‘a form of petty war’, one that despite having a clear objective — that being to ‘demoralise’ the local French population — it ultimately sought to avoid pitched battle; Kenneth Fowler also believed that ‘engagement with the enemy was, whenever possible, to be avoided for the consequences it might have’; whilst Maurice Keen simply stated that the ‘only one major risk’ to have faced those on *chevauchée* was that they could find themselves ‘cut off, deep into hostile territory, by a superior enemy force’.<sup>11</sup> And by no means was this battle-avoiding theory confined to the Hundred Years War. Neil Murphy has highlighted how Hewitt’s understanding of the *chevauchée* ‘continues to be

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<sup>8</sup> C.W.C. Oman, *The Art of War in the Middle Ages*, revised and edited by J.H. Beeler, (London, 1953), 61; Beeler, in 1953, still felt it necessary to suggest that this view was ‘generally accepted’, although the ‘whole aspect of mediaeval warfare should be thoroughly restudied’, see footnote 2; Rogers, ‘Edward III and the Dialects of Strategy’, 84-85.

<sup>9</sup> Hewitt, *Organization of War*, 100, 111; Hewitt, *The Black Prince’s Expedition*, 13.

<sup>10</sup> Rogers, ‘Edward III and the Dialects of Strategy’, 84.

<sup>11</sup> C.T. Allmand, ‘The War and the Non-Combatant’, *The Hundred Years War*, ed. K. Fowler, (London, 1971), 166; K. Fowler, *The age of Plantagenet and Valois: The Struggle for Supremacy 1328-1498* (London, 1967), 152; M.H. Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages: A Political History* (London, 1973), 135.

influential' in his study of the somewhat neglected Tudor *chevauchée*'s of Thomas Howard, between 1522 and 1523.<sup>12</sup>

The fact that the *chevauchée* has, for so long, been viewed as a battle-avoiding strategy is almost certainly due to the immediate effects that this type of raid could have upon the defenceless in society. In its most basic form the *chevauchée* was little more than a fast cavalry charge or "ride" through the enemy's territory, causing as much economic and social damage to the surrounding region as possible; a *chevauchée* would involve the burning down of houses, churches and small fortified structures (most often made of wood), and therefore wasting whole villages and towns in the process, which was then further exacerbated by the driving-off of cattle and livestock (another tactic which has been attributed to the hobelar: see chapter eight).

Moreover, a *chevauchée* could often lead to the destruction of crops and forage, food-stores and agricultural tools, creating an economically untenable environment for months or even years afterwards; whilst it should also be expected that the profiteering soldier, unleashed in a foreign land, committed some of the more heinous crimes upon the natives such as murder, kidnap and abduction, and even rape.<sup>13</sup> There was, quite clearly, a differentiation between land inadvertently affected by warfare and passing armies, and land deliberately devastated to destroy the lives of local inhabitants.

Nevertheless, there is growing evidence to support Rogers' claim that the *chevauchée* was indeed focused on forcing the enemy into a pitched battle. Both Anne Curry and Richard Barber have suggested that Edward III, in pursuing a scorched earth policy between 1339 and 1346, was directly challenging Philip VI's kingship; not only was Edward showing how the French king 'could not defend his people', but he was successful in goading Philip into raising an army, not once but twice, at Buironfosse and at Crécy.<sup>14</sup> Philip VI, according to Barber, 'was forced to prove that he was equal to

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<sup>12</sup> N. Murphy, 'A "very fowle warre": Scorched earth, violence, and Thomas Howard's French and Scottish campaigns of 1522-1523', *War in History*, (2020), 4. Murphy has also highlighted how Oman simply 'lumped Howard's scorched earth policy' in with the 'devoid of strategy' pile. See Oman, *Art of War*, 322.

<sup>13</sup> S. McGlynn, 'The Black Prince Unleashed', *Medieval Warfare*, 6:1 (2016), 51; Hewitt, *Organization of War*, 93-99; J.P. Bothe, 'How to "Ravage" a Country: Destruction, Conservation, and Assessment of Natural Environments in Early Modern Military Thought', *The Hungarian Historical Review*, 7:3 (2018), 512; Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 173.

<sup>14</sup> Curry, 'The Hundred Years War', 87-89; Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 197-198. Yuval Noah Harari believes that Edward III shunned Philip's earlier invitation to battle close to the walls of Paris, see

the task of taking on the invaders'.<sup>15</sup> And again, both Mollie Madden and Peter Hoskins have alluded to the successes of the Black Prince during the *Grande Chevauchée* of 1355. Here, Madden claims that the Black Prince demonstrated 'the power and authority of the English king and the inability of the French king to protect his kingdom and people from attack', and, according to Hoskins, 'if the French forces in Languedoc could be brought to battle', then 'so much the better'.<sup>16</sup>

Contemporaries were also understanding of the clear motives of the *chevauchée*. As the 1355 and 1356 ravaging of French land ultimately forced John II to do battle at Poitiers, the Chandos Herald reported how prior to the battle the French king had warned his brother, the duke of Orleans, to "take good heed, for God's sake, that you have no mercy on the English, but put them all to death: for they have done us much wrong and burnt and destroyed our land since they left England".<sup>17</sup> In fact, so successful were English armies at conducting scorched earth throughout the Hundred Years War that this fearsome tactic was revived many years later; Murphy has shown how Thomas Howard specifically chose historical landmarks, like Crécy and Agincourt, to focus his scorched earth policies, in the process stirring up the sensitivities of the French so as to bring Francis I to battle.<sup>18</sup>

Naturally, there are pitfalls in comparing the battle-*seeking* tactics of the English throughout the fourteenth century with those of Edward I's military commanders. Edward III's forces, for instance, arrived in France with the confidence to overcome a numerically superior army, as had been demonstrated at both Dupplin Moor (1322) and Halidon Hill (1333) when the odds had ranged between 10:1 and 3:1 in favour of the Scots.<sup>19</sup> These victories, however, were only achieved through the deployment of dismounted men-at-arms flanked by longbowmen, a development of the English 'craft of war' which had it not occurred may have left the young Edward III facing two failures reminiscent of Bannockburn and Stanhope Park.<sup>20</sup>

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Y.N. Harari, 'Inter-frontal cooperation in the Fourteenth Century and Edward III's 1346 Campaign', *War in History*, 6:4 (1999), 389.

<sup>15</sup> Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 198.

<sup>16</sup> Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée*, 3, 92; Hoskins, *In the Steps of the Black Prince*, 19.

<sup>17</sup> *Chandos Herald*, 143.

<sup>18</sup> Murphy, 'A "very fowle warre"', 5.

<sup>19</sup> Rogers, 'Edward III and the Dialects of Strategy', 93.

<sup>20</sup> Rogers, 'Edward III and the Dialects of Strategy', 86-88.

The longbow in particular had become a great leveller, allowing Edward III's forces to 'fight when outnumbered to a hopeless degree'; it gave the English a series of almost miraculous victories, instilling in them the idea that God was on their side.<sup>21</sup> The earl of Lincoln, on the other hand, could not have been as confident in overcoming a larger French force, simply because these tactics had not yet been fully perfected by the English on the battlefield. Nevertheless, this did not mean that confidence and morale was low, after all had Wales, and seemingly Scotland, not been conquered by 1296? Had Gascony's more prominent ports and walled cities not been quickly turned over to the expeditionary forces? Had Lincoln and a large proportion of the Anglo-Gascon army not evaded complete defeat at Bellegarde? When all is considered, Lincoln would not have been wrong to believe that God was on the side of the English, and neither would the earl have been discouraged to pursue the remnants of Artois' army.

Therefore, it is amongst the current reappraisal of the *chevauchée* as a battle-seeking tactic that Lincoln's scorched earth policy will be analysed. And although the French were more than familiar with this type of warfare — having conducted scorched earth policies of their own throughout the late thirteenth century — it is the extent of Lincoln's raid which would mark this event as a significant departure point towards the more prominent English raids of the mid-fourteenth century. It is also important for the study to point out that Scotland would provide the training ground for Edward I's scorched earth tactics, just as they would later do for Edward III, and for this reason comparisons will be made to gauge the effectiveness of the battle-seeking tactics. Lincoln's *chevauchée* is key to the development of this understanding for not only will it demonstrate how a small Anglo-Gascon force — still reeling from an unexpected ambush — was able to seek retribution in enemy territory in the hope of forcing Robert of Artois into battle, but it will also show how this age-old Vegetian tactic could be deployed in vastly different warzones to achieve the same outcome.

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<sup>21</sup> G. Cushway, *Edward III and the War at Sea: The English Navy, 1327-1377* (Woodbridge, 2011), 90; Rogers, 'Edward III and the Dialects of Strategy', 93.

## Objective and Strategy

Considering Lincoln's *modus operandi* to bring the French army to battle, it is important to note that the earl and the remaining Anglo-Gascon army were not pinned down or deserted at Bayonne, as both Morris and Powicke suggest, and neither was it set on simply plundering the open French countryside in search of booty or reward. Yet, the area to the east of the Landes had become severely dislocated from the centre of Plantagenet power at Bayonne after the ambush that year, and the inhabitants of the inland bastides and settlements at Bellegarde, Chalosse, St Sever and Hastings, for instance, were far from secure behind their defensive walls.<sup>22</sup>

Although Artois' army had returned to Paris, key strongholds in the duchy were still occupied by forces loyal to Philip IV, like those of Dax and Tartas, whilst Mont de Marsan had been, and still was, the main base of operation for the Capetian army arriving from the Agenais.<sup>23</sup> The Capetian army may have failed to capitalise on the ambush by not advancing on the coastal region of Gascony, yet the garrisons were effective in cutting-off navigable river routes inland along the Adour and Ousse. Two of the larger cities on the border with Bellegarde, Orthez and Pau, also formed significant frontier zones from which Capetian-allied forces could prepare for a new, and perhaps more final attack on the duchy; nobles from the Toulousain, Albigeois, the lower Languedoc, and Foix-Béarn, such as Roger-Bernard III, count of Foix, Robert de Lévis-Mirepoix and Odo de Montaut, were constant reminders of the vulnerability of outlying English possessions.<sup>24</sup>

In chapter two it has already been proposed (based on the evidence the chroniclers have provided in their use of place names situated further inland) that the most obvious route for the earl of Lincoln's *chevauchée* was firstly south-east into Béarn — the lands of Roger-Bernard — even though Lincoln had recently been engaged in the siege of Dax which was just over thirty miles north-east of Bayonne. It seems likely, however, that Lincoln adopted a new strategy when it came to deploying the *chevauchée* in the summer. Not only did this change of direction help to avoid the complete destruction of the economic infrastructure of Edward's duchy, but the earl of Lincoln's new objective

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<sup>22</sup> *RG*, iii, cxii-cxiii.

<sup>23</sup> *RG*, iii, cliii.

<sup>24</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 204-205.

aimed to divert the focus of war away from centres of Capetian resistance in central Gascony, and to place it within an untouched peripheral region allied, somewhat tentatively, to the French Crown.<sup>25</sup> Roger-Bernard made for a good target: this was because the Count of Foix had been appointed lieutenant in Aquitaine and the Languedoc and was, therefore, both a ‘valuable ally’ to the French Crown, as well as a legitimate military target of the Anglo-Gascon army; the region itself also proved to be a useful political and military buffer for Philip IV, here preventing the expansion of English ambitions eastwards along Gascony’s south-eastern border, as well as interrupting supplies and communication coming to Edward’s aid from Aragon.<sup>26</sup>

The proposed direction of Lincoln’s *chevauchée* would also suggest that Béarn was a tactically expedient route, one which caused the most destruction to the enemy’s lands whilst avoiding those in allegiance to Edward I. Progress towards the environs of Orthez and Pau — covering a projected total distance of 70 miles in 5 or 6 days — could be taken following the south bank of the Ousse, meaning that river crossings (either damaged, intact or blocked by enemy forces) could be avoided. This also meant that for any French forces descending on Lincoln’s army from the north side of the river would have to wait for a viable crossing; in the meantime, this allowed for scouts in the area (in this instance most likely the *adalil* from Aragon, but also any individual who could get their hands on a horse: see chapter eight) to inform the earl of Lincoln of any imminent attack.

The target distance of Pau, however, is a mere projection of how far Lincoln’s forces could have travelled before they themselves succumbed to a lack of forage and fresh food supplies; summer campaigns were often dependent on grassland to feed horses, and given that carts packed with food reserves or boats following up river with hay or straw were unable to keep up with the *chevauchée*, then it would not be too long before a raiding force of any significant size had destroyed or spoiled the resources they required to progress any further.<sup>27</sup> Yet, given that Rishanger believed Lincoln’s

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<sup>25</sup> By the Spring of 1297 Roger-Bernard was still owed 48,000 *l.t.* from the French Crown for his wages during the war, as well as for the wages of his men; Roger-Bernard would later demand instalments of this payment, whilst in the meantime the count resisted complete Capetian intervention in the region, keeping royal tax collectors at arms-length. See Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 204-205.

<sup>26</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 204-205.

<sup>27</sup> Bothe, ‘How to “Ravage” a Country’, 514-519; Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée*, 99-102; Hoskins, *In the Steps of the Black Prince*, 110-115; J.F. Willard, ‘The Use of Carts in the Fourteenth Century’, *History*, 17:67 (1932), 246.

*chevauchée* had in fact reached as far as Aire or Auch, another 60 miles north-east of Pau between Agen and Toulouse, would suggest that the whole force — or part of it at the very least — continued to destroy the lands of a region which had proven to be a significant recruiting ground for Philip IV. In the previous summer, for instance, Artois had demanded reinforcements from as far away as Toulouse and Carcassonne to take part in the defence of Dax, and as a result Lincoln's almost daily attempts to take the bailey was finally lifted after a tortuous seven weeks for both camps.<sup>28</sup>

Continued destruction in the Toulousain may have been conducted by the main force of the *chevauchée*, or alternatively it could have been inflicted by satellite raiding groups which either flanked the main host or advanced ahead, plundering at their own will; these groups may have been working independently but at the same time achieving the required level of chaos and damage that Lincoln needed to draw the enemy out. There does certainly seem to be some targeted retribution at play here against a region that had continued to provide military support in the war for Philip, whilst the earl's uninterrupted march through Béarn — and possibly into the Toulousain — also highlights the lack of protection either Philip IV or Robert of Artois were able to offer those who had allied themselves with the Capetian cause.

Given the previous projection for the size of the second expeditionary force it is reasonable to suggest that there would have been around 220 mounted warriors present in Lincoln's *chevauchée*, which most likely increased with the arrival of the mounted banneret and man-at-arms of John of St John's *comitiva*, as well as independent cavalry troops from Gascony and the mercenaries from Northern Spain.<sup>29</sup> In addition, two of the king's clerks were also present in Lincoln's company; both John Sandale and Thomas of Cambridge were ordered to go with the earl to castles or towns 'to make payments and expenses conjointly'.<sup>30</sup>

The clerks' presence near to the raiding force was, more than likely, a means in which to continue paying wages, particularly to higher-ranking members, yet they may also have been entrusted with accounting for the expected ransom payments, or *patis*, of entire villages and their non-

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<sup>28</sup> Guisborough, 262; *RG*, iii, cliii, civ; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 205.

<sup>29</sup> A. Blumberg, 'The *Jinetes*: Mounted warriors of medieval Spain', *Medieval Warfare*, 3:1 (2013), 18-21.

*Jinetes* were a light cavalry force introduced to Spain and Portugal by the invading Berbers of the eight century.

<sup>30</sup> *CPR*, 1292-1301, 247.

combatants, such as peasants and priests; captured livestock, if not consumed or destroyed, was also ransomed back to the owner but needed to be accounted for all the same.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, military expenditure was often handled by the royal wardrobe in a conflict when the king was present in the campaign (such as in Scotland during 1298 for example), yet in Edward's absence in Gascony 'special treasurers of war' like Sandale and Cambridge were appointed to take complete 'financial management' of the campaign: this meant being located close to the fighting with readily available financial resources.<sup>32</sup>

The pardoned recruits from England were also likely to form part of the satellite raiding groups that were in pursuit of the main host; the opportunity to freely plunder towns and villages no doubt appealed to larcenists, while those who had previously been incarcerated for murder may have shown little sensitivity in the spilling of innocent blood.<sup>33</sup> In 1368, for example, a certain Walter Strael was excused for his part in having

committed and perpetrated many murders, larcenies, robberies, sacrileges, having assaulted towns and fortresses, killed men, women and children, set fires, raped women and violated maids, burned and destroyed churches, chapels, and monasteries, held men for ransom, ransomed towns and country-side, and done all other evils, crimes, wrongdoing and delicts which he could.<sup>34</sup>

Fear was certainly a central factor in the *chevauchée's* strategy, which underpinned a military objective that was, according to Sean McGlynn, strikingly similar to the aerial bombardments of World War II and the Blitzkrieg; the *chevauchée* was designed to destroy the enemy's economic

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<sup>31</sup> N. Wright, *Knights and Peasants: The Hundred Years War in the French Countryside* (Woodbridge, 1998), 65-76.

<sup>32</sup> M. Ormrod, 'The English State and the Plantagenet Empire, 1259-1360: A Fiscal Perspective', in *The Medieval State: Essays Presented to James Campbell*, eds., J.R. Maddicott and D.M. Palliser, (London, 2000), 205-206.

<sup>33</sup> Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 69.

<sup>34</sup> C.J. Rogers, 'By Fire and Sword: Bellum Hostile and "Civilians" in the Hundred Years War', *Civilians in the Path of War*, eds., M. Grimsley and C.J. Rogers, (Nebraska, 2002), 36.

infrastructure by undermining morale and exposing ‘the weakness of the enemy’.<sup>35</sup> In the Middle Ages, just as in the twentieth century, these acts certainly crossed the line of ethical warfare, leading Nicholas Wright to express his concerns that ‘obvious are the signs of a knightly class which cared little for the sufferings of non-combatants because they had troubles and dangers of their own’.<sup>36</sup> The troubles and dangers that Wright alludes to would certainly include the preservation of the army’s physical state, for troops sacking a town could unintentionally destroy their own food supplies, whilst the threat of exposure remained a real cause for concern: there was no guarantee that the sought after battle would prove victorious.<sup>37</sup>

However, scorched earth strategy — whether intended on bringing an enemy force to battle or not — certainly hit the innocent civilian populations the hardest. Little is known of the exact actions of Lincoln’s men, except that they burned an area towards the Toulousain, yet if the 1297 *chevauchée* was to set the benchmark for future English scorched earth policies then it should be expected that a ‘deliberate orgy of destruction’ was carried out, much like that committed by the English around Cambrai in 1339, where Edward III had boasted that his army had destroyed “commonly” an area of land of up to “twelve or fourteen leagues”.<sup>38</sup>

The main factor when considering the possible scale of destruction inflicted upon the innocent populations was the sheer vastness of the French countryside. Both Allmand and Fowler have highlighted that there were ‘many small towns with relatively open country in between’, whilst the countryside, or *plat pays*, ‘was defenceless against the incursions of the troops’.<sup>39</sup> As the *chevauchée*, generally, by-passed fortifications and strongholds — for they slowed the raid down, reducing its overall effect — it was the open country where the peasant lived that bore the brunt of the destruction; and even when a peasant could escape to a nearby stronghold their entry may be denied, or the sanctuary of a local parish church may have done little to prevent the attackers.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> S. McGlynn, ‘“Sheer Terror” and the Black Prince’s Grand *Chevauchée* of 1355’, *The Hundred Years Wars (Part III). Further Considerations*, 317; McGlynn, ‘The Black Prince Unleashed’, 51.

<sup>36</sup> Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 79; McGlynn, ‘“Sheer Terror”’, 317.

<sup>37</sup> Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée*, 99-100; Hoskins, *In the Steps of the Black Prince*, 306-310; Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages*, 135.

<sup>38</sup> Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 178; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 69.

<sup>39</sup> Allmand, ‘The War and the Non-Combatant’, 166; Fowler, *The age of Plantagenet and Valois*, 152.

<sup>40</sup> Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 65.

Whole villages were torched and the moveable goods were carried away, while any animals or beasts that could be found were either used as pack-animals or they provided sustenance for the army before they moved on to attack the next village.<sup>41</sup> Crops, food stores and vineyards were also destroyed when the soldiers could not consume anymore, or were unable to carry the goods away, whilst machinery and agricultural equipment was damaged beyond repair.<sup>42</sup> Froissart, recalling the actions of the Black Prince's troops throughout 1355, claimed that the English, once having found a fertile place would, for two or three days, bring back to the main host a large return of beasts (most likely horses, cattle and livestock), and having found much more wine than they could quite possibly consume, they would simply waste the rest.<sup>43</sup> Once the English army then left the area, the country was effectively broken ('et demorait tout brisiet').<sup>44</sup> Fields and woodland were also systematically targeted. This was because setting fields on fire led to a loss of pasture and resulted in soil erosion for consecutive years, whilst the destruction of woodland led to a lack of timber for building; it increased demand for firewood and fuel, particularly in the winter; and it also impacted upon weapon making. The removal of large swathes of woodland also reduced opportunities for local inhabitants to seek shelter during any subsequent raids.<sup>45</sup>

Further still, 'predatory soldiers', according to Wright, would on some occasions carry local men away to have them enter into free-labour elsewhere, as 'their wives and daughters offered sexual gratification' and 'their young sons made useful servants'.<sup>46</sup> This would become commonplace throughout the age of the English *chevauchée* as many local youths were kidnapped to then become pages or varlets to the great knights on campaign.<sup>47</sup> Commands were often given out beforehand to spare religious houses, women, and children, however, in the heat of a raid it would have been taken for granted that these groups would form part of what Gillingham has termed as the "collateral

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<sup>41</sup> Fowler, *The age of Plantagenet and Valois*, 152.

<sup>42</sup> McGlynn, ' "Sheer Terror" ', 321

<sup>43</sup> Jean Froissart, *Ouvres de Froissart: Chroniques*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, vol. v, (Brussels, 1867-1877), 379; Hewitt, *Organization of War*, 102.

<sup>44</sup> Froissart, *Chroniques*, 380.

<sup>45</sup> P. Slavin, 'Warfare and Ecological Destruction in Early Fourteenth-Century British Isles', *Environmental History*, 19:3 (July, 2014), 531-535; N. Murphy, *The Tudor Occupation of Boulogne: Conquest, Colonisation and Imperial Monarchy, 1544-1550* (Cambridge, 2019), 57.

<sup>46</sup> Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 67.

<sup>47</sup> Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 72.

damage”; although soldiers did not necessarily go out of their way to capture or slaughter innocent women and children it nevertheless ‘remained an accepted feature of warfare’.<sup>48</sup>



Image 5. A fourteenth century depiction of an army on the move with its captured livestock and pack-animals, along with the “free-labour” and youths, soon to become pages. (© British Library Board, MS Egerton 1894 fo. 8v.)

According to Prestwich, a raiding force was ‘impossible to restrain’, and the killing of innocent individuals, peasants, women, children, and the taking away of their worldly possessions, ultimately became an inevitability.<sup>49</sup> Yet as Thomas More once warned, it was only ‘the promise of plunder’ that ‘kept armies in the field and prevented mutiny’, while Honoré Bonet, in his *Tree of Battles*, reminded the reader that ‘if sometimes the humble and innocent suffer harm and lose their goods, it cannot be otherwise’; Honoré would later go on to express his grief in the account, having witnessed first-hand the destructiveness of the English *chevauchée*: ‘what glory, can there be in killing or capturing a man who has never borne arms and would not know how to put on a coat of mail, or fasten a greave or a helmet?’<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> J. Gillingham, ‘Women, children and the profits of war’, *Studies in the earlier middle ages in honour of Pauline Stafford*, eds., J. Nelson, S. Reynolds and S.M. Johns, (University of London: Institute of Historical Research), 61-71; Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 179; Murphy, *The Tudor Occupation of Boulogne*, 36.

<sup>49</sup> Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 179; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 67.

<sup>50</sup> Murphy, *The Tudor Occupation of Boulogne*, 23; *The Tree of Battles*, 153-154.

Clemency, however, was ‘an important manifestation of royal power’, as Neil Murphy rightly points out, and Edward I had on occasion demonstrated his displeasure at some of the more immoral acts of his troops in Flanders who had plundered the area around Ghent after a failed Flemish uprising in the same year as Lincoln’s *chevauchée* (for a more detailed discussion of Edward’s Flanders expedition see chapter seven).<sup>51</sup> The public hanging of some of his men who had raided the local towns near to Damp [Dampoort] — killing 200 local citizens in the process, according to Henry Knighton — may be a telling sign that there was, perhaps, an element of military order and restraint expected by the Crown; restraint may also have been expected of Lincoln’s force, however, this is difficult to gauge from such scant evidence and would certainly not be the case for what followed during the Hundred Years War.<sup>52</sup>

What is clear, however, is that Lincoln’s scorched earth strategy intended to strike a blow to Philip IV and Robert of Artois’ prestige. Although some of the more “chivalrous” elements of Lincoln’s force may have turned a blind eye to the depredations committed against the defenceless and innocent civilians, the overall objective was to stir a Capetian force to action in their defence. That this eventuality gradually slipped by was not for the lack of trying on Lincoln’s behalf, yet the absence of a Capetian relief force, in either Béarn or the Toulousain, would suggest that the French Crown had, indeed, abandoned the war effort and left previous allies to fend for themselves. With this in mind, Lincoln’s *chevauchée* must be viewed as a trial-run in the armoury of English military tactics; the scorched earth policy was, with almost immediate effect, deployed in Scotland, and it would later take centre stage in the successes of the English during the Hundred Years War.

### **A Tactical Initiative**

The earl of Lincoln’s *chevauchée* was not the first foray into scorched earth for English forces. It is likely that Henry III’s Anglo-Bayonnais troops had ravaged the lands around La Rochelle during 1242 in response to Louis IX’s *chevauchée* in the Saintonge; Simon de Montfort had also

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<sup>51</sup> Murphy, *The Tudor Occupation of Boulogne*, 22; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 394.

<sup>52</sup> Knighton, 370-371. Dampoort is located to the east of Ghent and forms part of the outer suburbs of the modern-day city.

destroyed vineyards in retribution for a Gascon uprising against his rule in the duchy; while the first English expeditionary forces in 1294 had raided Cap St Mathieu and the Ile de Ré on their voyage to the Garonne: in the absence of an opposing army, economic warfare was the principal form of attack during the early stages of the Anglo-French war.<sup>53</sup> Yet, the earl of Lincoln's *chevauchée* must be signalled for its impact — in terms of destructiveness throughout mainland France — and in its legacy. The *chevauchée* may not have succeeded in its primary objective — that being in all probability to bring Robert of Artois to do battle (or failing this, one of his sub-captains) — yet it did ignite the now familiar tactical initiative that successive kings of England and their military captains would turn to time and again in their ambitions to draw the enemy out of their hiding place and onto the battlefield.

The reign of Edward III, for instance, witnessed an increase in the severity of the *chevauchée* which, according to Prestwich, 'had rarely been present under Edward I'.<sup>54</sup> Yet, it was during Edward I's reign where the precedent had been set, certainly for his grandson half-a-century later. Although Wales had witnessed economic and agricultural destruction by Edward I's armies throughout the 1280s because, according to the Lanercost chronicler, 'the miserable Welsh... never dared to meet him in the open', it was Scotland that would prove to be the training ground for the English *chevauchée* before it was ever fully deployed in France.<sup>55</sup> That being said, it must be acknowledged that English scorched earth policies — particularly between 1296 and 1356 when Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-French relations had reached an all-time low — were far from unprovoked acts of warfare; for the English, the legitimate threat of a Franco-Scottish alliance, the Auld-alliance, (a topic discussed in further detail in chapter seven) was 'ample justification for war', whilst the Scottish ravaging of English lands, particularly in the northern counties of Northumberland, Cumbria and Yorkshire, as well as by the French in Gascony and along the south-coast of England, left the door open for reprisal attacks.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Carpenter, *Henry III*, 258; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 382; *Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Historia Anglorum*, ed. H.R. Luard, vol. v, (Rolls Series, 1872-83), 409-410.

<sup>54</sup> Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 55.

<sup>55</sup> *Lanercost*, 107.

<sup>56</sup> Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 42.

The Anglo-Scottish wars of Edward I's reign need no new introduction here, yet the commitment of the Scottish leaders to resist Plantagenet hegemony and to attack English lands would turn scorched earth policy on its head.<sup>57</sup> The Lanercost chronicler recorded how, in fact, it was the Scots who had inflicted the first crucial blow in the war for independence: 'On Monday in Passion week [26 March 1296], Sir John Comyn of Buchan invaded England with an army of Scots, burning houses, slaughtering men and driving off cattle, and on the two following days they violently assaulted the city of Carlisle'.<sup>58</sup> However, unlike the English objective of scorched earth this was not a tactic to draw the enemy into battle; the Scottish army's 'backwardness and inexperience' compared to their English counterparts, according to Fiona Watson, was always of 'David and Goliath proportions'.<sup>59</sup>

Scottish scorched earth policies were initially infantry affairs; mosstroopers were focused on breaking the will of border communities through raiding, receiving cash payments, and driving away cattle, that 'most potent expression of wealth' in Scottish society, all by fire.<sup>60</sup> As raids reached deeper into England in the aftermath of Bannockburn — in some instances as far as Richmond in Yorkshire — Robert Bruce introduced mounted troops and hobelars. Isolated border communities, fearing that they had been abandoned by Edward II's government, would offer, and negotiate security payments, such as *patis* in France, so that the Scottish raiders would pass them by; if this did not work then they simply abandoned their homes to seek sanctuary in the woods and hills further south.<sup>61</sup>

The 1296 opening attack on England set-off a series of successive raids around Hexham and Corbridge, most probably for their iron supplies; and in March 1297 a band of women brought 'fire and straw' to burn the English fleet at Berwick; and after the battle at Stirling Bridge a Scots raiding party wasted the land as far as Newcastle, before setting fire to 'all the chief towns on this side of the

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<sup>57</sup> Watson, *Under the Hammer*, 25-30.

<sup>58</sup> Lanercost, 115; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 470.

<sup>59</sup> Watson, *Under the Hammer*, 25.

<sup>60</sup> C. McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces: Scotland, England and Ireland 1306-1328* (East Linton, 1997), 160-164.

<sup>61</sup> J. Scammell, 'Robert I and the North of England', *English Historical Review*, 73:288 (1958), 385-391; Watson, *Under the Hammer*, 51; Lanercost, 192-193.

Scottish sea, so that the English should find no place of refuge'.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps the most graphic account of a Scots raid was that described by the Lanercost chronicler in 1297

the men of Galloway, led by the Earl of Buchan [went] through Cumberland, the whole band of young knights and fighting men forcing their way through Redesdale. In this raid they surpassed in cruelty all the fury of the heathen; when they could not catch the strong and young people who took flight, they imbrued their arms, hitherto unfleshed, with the blood of infirm people, old women, women in child-bed, and even children two or three years old, proving themselves apt scholars in atrocity, in so much so that they raised aloft little span-long children pierced on pikes, to expire thus and fly away to heavens. They burnt consecrated churches; both in the sanctuary and elsewhere they violated women dedicated to God, as well as married women and girls, either murdering them or robbing them after gratifying their lust. Also they herded together a crowd of little scholars in the schools of Hexham, and, having blocked the doors, set fire to that pile [so] fair [in sight] of God.<sup>63</sup>

Despite their being little to differentiate between the atrocities described above and those most likely committed on Lincoln's *chevauchée*, or during the scorched earth policies of the Hundred Years War, it would be these types of Scottish 'horror stories' that remained with the English throughout the long fourteenth century, and arguably beyond this point.<sup>64</sup> From 1297, however, the whole concentration of the English military machine, after the events in Gascony and Flanders had ended, could now be fully focused on Scotland; it is notable that Edward was keen to go to Scotland in person so as to 'repress the malice and rebellion of the Scots enemies and rebels, who invaded the

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<sup>62</sup> Flores, 97; McNamee, *Wars of the Bruces*, 162-163; Lanercost, 134, 164-165. It is worth noting that northern Scotland was known as the land beyond the sea ('*Scocia ultra marina*') which was only connected to the mainland by Stirling bridge. Therefore, any reference to the Scottish sea can be interpreted as the land divided by the River Forth, on its northern or southern sides. For a detailed map see Matthew Paris' map of Britain, St Albans, c.1250, (British Library, *Cotton Claudius D. VI*, fo. 12v).

<sup>63</sup> Lanercost, 136; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 471.

<sup>64</sup> Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 69.

kingdom while he was in Flanders and perpetrated very many homicides, depredations, arsons and other damages'.<sup>65</sup>

The king initiated one of the first raids into Perth after the victory at Falkirk, yet this swift march was marked out for Edward's orders not to damage the religious house at St Andrews (a nod to Edward's piety, as well as a clear example of the act of clemency). In 1302 both John de Segrave and Ralph Manton, the cofferer of the wardrobe, also led a mounted raid into Kirkintilloch, and Segrave, Robert Clifford, and a veteran of the Gascon expedition, William Latimer — now captain of the eastern garrisons in Scotland — deployed a *chevauchée* into Lothian in the winter of 1303 and early 1304; Edward of Carnarvon, Prince of Wales, also marched an army on Perth in 1306, 'going beyond the mountains on the king's business' and 'ravaging the countryside as it went', but not before Aymer de Valence and Henry Percy had 'brenede tounes & castilles'; whilst another veteran of the Gascon campaign, John Botetourt, raided deep into Nithsdale 'against the earl of Carrick', at the start of 1307.<sup>66</sup>

These raids of destruction throughout Scotland, however, were not devoid of strategy. The Lothian *chevauchée* during the winter months, for instance, would have proven particularly catastrophic for the natives.<sup>67</sup> Having torched houses and shelter, grassland, crop yields, winter food stores, and driven away livestock, the area would have become untenable overnight, leaving residents destitute and searching for refuge in the surrounding woodlands. This socio-economic destruction, such had been seen in southern France seven years earlier, intended to turn local communities against those Scottish leaders who were continuing the war effort against Edward. It also aimed to bring out of hiding rebellious leaders that were missing in action, such as William Wallace who had escaped after the battle of Falkirk and was outlawed.<sup>68</sup>

It should be mentioned that although the earl of Lincoln was present in the Scottish campaigns from 1298, the earl's apparent absence in any of the previously mentioned *chevauchée*'s is

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<sup>65</sup> CDS, vol. v, 156.

<sup>66</sup> CDS, vol. v, 174, 193, 207; *The Brut, or the Chronicles of England*, ed. F.W. Brie, (London, 1960), 200; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 479-510; Watson, *Under the Hammer*, 81-82.

<sup>67</sup> Bothe, 'How to "Ravage" a Country', 513-514.

<sup>68</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 481.

striking. Nevertheless, although it is possible that Lincoln may have been preoccupied with his new estates in Scotland or had turned conscientious objector against such atrocities — and despite the drastically different landscape to that of Béarn and the Toulousain — the same principal objective of the *chevauchée* was maintained: to bring the enemy to battle.<sup>69</sup>

As Rogers quite understandably suggests, it was along the Scottish border where Edward III did indeed learn the tactical initiatives of the *chevauchée*, and how to adapt it to meet his own means. Faced with an expansive country in which to draw a French army into battle, Edward III turned to scorched earth in order to force the conflict. Here, according to Rogers, Edward III ‘would ride through Philip’s territory as Robert Bruce had ridden through England, destroying and burning as he went’.<sup>70</sup> The king had observed how Scottish mounted troops in 1327 had ‘raided deep into English territory... “with a strong hand, and laid waste with fire and sword”’; the imposition was returned, perhaps most devastatingly in 1356 during the Burnt Candlemas where it was said that Edward III destroyed every town and village that he came across in the eastern lowlands, ‘He vented his fury even on churches and religious houses’.<sup>71</sup> The speed in which a mounted force such as this could travel was highlighted in 1336 when Edward III ‘appeared unexpectedly at Perth, and then rode at speed to rescue the Countess of Atholl who was besieged in the castle of Lochindorb’, a distance of a hundred miles into the south-eastern part of the Scottish Highlands.<sup>72</sup>

In France there is no lack of chronicle evidence for the impact, and depredations, of the knights, men-at-arms and common soldiers who took part in the English *chevauchée*’s. John Chandos and James Audley were two companions of the Garter, for example, who occasionally found themselves involved in unlawful operations, such as when they had burned down ‘noble abbey’s’

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<sup>69</sup> CDS, vol. v, 157; Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 46; CPR, 1292-1301, 346. The writ of aid directed to the sheriffs of Chester in April 1298 regarding the servants de Lacy was sending to those parts ‘to buy necessaries’ for his ‘present journey to Scotland’, was the first account of Lincoln’s movements since his return from Gascony.

<sup>70</sup> Rogers, ‘Edward III and the Dialects of Strategy’, 90.

<sup>71</sup> Rogers, ‘Edward III and the Dialects of Strategy’, 86; John of Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, ed. W.F. Skene, (Edinburgh, 1871), 351; E.B. Rankin, ‘Whitekirk and “The Burnt Candlemas”’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 13:50 (1916), 133.

<sup>72</sup> Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 61; M. Hefferan, *The Household Knights of Edward III: Warfare, Politics and Kingship in Fourteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge, 2021), 114.

between Vierzon and Aubigny on the road to Poitiers in 1356.<sup>73</sup> During the pre-Crécý campaign, however, the Chandos Herald recalled how the Black Prince had overthrown the Cotentin: he ‘wholly burnt and laid waste, La Hogue, Barfleur, Carentan, Saint-Lô, Bayeaux, and up to Caen’.<sup>74</sup> Having ‘laid waste all the country’ in Normandy, Edward III and the Black Prince then ‘took their way through Caux, burning, laying waste, harrying; whereat the French were sore grieved and cried aloud: “Where is Philip our king?”’.<sup>75</sup> The Chandos Herald expressed his regret that the English had ‘put everything to fire and flame. There they made many a widowed lady and many a poor child orphan’.<sup>76</sup>

The period between 1337 and 1339 witnessed the greatest level of economic damage during the Hundred Years War, yet there was method behind the king’s actions; this had always been an objective to ‘bring Philip to battle’, according to Anne Curry, which had nearly happened at Buironfosse in 1339, before the infamous encounter at Crécý.<sup>77</sup> And in fact, the strategy of drawing the French king to battle was far from haphazard, but carefully orchestrated. Once again Curry highlights Edward III’s two previous visits to Crécý at the start of the king’s reign and believes that his strategy ‘had always been to ensure that the battle was in a location beneficial to the English’.<sup>78</sup> It is not unreasonable to suggest that Edward III had obtained the geographical knowledge of a site in which he would, years later, force the French king into battle. Perhaps this was achieved in the same way as Robert of Artois who, in 1302, had acquired a map of the terrain surrounding Courtrai, allowing his troops to conduct harrying tactics prior to the ill-fated battle for the French military captain.<sup>79</sup>

If Edward III had learnt the art of scorched earth from his grandfather’s Scottish experiences, as well as his own, the Black Prince similarly had learnt from his father. The *Grande Chevauchée* of

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<sup>73</sup> *Eulogium (Historiarum sive Temporis): Chronicon Ab Orbe Condito Usque Ad Annum Domini M.CCC.LXVI.*, ed. F.S. Haydon, iii, (London, 1863), 218; Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 407, 422, 429.

<sup>74</sup> *Chandos Herald*, 136.

<sup>75</sup> *Chandos Herald*, 137.

<sup>76</sup> *Chandos Herald*, 137. ‘Mes li Englois pour iaux esbatre Misent tout en feu et a flame. La firent mainte veve dame Et maint poure enfent orfanyn’.

<sup>77</sup> Curry, ‘The Hundred Years War’, 87-89.

<sup>78</sup> Curry, ‘The Hundred Years War’, 89.

<sup>79</sup> K. DeVries, *Infantry Warfare in the Early Fourteenth Century: Discipline, Tactics, and Technology* (Woodbridge, 1996), 15.

1355 and 1356 dwarfed those that had taken place before, particularly that of the earl of Lincoln's in 1297, but also significantly that of Edward of Carnarvon's in 1306 where only 171 horses were accounted for.<sup>80</sup> In contrast, the Black Prince's raids consisted of some 6,000-8,000 Anglo-Gascon troops, who eventually covered a distance of 700 miles between Bordeaux and Narbonne, 'from west coast to east coast and back again'.<sup>81</sup> Moving forward in three battles, this *Grande Chevauchée* would spoil around 500 villages and strongholds, exceeding on some occasions 28 miles a day.<sup>82</sup> The Chandos Herald provides a succinct account of the events of 1355

He [the Black Prince] rode towards Toulouse; not a town remained that he did not utterly lay waste; he took Carcassonne and Béziers and Narbonne, and all the country was ravaged and harried by him, and divers towns and castles, whereat the enemies in Gascony made no great rejoicing. More than four and a half months he remained in the field this time and did much damage then.<sup>83</sup>

Once again, this was no mere snatch and grab raid, yet the Black Prince had a clear objective when launching the *Grande Chevauchée*. As Madden points out, this was part of a 'multi-pronged strategy' to work in conjunction with Henry Grosmont in Normandy and Edward III in Bordeaux; it intended to bring those allied to the Valois cause to do battle, such as Jean d'Armagnac; to punish those that had supported the Valois cause by destroying their lands, their economic foundations, and their very existence if need be; and, finally, to restore English Gascony to its former glory.<sup>84</sup> According to Froissart, the 1355 *chevauchée* was both ardent and sweeping, and would be matched for its destructive nature the following year prior to the battle of Poitiers, only this time the Dordogne became the target: 'towns and castles were ransomed, people were taken, as

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<sup>80</sup> *CDS*, vol. v, 193-194.

<sup>81</sup> McGlynn, 'The Black Prince Unleashed', 51.

<sup>82</sup> McGlynn, 'The Black Prince Unleashed', 52; Hoskins, *In the Steps of the Black Prince*, 107. This distance was covered between Villenave-d'Ornon and Castets-en-Dorthe.

<sup>83</sup> *Chandos Herald*, 140.

<sup>84</sup> Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée*, 2-3.

well as purveyances, big and large'.<sup>85</sup> The English *chevauchée* had, once again, proven that it could force the king of France to do battle, but not before 'The whole country is laid waste'.<sup>86</sup>

Of course, the French army was no innocent by-stander, and just as the Scots had brought fire and sword to English soil, the French would do the same, in both Gascony and along the south-coast of England. For example, Arnaud Guillaume de Mauveisin recorded how 'the lands of Juliac [close to Périgueux] were destroyed and burnt' in the Anglo-French war, and the local inhabitants were reluctant to return to their homes until 'the knights' fees have been determined', while Fortz de Pegeres, a clerk and Gascon ally of Edward I, claimed that the French had destroyed his houses in the conflict, at both Roquetaillade and Castelnau-de-Sarnies, which would cost him and his brother more than 300 *livres chapotenses* to repair: this, as previously mentioned, had also been the case for Bos de Caupenne who had been another victim of the enemy's night time raids.<sup>87</sup>

Furthermore, in 1295 a combined Franco-Castilian fleet had sailed to Dover, torching the town and killing two monks from the local priory; whilst a French fleet, presumably sent to conduct a similar raid, had blown off course close to Hythe and was later captured by the men of the Cinque Ports.<sup>88</sup> In 1338 another south-coast raid took place at Portsmouth, which was soon repelled, only to then ravage the Isle of Wight on its return journey to France.<sup>89</sup> Yet, despite the attacks on rural settings and villages, like that at Libourne during the Anglo-French war, French coastal raids were limited in the scale of their destruction, mainly due to the nature of naval warfare in the Channel; not only did seaborne raids rely on favourable weather conditions, but any sustained damage needed the participation of a significant land force, something in which small hit-and-run fleets could not provide.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Froissart, *Chroniques*, 380. 'Á rançonner villes et chastiaus ou ardoir, á prendre gens, á trouver pourvéances grandes et grosses'.

<sup>86</sup> *Chronica Johannis de Reading et Anonymi Cantuariensis, 1346-1367*, ed. J. Tait, (1914), 122.

<sup>87</sup> TNA SC8/125/6239/6239; TNA SC8/291/14541; TNA SC8/291/14542.

<sup>88</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 383; Flores, iii, 94-95; A.Z. Freeman, 'A Moat Defensive: the coast defense scheme of 1295', *Speculum*, 42:3 (1967), 446.

<sup>89</sup> Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages*, 122.

<sup>90</sup> TNA SC8/122/6084.

## Summary and Observations

This chapter has discussed the military objectives of the earl of Lincoln's *chevauchée*, placing it within the battle-*seeking* category. It has aimed to provide an interpretation of Lincoln's route into the Toulousain, whilst also highlighting the beginnings of the English *chevauchée* on French soil; this has inevitably required comparison with its somewhat more successful, yet infamous, predecessors throughout the first phase of the Hundred Years War. However, although Lincoln's *chevauchée* failed to achieve its ultimate ambition, this did not mean that the overall strategy was less focused than that of Edward III pre-Crécy or the Black Prince during his raid into the Languedoc. Despite the absence of a final, and perhaps pivotal battle — certainly given the timing of events at such a late stage in the Anglo-French war — the earl of Lincoln's *chevauchée* had highlighted, at the very least, the ineffectiveness of the French Crown to defend its civilian populations: defenceless peasant classes were the ultimate victims where scorched earth was involved.

What is also apparent is that during a *chevauchée* it was inevitable that some of the more ruthless individuals would have directly targeted the weak and the vulnerable, whilst the man-at-arms or pardoned criminal awaiting payment from the Crown for their military service may have seen the “spoils of war” as a supplementary reward for their involvement in the conflict.<sup>91</sup> Yet even then, the acts that were committed against innocent civilians — who were in most cases left to fend for themselves — contributed to the individual missions of the military commanders, whether that was the earl of Lincoln or the Black Prince: these missions were, ultimately, set on battle.<sup>92</sup>

Of course, raids and economic warfare were far from novel techniques, being in large part advocated by Vegetius (Roman legions had used similar tactics in their conquests of Gaul and Britain); even Simon de Montfort had complained at the start of his tenure in Gascony that the locals “rob the earth, and burn and pillage... and ride by night in the manner of thieves”.<sup>93</sup> Yet, as the chapter has demonstrated, scorched earth was also used by invading forces for very different purposes to their English counterparts. Robert Bruce, for instance, relished the prospect of cash rewards,

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<sup>91</sup> McKisack, ‘Edward III and the Historians’, 13.

<sup>92</sup> Hefferan, *The Household Knights of Edward III*, 115-116.

<sup>93</sup> McNeil, ‘Woods and Warfare’, 401; C. Bémont, *Simon de Montfort, Comte de Leicester* (Paris, 1884), 267. Quoted from Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 19.

although his actions were carefully veiled behind acts of patriotism. The capture of hostages also made for sizable ransoms, and protection payments from border communities were anticipated; as a sideshow it was a common feature of Bruce's raids to dig up prized fruit trees and to damage rabbit warrens that belonged to local nobles.<sup>94</sup> Robert Bruce was making a nuisance of himself in the northern counties, whilst breaking the resolve of those who lived there, yet at the same time he was content with 'skimming off the accessible plunder'.<sup>95</sup>

Although the English *chevauchée* has been the focus of this study, it is important to add that scorched earth policies were not uncommon for either Scottish or French armies. In this instance it was often English land, and its localised communities, that were the main victims. For instance, the chronicler Henry of Huntingdon recalled how the Scots, in 1138, had invaded the North of England and "ripped open pregnant women, tossed children on the points of their spears, butchered priests at the altars, and, cutting off the heads of the images on the crucifixes, placed them on the bodies of the slain".<sup>96</sup> Given to stereotypical depictions of the Scots as 'savage barbarians' (monastic writers of the period tended to include 'stock literary themes' like 'tossing babies onto the points of spears' to describe the savagery of the Scots, according to McGlynn), the account aims to convey the anxieties and fears that many border communities were living with on a daily basis: Huntingdon would go on to write, "Wherever the Scots came, there was the same scene of horror and cruelty; women shrieking, old men lamenting, amid the groans of the dying and the despair of the living".<sup>97</sup>

Still, far more devastating, both physically and in the English psyche, was William the Conqueror's Harrying of the North throughout 1069 and 1070. This was an attempt to create an 'artificial famine', and to wipe-out a population unwilling to cooperate with the new Norman authority.<sup>98</sup> William ordered his troops to raze the peasant classes' economic infrastructure by burning whole villages in the Vale of York and across the Pennines, destroying grain and livestock in the

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<sup>94</sup> McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces*, 163.

<sup>95</sup> Scammell, 'Robert I and the North of England', 386.

<sup>96</sup> *The Chronicle of Henry of Huntingdon. Comprising the History of England, From the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Accession of Henry II. Also the Acts of Stephen, King of England and Duke of Normandy*, ed and trans., T. Forester, (London, 1853), 266; S. McGlynn, 'The Scottish invasion of England in 1138: A war without quarter', *Medieval Warfare*, 3:3 (2013), 44-49.

<sup>97</sup> *Henry of Huntingdon*, 266-267; McGlynn, 'The Scottish invasion of England in 1138', 47.

<sup>98</sup> W.E. Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North* (London, 1979), 119.

process, ensuring that crops could not be planted for the following year.<sup>99</sup> The harrying which took place was particularly ferocious, Orderic Vitalis described how the Norman forces searched ‘forests and remote mountainous places, stopping at nothing to hunt out the enemy hidden there’; John of Worcester would recall how ‘famine so prevailed that men ate the flesh of horses, dogs, cats and human beings’.<sup>100</sup>

In some respects, the earl of Lincoln’s *chevauchée* contained elements of this type of economic warfare, but it did not actively go seeking peasants who had sought refuge in the forests and hills, after all what benefit was there for destroying a community that cared little for sovereign rivalries?<sup>101</sup> However, there was a targeted approach to the earl’s *chevauchée*, its aim was focussed directly on the finality of battle with Artois. The innocent societies that were caught up in the scorched earth policies of the earl of Lincoln, or subsequently Edward III and the Black Prince, were simply unfortunate enough to be in the path of the raiding force. And often the anticipation of an English *chevauchée* — and the fear that came with it — was of greater significance to military commanders than the pointless massacre of a defenceless population; it has been suggested that in 1345 Henry Grosmont did not intend to harm the inhabitants of Toulouse, but he had intended to “make them shiver in their shoes”.<sup>102</sup>

It is tempting to believe that the earl of Lincoln abstained from any further scorched earth policies because of the crimes and depredations that he had witnessed in Béarn and the Toulousain. Lincoln had also been on the receiving end of some small-scale raiding whilst he was in Gascony, and this may have represented some form of divine retribution for the earl; Lincoln’s park at Kneesall was broken, and the trespassers ‘hunted therein’, and for over four days thieves with covered horses had ‘entered his manor’ in Suffolk, ‘broke his houses there, carried away his goods, cut down his trees in

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<sup>99</sup> Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 118.

<sup>100</sup> J. Palmer, ‘War and Domesday Waste’, *Armies, Chivalry and Warfare in Medieval Britain and France, Proceedings of the 1995 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. M. Strickland, (Stamford, 1998), 264; *The Chronicle of John of Worcester: Volume III, The Annals from 1067 to 1140 with the Gloucester Interpolations and the Continuation to 1141*, ed. and trans., P. McGurk, (Oxford, 1998), 11.

<sup>101</sup> Murphy, *The Tudor Occupation of Boulogne*, 18.

<sup>102</sup> *The Chronicle of Geoffrey Le Baker of Swinbrook*, trans. D. Preest, (Woodbridge, 2012), xiv, 68.

his wood there, and carried them away'.<sup>103</sup> Yet, whether Lincoln did refrain from any further scorched earth policies due to a change in nature, or military focus, is beside the point.

What this chapter has shown is that the English *chevauchée* continued to gather pace as a battle-seeking device long after the Anglo-French war. This occurred firstly in Scotland, before then being unleashed on the French populace in the fourteenth century. Quite masterfully the *chevauchée* became a 'standard English instrument of war', one that was underpinned both by retributive and proactive strategies.<sup>104</sup> This military tactic, however, certainly had its nefarious side, being far removed from the chivalric conventions seen in the aftermath of the ambush at Bellegarde for instance. There had been glimmers of restraint, most notably by Edward I himself, particularly in the punishment of his troops in Flanders and in the preservation of St Andrews the following year, yet at its core those on *chevauchée* may have hoped, like Henry Percy had done in 1306, for nothing more than 'to grieve the king's enemies as much as he can'.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> *CPR, 1292-1301*, 356, 379.

<sup>104</sup> Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 159.

<sup>105</sup> *CDS*, vol. v, 192.

## Six

### **“Most Trusted Liege Men”: Edward’s heavy cavalry on campaign**

This chapter will analyse the operational role of Edward’s heavy cavalry in Gascony. Due to the absence of a pitched battle the chapter will consider the military function of this force, in the process examining the collective status and martial prowess of the knights on campaign. The primary focus will be to highlight the military capabilities of Edward’s mounted elite at a time of increasing inter-frontal warzones and, as a result, the inevitable stretching of *comitivas*; English and Gascon forces were dispersed across four different frontiers between 1294 and 1297 (from Gascony to Flanders, Wales, and Scotland), while many of the king’s military commanders would end up campaigning on at least two separate fronts during this period. To achieve this, it is imperative to turn to both the *restauro equorum* accounts and the horse valuation rolls. These primary sources will offer an insight into the military standing of the knight through the assessed (or claimed) value of a warhorse, through Crown expenditure in times of war, as well as in the military demands made upon the household knights. Finally, the chapter will aim to showcase how the archetypal image of the cavalry in medieval warfare — that being the heavily armoured mounted knights, bound by chivalric values — had reached its peak military purpose in Edward I’s reign before being replaced within a generation in English battlefield tactics by the dismounted man-at-arms and the longbowman.

#### ***Milites Vexilliferos and Milites Minoris Gradus***

The heavy cavalry in Edward’s reign consisted of the household knight, both banneret and bachelor, or “*milites vexilliferos*” and “*milites minoris gradus*”, as Rishanger would differentiate in his description of the captured rebels at Northampton in April 1264 during the Second Barons’ War.<sup>1</sup> Distinction between the two was important, the rank within the socio-military hierarchy stretched back to the twelfth century and was used, according to David Simpkin, ‘to delineate clearly between

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<sup>1</sup> *Rishanger*, 21; D. Simpkin, ‘Knights Banneret, Military Recruitment and Social Status, c.1270- c.1420: A View from the Reign of Edward I’, *Military Communities in Late Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Andrew Ayton*, eds., G.P. Baker, C.L. Lambert and D. Simpkin, (Woodbridge, 2018), 55.

those knights who had the wealth and wherewithal to lead a troop of knights into battle, and those, on the other hand, who did not'.<sup>2</sup> They were, in the words of R.H.C. Davis, 'the essential feature of a medieval army, and the knights who formed it were the essential feature of medieval society'.<sup>3</sup> This was a highly dependable military force under Edward I, certainly when the feudal levy was not so reliable. It was a contingent made up of the king's 'most trusted liege men', and for the most part they were an unswervingly loyal group.<sup>4</sup> Their 'greatest contribution', Hefferan pinpoints, came during Edward's Flanders' expedition in 1297 when 527 cavalry troops 'served as part of the household knights' retinues', and again in the Falkirk campaign of 1298 when around 800 cavalry troops also served within the retinues of the household knights.<sup>5</sup>

The knight banneret was part of a 'small and relatively affluent elite', capable of leading the 'most impressive' retinues; at Falkirk, for instance, each banneret's retinue had at the very least 15-20 knight's bachelor or valets (armed servants) within its number.<sup>6</sup> Yet further to this, the knight banneret's duties could extend beyond that of a military sphere to administrative and diplomatic roles as seen with John of St John, whilst they were also regularly summoned to parliament.<sup>7</sup> Within a social setting the knight banneret was distinguishable from the lower ranked knight bachelor through the fees and robes received from the king, equating to £24 annually, and even in the daily meal received in the royal hall ('bouche a court'); on campaign the banneret was allocated payment of 4 shillings a day, twice the amount granted to the knight bachelor.<sup>8</sup>

As a collective force both the knight banneret and bachelor was the 'embodiment of the medieval concept of a warrior'; a heavily armoured individual, bound by chivalric principles, yet

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<sup>2</sup> Simpkin, 'Knights Banneret', 51.

<sup>3</sup> R.H.C. Davis, *The Medieval Warhorse: Origin, Development and Redevelopment* (London, 1989), 11.

<sup>4</sup> A. Tebbit, 'Household Knights and Military Service under the Direction of Edward II', *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives*, eds., G. Dodd and A. Musson, (Woodbridge, 2006), 76; R. Ingamells, 'The Political Role of the Household Knights of Edward I', *Thirteenth Century England V: Proceedings of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Conference 1993*, eds., P.R. Coss and S.D. Lloyd, (Woodbridge, 1995), 30; Prestwich, 'The Unreliability of Royal Household Knights', 1.

<sup>5</sup> Hefferan, *The Household Knights of Edward III*, 100.

<sup>6</sup> Hefferan, *The Household Knights of Edward III*, 102; Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, 25.

<sup>7</sup> K. Faulkner, 'The Transformation of Knighthood in Early Thirteenth-Century England', *The English Historical Review*, 111:440 (February, 1996), 1; R.W. Jones, *Bloodied Banners: Martial Display on the Medieval Battlefield* (Woodbridge, 2010), 14.

<sup>8</sup> Prestwich, 'The Unreliability of the Royal Household', 2; Ingamells, 'The Political Role', 30; Bell, et. al., *Soldier in Later Medieval England*, 55.

above all, as Stephen Morillo emphasises, ‘on horseback’.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, R.W. Jones has claimed that the knight's standing was built ‘upon military reputation’ (which was ‘a consequence of their right to lead other knights into battle’, according to Hefferan), and the ‘idea that the knight had no standing unless he was active on the battlefield was a common one’, certainly during Edward’s reign.<sup>10</sup> Yet of course, there was no battlefield encounter during the Anglo-French war. The ambush at Bellegarde had led to a strategic retreat, whilst the earl of Lincoln’s battle-*seeking* tactics in the 1297 *chevauchée* had failed to prevent Robert of Artois from leading his force to intercept a north-eastern invasion by Edward and his allies from across the Low Countries and the Holy Roman Empire. This, therefore, raises some important questions: what was the composition of Edward’s heavy cavalry in Gascony? Were they experienced in battle strategy? What type of service did they provide on campaign? Did they serve throughout the war or for short periods of time? And did the heavy cavalry become demilitarised because of the Anglo-French war?

This chapter will provide a clearer picture as to the operational role and martial prowess of the knight on campaign in Gascony, as later demonstrated on the battlefield at Falkirk and captured in the chivalric display prior to the Caerlaverock campaign in 1300. The study will also bring to the fore the role of the Gascon and Aragonese knight who formed a large part of Edward’s cavalry; their participation in the Anglo-French war is highlighted most impressively by the extensive claims for horse compensation (*restaur*). Not only does this suggest that they outnumbered the English knight, but that they also suffered heavy losses due to their operational role; Gascon and Aragonese knights also found it exceptionally difficult to claim compensation from the English Crown after the war.

To achieve these aims the *restauro equorum* accounts for the Anglo-French war will be examined. These individual or group petitions can provide evidence of who was in receipt of royal pay, and more importantly, the value of the knight's warhorse. The petitions were intended to claim compensation for lost or injured horses whilst in the king’s service, and although they often only form

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<sup>9</sup> Bell, et. al., *Soldier in Later Medieval England*, 54; S. Morillo, ‘The “Age of Cavalry” Revisited’, *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages: Essays on Medieval Military and Naval History*, eds., D.J. Kagay and L.J.A. Villalon, (Woodbridge, 1999), 45; C. Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War* (Cambridge, 2013), 1.

<sup>10</sup> Jones, *Bloodied Banners*, 16; Hefferan, *The Household Knights of Edward III*, 114-115.

one half of the process of *restaur*, they can offer valuable insight into cavalry losses, as well as to the difficulties of receiving Crown restoration costs. Determining the calibre of warhorse will be a key component of this chapter. It will aid the development of this study where letters of protection or respite of debts cannot; these primary sources only show the ‘*intent* of service’, according to Spencer, and for the importance of this chapter they simply fail to provide enough evidence to determine the status and prestige of the mounted warrior.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, *restauro equorum* accounts can, suggests Ayton, give ‘a fairly accurate measure of his [the knight’s] position in the military hierarchy’.<sup>12</sup> This position was confirmed by the value of the knight's mount.

A.G. Miller has emphasised how the knight’s status ‘was measured by the physique, condition, and value of the animal itself’.<sup>13</sup> And historians are in collective agreement that the “Rolls Royce” for any high-ranking knight in the thirteenth century was the destrier: a courageous and noble animal, according to the Catalan Ramon Llull, and one that had clearly impressed the unknown artist of the knight Geoffrey Luttrell, as depicted below mounted on his warhorse in The Luttrell Psalter.<sup>14</sup>



Image 6. Sir Geoffrey Luttrell (born 1276; died 1345), of Irnham, Lincolnshire. Image from 'The Luttrell Psalter', produced between 1325 and 1340. (British Library MS 42130 f.202v. © British Library).

<sup>11</sup> A. Spencer, ‘The comital military retinue in the reign of Edward I’, *Historical Research*, 83:219 (2009), 48.

<sup>12</sup> Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 229.

<sup>13</sup> A.G. Miller, ‘“Tails” of Masculinity: Knights, Clerics, and the Mutilation of Horses in Medieval England’, *Speculum*, 88:4 (2013), 969-970.

<sup>14</sup> Llull, *Order of Chivalry*, 40, 68; Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 23; Prestwich, ‘Destriers in Edward I’s Armies’, in *Military Communities*, 1-2; M. Bennett, ‘The Medieval Warhorse Reconsidered’, *Medieval Knighthood V: Papers from the Sixth Strawberry Hill Conference 1994*, eds., S. Church and R. Harvey, (Woodbridge, 1995), 21-26.

It is clear to see how the destrier came to resemble such wealth: Powicke, Ayton, Prestwich, Matthew Bennett, Bernard Bachrach and D. James Rackham are all in agreement that the destrier stood around fifteen hands tall, cost in excess of £40, and weighed over 1,500*lb*.<sup>15</sup> However, not all warhorses were destriers, as will be demonstrated, and far more available to the lesser ranked knight was the courser or rouncey, a cheaper and slimmer mount, yet one that could prove easier to manoeuvre in ‘less hospitable warzones’, such as in Gascony or the Scottish Lowlands.<sup>16</sup>

Another way of determining the value of warhorse is through the horse valuation rolls. These were compiled prior to a campaign where the king’s clerks would value the knight’s horse, allowing for that individual (who had to be in receipt of royal pay) to claim compensation should the horse be injured or killed on campaign.<sup>17</sup> It should be expected, however, that the knight, preferring instead to serve under feudal obligation rather than for Crown pay — a result of the prestige and honour linked to voluntary service in royal armies, a tradition which bound the knight with his ancestors — most likely arrived to do battle with a less-expensive mount (a rouncey rather than a destrier) due to the risks attributed to horse fatalities and the ensuing high financial costs.

Although the valuation rolls for the expeditionary forces are missing, the account for the Falkirk campaign is the most comprehensive for Edward I’s reign; the campaign included over forty knights who had previously served overseas in Gascony during the Anglo-French war. Therefore, by examining the valuation of the knight’s mount prior to the battle of Falkirk, a clearer picture will develop as to their social standing within the heavy cavalry in the few years following on from the Anglo-French war.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately, the chapter will turn to the changing role of the heavy cavalry,

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<sup>15</sup> Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, 549; Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 226; Prestwich, ‘Destriers in Edward I’s Armies’, 2, 7; Bennett, ‘The Medieval Warhorse Reconsidered’, 21-26; B.S. Bachrach, ‘*Caballus et Caballerius* in Medieval Warfare’, *The Study of Chivalry: Resources and Approaches*, eds., D. Howel, D. Chickering and T.H. Seiler, (Kalamazoo, 1988), 173-211, [www.deremilitari.org](http://www.deremilitari.org) [accessed 16 November 2020]; D. James Rackham, ‘The Size of the Medieval Horse’, *The Medieval Horse and its Equipment, c.1150-c.1450*, ed. J. Clark, (London, 1995).

<sup>16</sup> Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 226.

<sup>17</sup> Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 199. In this instance it should be expected that the knight, serving without pay and under feudal obligation, may have brought a cheaper mount due to the risks attributed to financial loss.

<sup>18</sup> Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 71, 84, 194; Spencer, ‘The comital military retinue’, 48-49; Prestwich, ‘Destriers in Edward I’s Armies’, 9; Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers*, 29; Simpkin, ‘Knights Banneret’, 62. Pertinent primary sources for this study are *Scotland in 1298: Documents relating to the Campaign of King Edward I in that year*, ed. H. Gough, (Paisley and London, 1888), 161-237; and TNA E101/5/23 for Falkirk.

certainly during the Hundred Years War. This was a result of the financial demands made upon the Crown — attributed to *restaur* — and the development of battlefield strategy, particularly under Edward III. The heavy cavalry may have reached its peak military purpose during Edward I's reign, yet this was only short lived as there would be a demilitarisation of this force within fifty years of Edward's great victory at Falkirk.

### Great Horses Suitable for Arms

Although battles were in fact rare in the Middle Ages, the failure to meet the enemy on the battlefield was certainly uncharacteristic for one of Edward I's armies.<sup>19</sup> The image of the armoured knight charging the field with couched lance towards a defensive line of infantrymen belongs to the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries; notably the cavalry charge had been Vegetius' salient point in the deployment of the mounted warrior and may prove to be another example of Edward following in the military strategy of the Roman author.<sup>20</sup>

Edward had been involved in three major battles during his own lifetime (Lewes, 1264, Evesham, 1265, and Falkirk, 1298), and on each occasion the royalist heavy cavalry had charged at the opposing ranks — admittedly to varying degrees of success — creating a reactionary dispersal of the enemy line (or schiltrom, as was the case at Falkirk).<sup>21</sup> Alternative forms of medieval warfare such as raiding, attrition, the preservation of strongholds and the siege, were clearly far more common than “decisive” victories on the battlefield, as pointed out by Matthew Bennett, and the Anglo-French war was certainly *the* example where these defensive, economic, harrying tactics are concerned.<sup>22</sup>

However, what makes the absence of any battlefield encounter striking is that the knight, as a military

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<sup>19</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 44, 180.

<sup>20</sup> *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science*, ed. and trans., N.P. Milner, (Liverpool, 1993), 98, 111; M.K. Jones, ‘The Battle of Verneuil (17 August 1424): Towards a History of Courage’, *War in History*, 9:4 (2002), 391.

<sup>21</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 44-46, 51, 479-481; M. Bennett, ‘The Development of Battle Tactics in the Hundred Years War’, in *Arms, Armies and Fortifications*, 4; Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, 549; S. Bennett, ‘The Battle of Evesham 1265’, *Medieval Warfare*, 2:5 (2012), 42-46. A warhorse's housings would normally include quilted textiles of a padded covering for the horse's flanks, and a metal *chamfron* to protect the head from the enemy's spears, swords, and arrows.

<sup>22</sup> Bennett, ‘The Development of Battle Tactics’, 1.

leader, recruiter, and accomplished mounted warrior was, according to Simpkin, in its ‘zenith’ during the time of the Anglo-French war.<sup>23</sup>

So pivotal was the heavy cavalry in early Edwardian battlefield tactics prior to the deployment of the longbowmen and the mounted archer that Edward had indeed re-introduced tried and tested methods to recruit effective cavalry contingents in times of war. Distrainment of knighthood, for instance, was just one way of increasing the number of knights at Edward’s disposal. Distrainment was based on landed wealth alone and had first been introduced in 1224; it was a way in which to obtain the military services of feudal tenants lower down the economic standing, particularly when the feudal summons at times of overseas warfare had failed, such as in 1294.<sup>24</sup> Edward would turn to the writ on several occasions throughout his reign, each time targeting the £20-£40 landholders. Although this most likely caused problems for the less wealthy knight bachelor, who may have struggled to cover the costs of military service, it has been suggested by Prestwich that recruitment of cavalry forces for war ‘caused no great problems’.<sup>25</sup>

However, even if knights were willing to fight at the first opportunity there was clearly a lack of suitable warhorses in the realm. This was highlighted when Edward turned to the importation of ‘horses of value’ in order to raise the standard of the heavy cavalry; letters of protection were issued to members of the royal household, as well as to merchants from Italy, France, and Spain, to bring into the kingdom over two hundred horses — of which 82 were destriers — between 1276 and 1282.<sup>26</sup> The initiative to introduce a higher calibre of warhorse had developed during the second Welsh war when Edward had seen first-hand the poor quality of warhorse on display. The king would again, later that year, express his concerns for the lack of “great horses suitable for war”, and a writ was issued

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<sup>23</sup> Simpkin, ‘Knights Banneret’, 53.

<sup>24</sup> M.R. Powicke, ‘The General Obligation to Cavalry Service under Edward I’, *Speculum*, 28:4 (1953), 816; S.L. Waugh, ‘Reluctant Knights and Jurors: Respites, Exemptions, and Public Obligations in the Reign of Henry III’, *Speculum*, 58:4 (October, 1983), 939-941; M.R. Powicke, ‘Distrainment of Knighthood and Military Obligation under Henry III’, *Speculum*, 25:4 (October, 1950), 457.

<sup>25</sup> Waugh, ‘Reluctant Knights’, 954-955; Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, 553; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 197-198.

<sup>26</sup> *CPR, 1272-81*, 184, 186, 212; *CPR, 1281-1292*, 11, 14.

As there is a great lack in the realm of great horses suitable for arms, the king, for the greater security of the realm and for the convenience of the inhabitants, has caused it to be ordained (*statuimus*) and ordained that any person of the realm who has 30*l.* yearly of land therein shall so provide himself henceforth that he shall have ready a strong and suitable horse with befitting arms, which may serve him in emergencies as often as shall be necessary.<sup>27</sup>

This became a standard summons for war as in late 1298 the knight banneret Thomas Furnival was ordered to raise men-at-arms throughout Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire in preparation for the forthcoming Scottish campaign: ‘between the ages of 20 and 60, every one having 30*l.* a year in land, to find one barded horse, having 60*l.* a year in land to find two barded horses, and so on in proportion’.<sup>28</sup> Concerted efforts were quite clearly being made to raise the status of the knight through the calibre of his warhorse, and it is through these methods, Morris claimed, that Edward had hoped ‘to create a cavalry caste, a professional caste,... accustomed to horses’; Powicke would similarly suggest that Edward had intended to achieve ‘a class of effective knightly cavalry’.<sup>29</sup>

It is surprising, therefore, that the heavy cavalry, which Edward had proactively aimed to develop into an effective fighting unit over a decade earlier, did not feature at all in their customary battlefield role in Gascony. This is despite the fact that the magnates were summoned ‘*cum equis et armis*’ to both the 1294 and the 1296 musters on the south-coast of England, and that ships greater than a hundred tuns were most likely commandeered in order to transport these horses across to Gascony.<sup>30</sup> The logistical aspect of shipping all types of horses overseas was clearly a colossal undertaking and it would have included the use of gangplanks to lead the horses from the quay to the boat and off again, as well as hurdles to keep the horses secure whilst onboard. Craig Lambert has suggested that English ships could transport around fifty horses each, and while using the war of St Sardos for an example Lambert has also provided further evidence that some ships were solely

<sup>27</sup> *CChRV*, 252-253; Prestwich, ‘Destriers in Edward I’s Armies’, 4; Davis, *Medieval Warhorse*, 87-88.

<sup>28</sup> *CPR*, 1292-1301, 887.

<sup>29</sup> Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 73; Powicke, ‘General Obligation’, 816.

<sup>30</sup> *Foedera*, 801-804; 828; C. Lambert, ‘Henry V and the crossing to France: reconstructing naval operations for the Agincourt campaign, 1415’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 43:1 (August, 2017), 28.

responsible for the transportation of horses.<sup>31</sup> Further still, all of the horses had to be fed around two-fifths to half a bushel of oats a day, according to the royal household account of 1292-93.<sup>32</sup> On the crossing to Gascony in 1324, for instance, the horses were provided with '32 racks for their fodder and 7 tons of water'.<sup>33</sup> This logistical process would not have changed much between the Anglo-French war and the war of St Sardos.

From 1294 there was a considerable presence in Gascony of both knights banneret and bachelor, and it is testament to the importance of the expeditions that the elite of English medieval society were present, such as the earls of Lancaster and Lincoln, as well as those lower down the social standings, like John Botetourt and Eustace Hatch. Yet, to assume that their presence in the Anglo-Gascon army was one purely based on engaging the enemy on the battlefield is to also suggest that Edward had a single military strategy in mind, and that there could be no other outcome than victory. It would be wrong to suggest, however, that a battlefield encounter (as the primary objective of the expeditionary forces) was the key to success in the duchy, mainly because the risks attributed to defeat in battle were just too great. A reversal of fortune on the battlefield for Edward and his military commanders in the opening stages of the conflict would have made the recovery of Gascony twice as difficult, both militarily and politically. This cautious approach towards engaging the enemy face-on in the field was only removed once the English footing in Gascony had significantly improved and the royal army had opened a new front in Flanders; Lincoln's *battle-seeking* tactics aimed to remove what Capetian resistance remained in Gascony after this point, whether that was under the command of Artois or one of his subordinates.

However, in considering the pattern of warfare in Gascony, from siege and strength in depth strategy to socio-economic destruction, it is clear to see how the heavy cavalry adapted to their surroundings. Long distance field movement, frontier patrols, garrison, and naval service, coupled with financial roles, became their primary operational purpose in the duchy. This has already been highlighted in John of Brittany's relatively successful defence of the Garonne; in John of St John's

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<sup>31</sup> Lambert, *Shipping the Medieval Military*, 93-96; TNA E101/17/3.

<sup>32</sup> Prestwich, 'Destriers in Edward I's Armies', 5-6; TNA E101/353/15.

<sup>33</sup> Lambert, *Shipping the Medieval Military*, 94.

march on Bayonne during the winter of 1294 and 1295; through to the earl of Lincoln's highly destructive scorched earth policy in the final year of the war. Alongside these field movements we also find knights banneret and bachelor deployed to some of the more strategically important castles and baileys in the region. These individuals included the likes of Roger Mortimer at Blaye (1294), William Latimer at Rions (1294), John Giffard at Podensac (1294), and Peter Mauley and William de Rye at Burgh (1296).<sup>34</sup> Others would turn to more adventurous roles such as John de Suteley, who suffered the misfortune of having his ship sunk during a raid on Bordeaux, while John Droxford, the appointed keeper of the wardrobe, was present in carrying out the more mundane tasks of paying wages, purchasing supplies and equipment, as well as accounting for the horse restoration costs.<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, the presence of Edward's heavy cavalry on campaign in Gascony was also one of great visual importance. In the same manner that commanders of royal blood were a 'stabilizing factor' on campaign, so too were the aristocratic leaders.<sup>36</sup> An overseas campaign that relied on the recruitment of local forces, regional alliances, and maintaining infantry recruits in the field (paid or pardoned), not only required the incentive of Crown wages or the promise of early release from imprisonment, but also the 'secular courage' that only the heavy cavalry could offer (they, in turn, had been given the backing of Anthony Bek, bishop of Durham, during the council meeting of 1294, a parliamentary procedure that offered a sense of holy acceptance for the war effort).<sup>37</sup> The heavy cavalry's pennons and banners, shields and surcoats, and caparisoned chargers, for example, although primarily there to distinguish the individual in battle, would have also created sights and sounds that some recruits may not have seen or heard before, offering an alternative to the 'drab local horizons that might constitute "ordinary" life', and therefore inspiring the common recruit to take up arms.<sup>38</sup>

Chivalric ritual was certainly a defining feature of Edward's heavy cavalry, and nowhere was this demonstrated in greater detail than in the *Song of Caerlaverock*. Here, the anonymous poet described how Edward and his royal household had left Carlisle for Scotland in 1300, 'on powerful

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<sup>34</sup> *RG*, iii, cxlvii, cxlviii, 344.

<sup>35</sup> *RG*, iii, cxlvii, clxxiii; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 355.

<sup>36</sup> McKisack, 'Edward III and the Historians', 6; A.J. MacDonald, 'Courage, Fear and the Experience of the Later Medieval Scottish Soldier', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 92:235 (October, 2013), 109.

<sup>37</sup> MacDonald, 'Courage, Fear and the Experience', 109; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 386-387.

<sup>38</sup> Jones, *Bloodied Banners*, 14; MacDonald, 'Courage, Fear and the Experience', 109-110.

and costly chargers', where there were 'many rich caparisons embroidered on silks and satins; many a beautiful pennon fixed to a lance; and many a banner displayed'.<sup>39</sup> In the host we can find veterans of the Gascon campaign such as Henry de Lacy, with a 'banner of yellow silk with a purple lion rampant'; John Botetourt, with his 'yellow banner and pennon with a black saltire'; and Roger Mortimer, who displayed 'a shield barry, with a chief paly and the corners gyronny, emblazoned with gold and with blue, with the escutcheon voided of ermine'.<sup>40</sup> For the common recruit it would have been a difficult concept to imagine such a noble force being defeated in battle against the low-born Scottish infantryman, therefore instilling the required courage to take up arms. Yet, it must be acknowledged here that it was in fact the contribution of the siege engineers with their constant bombardment of the castle walls, that forced the victory for Edward's army in the attack on Caerlaverock Castle.<sup>41</sup>

Yet, through this carefully orchestrated piece of military showmanship the importance of heraldic symbolism is demonstrated, and it is not hard to imagine a similar display of chivalric occasion taking place in Gascony. The heavy cavalry's public display of ancestral lineage, feat of arms, and collective military power would have aimed to move regional lords — and the common recruit — to take part in a legitimate cause in defence of the king's inheritance. Elaborate displays of chivalry, however, formed only one aspect of the socio-military elite. It was in fact their military reputation which preceded them, as Jones states, the heavy cavalry was primarily 'based upon a concept of individual martial prowess'.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, by taking a closer look at the military reputation of the knight who campaigned in Gascony, greater clarity can be developed as to the experience and potential martial capabilities of this exclusive group of warriors.

Edward's heavy cavalry in Gascony was made up of both experience and youth. It included perennial household names such as the Gorges, Oddingseles, and Tregoz. These were ancestral names familiar to the reign of Henry III and his predecessors, and they were to continue to offer Crown

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<sup>39</sup> *The Rolls of Arms*, 3.

<sup>40</sup> *The Rolls of Arms*, 5, 33, 45-47.

<sup>41</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 487.

<sup>42</sup> Jones, *Bloodied Banners*, 16.

military service, both domestically and overseas, throughout Edward I's reign.<sup>43</sup> Their participation in Edward's armies is clear to see. Ralph Gorges' son, for example, petitioned the king in excess of £200 in horse restoration costs in the aftermath of the Anglo-French war, here suggesting that alongside his father's death they had accumulated a high rate of horse fatalities; Hugh Oddingseles would similarly request around £33 in *restaur* during 1297.<sup>44</sup> Both Henry and John Tregoz were also summoned for overseas military service in 1294 where John would lead his own *comitiva* in Gascony before returning to fight in the Falkirk campaign.<sup>45</sup>

The heavy cavalry also included Marcher lords such as the Mortimers, Corbets, and perhaps most prominently, the Bassetts: Ralph Bassett had been a close adherent of Simon de Montfort prior to the Second Barons' War, although he later pledged his allegiance to the Lord Edward in 1263.<sup>46</sup> Ralph Bassett would prove his loyalty to the Crown by serving in three theatres of war during Edward's reign (Wales, Gascony, and Scotland) demonstrating the continual military service of a household knight across the inter-frontal warzones of the late thirteenth century; Bassett would firstly serve as a military leader in his own right, then as part of the earl of Lancaster's *comitiva* in Gascony, before finally serving outside of the royal household in Scotland, as part of his feudal obligation to the Crown, alongside his own son.<sup>47</sup>

Wales was to be the proving ground for many household knights who would later go on to take part in the Gascon campaigns. The likes of William de Braose and Geoffrey de Caumville were just two of the thirty-six heavy cavalry that had served in Wales prior to the overseas expeditions (these were part of the less-than impressive contingent that Edward had seen on campaign), while Braose was also present at the battle of Falkirk.<sup>48</sup> Eustace Hatch was another household knight who had been inextricably linked to the earl of Lancaster's *comitiva*, firstly in Wales during the 1294 rebellion, and then again in Gascony for the second expedition of 1296; Hatch would play a

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<sup>43</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 150.

<sup>44</sup> TNA SC8/313/E65; *RG*, iii, clxiii.

<sup>45</sup> *Foedera*, 801-802; *RG*, iii, 105; *Scotland in 1298*, 146, 192.

<sup>46</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 41. Bassett turned from de Montfort's cause due to the proposed alliance with Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, 'a policy unacceptable to men with major interests in the Welsh March'.

<sup>47</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 41; *CChRV*, 356-359; *Foedera*, 828; *Scotland in 1298*, 224.

<sup>48</sup> *CChRV*, 253; R.F. Walker, 'William de Valence and the army of West Wales, 1282-1283', *Welsh History Review*, 18:3 (June, 1997), 408-409, 419; *Foedera*, 801, 803-4; *Scotland in 1298*, 137.

prominent role in Edward's inter-frontal wars between Gascony and Scotland, however, this did not secure his payment as he was still owed £299 2s. 6d. in unpaid wages and lost horses by the end of the king's reign.<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps most interesting, certainly due to the rate in which his military reputation had risen in such a short period of time, was the inclusion of John Botetourt. As we have seen, Botetourt led a small retinue to Gascony in 1295 but only two years later, as a result of good service, he was promoted to knight banneret; Botetourt would eventually leave Gascony at the height of the second expedition to join the king in Flanders during the summer of 1297, where he took charge of his own retinue of one knight bachelor and seven valets.<sup>50</sup> In the following year Botetourt would once again lead his own larger *comitiva* at Falkirk which this time included three knights and his own family members, Guy and William Botetourt.<sup>51</sup> It is worth noting that the three knights in the retinue, Robert de Felton, Robert de Bavent, and John de Preyeres, also brought their own family members (most likely sons) to take part in the campaign as valets, which included John de Felton, Johan de Bavent, and Thomas de Preyeres.

Quite clearly Botetourt was at the forefront of Edward's military endeavours on the continent. The knight banneret had risen the ranks from a royal falconer to leading his own personal retinues within the space of three years, suggesting that continued military service across the Crown's inter-frontal warzones could lead to rapid advancements within the military hierarchy. John Botetourt's standing was further highlighted by his possession of two destriers at Falkirk, each worth 60 marks, however, like many other *comitivas* at the battle, Botetourt was to suffer high horse fatality rates which included the death of his own white charger.<sup>52</sup>

The evidence at our disposal for the Falkirk campaign is crucial in developing a better understanding as to the potential martial capabilities of the veterans of the Anglo-French war, as has been demonstrated with John Botetourt in particular. It is estimated that a total of 43 knights banneret

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<sup>49</sup> TNA SC8/311/15557; SC8/311/15558.

<sup>50</sup> Simpkin, 'Knights Banneret', 69.

<sup>51</sup> *Scotland in 1298*, 166-167. Other members of the Botetourt *comitiva* were David Hereford, Guy de Tymeworthe, Peter le Mareschal, John Bosse, William Blecche, Richard de Camera, William de Flyntham, and Walter le Poure.

<sup>52</sup> Prestwich, 'Destriers in Edward I's Armies', 13; *CDS*, vol. ii, 1272-1307, 258; *Scotland in 1298*, 166.

of the royal household who were involved in the Falkirk campaign had played a previous role in the heavy cavalry during the Gascon expeditions. These included Edmund Eyncourt, Andrew Estleye, John d'Engaine, Nicholas Meynill and William Latimer the younger, to name just a few.<sup>53</sup> Yet further still, by examining the Falkirk rolls it can also be determined, to some certain degree, the status of at least thirteen individuals through the valuation of their mounts.

Five of the Anglo-French war veterans serving in the royal household at Falkirk had their horses valued as destriers, ranging in price from an unusually low 6 marks to the customary £40. They included the likes of Hugh Despenser, William Canteloupe, William Grandison, John Botetourt, and John de la Mare. Two knights banneret in addition to this list had their horses valued at similar prices but not, it would seem, quite up to the quality of a destrier: John Tregoz for a 25 mark Welsh pony, and Gilbert Pecche for a 30 mark *equis*.<sup>54</sup> Six knights banneret served outside of the royal household at Falkirk, four of which had their horses valued as destriers, ranging in value from 30 to 50 marks; these knights were Thomas Furnival, Nicholas Meynill, Roger Mortimer, and Ralph Bassett. A further two knights, William de Rye and Hugh Bardolf, had their horses valued at 20 and 50 marks respectively, but again these were not deemed to be worthy of the title of destrier by the king's clerks.<sup>55</sup>

The failure to class these specific mounts as destriers may have been an oversight by the clerks for the value matched that of their counterparts' chargers. However, the fact that they were not listed as so may say more about the status and prestige of the knights. William de Rye, for example, had not reached the social and economic standing of knight banneret in 1298, whilst Hugh Bardolf had only recently returned from his imprisonment in France, having been captured at the siege of Rions in 1295; as a result of the expected high cost of his ransom, Bardolf may have been unable, or perhaps unwilling to find the necessary finances for an expensive warhorse, certainly if Crown compensation was to allude him.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Scotland in 1298*, 140, 144, 146, 154.

<sup>54</sup> *Scotland in 1298*, 131-157, 166, 203.

<sup>55</sup> *Scotland in 1298*, 211, 221-226.

<sup>56</sup> *RG*, iii, 101.

Although only a small cross-reference of the entire heavy cavalry that served in Gascony can be deduced from their continued military service at Falkirk, the evidence provided in the roll of arms and horse valuation list suggests that the knights that can be identified were an experienced unit of some significant social standing. What becomes clear to see, however, is that many household knights were victims of the slow process of *restaur*, which was further reflected in the value of their warhorses. Only one destrier out of nine belonging to the Anglo-French war veterans at Falkirk (that of John de la Mare's) reached the expected value of £40. This was almost certainly due to the legacy of high horse fatality rates during the Gascon expeditions.

By 1297 the total Crown expenditure attributed to *restaur* in Gascony came to £25,816, or 69% of the total pay allocated to the heavy cavalry of English household knights alone.<sup>57</sup> Yet of course, the heavy cavalry was not solely composed of English household knights and in fact a large proportion of Edward's cavalry force — domestically and overseas — consisted of both Gascon and Aragonese knights banneret or bachelor.<sup>58</sup> Their contribution to the war effort in Gascony was certainly significant for not only did they suffer high horse fatalities as a result of their operational role, but by examining the *restauro equorum* accounts it is clear to see that their compensation was a severely long and overdue process.

### **Gascon and Aragonese Losses**

Claims of *restaur* were usually a lengthy process often taking years to be resolved. Proof of loss (presumably on the production of the branded portion of the warhorses hide, or *signum*), compensation claims from the deceased relatives residing overseas, as well as a lack of Crown funds, all added to the complexities of the process and, ultimately, the backlog of requests.<sup>59</sup> Yet by examining the *restauro equorum* accounts it becomes apparent that Edward's heavy cavalry in Gascony was, predominantly, made-up of locally recruited mounted warriors; this was a key source of

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<sup>57</sup> *RG*, iii, clxviii.

<sup>58</sup> *RG*, iii, clxvii-clxix.

<sup>59</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/67: 162; Spencer, 'The comital military retinue', 49; Lambert, *Shipping the Medieval Military*, 98; G.P. Baker, 'Sir Robert Knolles' Expedition to France in 1370: New Perspectives', in *Military Communities*, 150.

recruitment that would continue into the reigns of Edward II and Edward III. Further still, some of these locally sourced units were of considerable social standing, as demonstrated by their chargers, and they would also go on to offer the same level of itinerant military service as their English counterparts.

For example, in January 1300 it was confirmed by John Droxford that Pascal Valentin, the *Adaliz* of Aragon, was still owed — as confirmed by the letters of the earl of Lincoln — £1,637 21*d.* ‘for wages and compensation for horses’ which he had accrued whilst in the king’s service in Gascony. Although there does seem to be some effort made by the Crown to pay these sums, by 1310 the *Adaliz* had accumulated further debts, this time for services rendered in Scotland under Edward II. It was confirmed in 1318 that the *Adaliz* had indeed lost a ‘grey dappled destrier’, valued at £23 5*s.* 4*d.* yet this was far too late to be of any benefit for the *Adaliz* had died in 1312. It was left to his brother, Valenti de Ispannia, to claim a solitary payment of 100 marks from the sums owed by the Crown to the deceased *almogaver*.<sup>60</sup>

Arnold de Valac was another Gascon ally of Edward I. Yet, having been dispossessed of both his equipment and warhorse (‘son harneys et son chival’), by his former retinue leader, Bernard de Lesparre — who had become the ‘king’s enemy’ and joined the Capetian cause — Valac found himself petitioning the Crown in the wake of the Anglo-French war for compensation.<sup>61</sup> The list of Gascons petitioning for compensation from 1297 is extensive. This suggests that they had been at the forefront of the fighting during the previous three years, accumulating a high rate of horse fatalities through the rigours of life in and around the siege. Although some individuals may have occasioned horse losses by venturing too close to the walls of a besieged garrison, becoming the target of crossbowmen, archers, and stone-hurling weaponry, it is most likely, as Bryce Lyon notes, that horses were lost through ‘accident or from sickness’, particularly in this instance if they had been marched across the difficult terrain of the Pyrenees late in the year towards the Garonne.<sup>62</sup> The *chevauchée* of

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<sup>60</sup> *CPR, 1292-1301*, 489; *RG*, iii, clxxiii; ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/32: 180; *CCR, 1307-1313*, 412.

<sup>61</sup> TNA SC8/288/14372.

<sup>62</sup> B. Lyon, ‘The Failed Flemish Campaign of Edward I in 1297: A case study of efficient logistics and inadequate military planning’, in *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent*, 59 (2005), 41.

1297 would also have taken its toll — just as it would in 1355 — as the landscape, coupled with a lack of water supplies and fresh pastures in which to graze led to ‘accidents, exhaustion, disease or malnourishment’.<sup>63</sup>

The timing of these claims also suggests that the Gascon knights were hoping to obtain the compensation that was available to them as paid recruits before the war was over and Edward’s attention (and finances) turned to the northern front in Flanders. It is clear to see how the large sum of more than £25,000 in claims of *restaur* was reached: Sanchotus Derudy de Aspa claimed £627 14*d.*, Brask de Tardetz claimed £294 15*s.* 4*d.*, and Bernard de Bessavatz for £262 6*s.* 9*d.*, whilst both Guillaud de Saint-Martin and Arnaud Sanz, lord of Tardetz, claimed just over £200 each ‘por gages et restor de chevaux’.<sup>64</sup> The process of petitioning for *restaur*, however, does not seem to have deterred many Gascons from offering their military services across Edward’s inter-frontal warzones; service for their liege lord was honourable, but the promise of landed wealth through good military service was also an incentive.<sup>65</sup>

Over a hundred Gascon nobles would take part in the Falkirk campaign as part of the royal household, including Amanieu VII Albret, Pons de Castillon, Arnold de Lungaynes and Pierre-Amanieu, captal de Buch.<sup>66</sup> These were knights banneret of considerable social standing, and all four knights were in possession of destriers (although the only one valued at £40 was Albret’s).<sup>67</sup> Again, it is clear to see that the vast majority of arrayed warhorses prior to the battle of Falkirk did not reach anywhere near the expected value that a destrier should, which points to the fact that even though household knights were in receipt of Crown wages, and could therefore receive compensation for any losses accrued in battle, they were reluctant to bring their most expensive mounts most likely on account of the slow process of petitioning for, and actually receiving, compensation.

The reliance upon Gascon nobles was not unique to Edward I’s campaign overseas, and neither was the slow process in which finances were delivered to them, in both wages and horse

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<sup>63</sup> Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 72-73.

<sup>64</sup> *RG*, iii, clxiii.

<sup>65</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 205.

<sup>66</sup> Morris, *Welsh Wars*, 87; *Scotland in 1298*, 143.

<sup>67</sup> *Scotland in 1298*, 167, 204-205.

compensation. For example, during the war of St Sardos more than one hundred Gascon knights banneret pledged their allegiance to Edward II's cause. Crown expenditure was considerably lower for the 1324 conflict than it had been during 1294-97, although Edward II's government had set aside £65,000 for the engagement, however, by March 1325 only £20,441 had arrived in Bordeaux.<sup>68</sup> Even then, Gascon nobles only began receiving their due wages between May 1327 and September 1329, which would make claims of *restaur* almost impossible.<sup>69</sup> In 1328, for example, the two brothers, Arnaut and Roman de Claverie, petitioned the Crown at Bordeaux for the 'restor' of their horses lost in the king's service at Puymirol and Bazas, whilst at the same time the knight bachelor, William Aimeric, although expressing his desire to continue to serve, claimed that a large sum of money was owed to him 'de les gages et de pert des chevaux'.<sup>70</sup>

The accumulation of requests meant that Gascon knights were still petitioning for the compensation of their lost horses well into the reign of Edward III. For instance, in 1331 Guilhem de Berrenys, Pey de Montcaut, Pey de Galard, Guilhem-Amaniu de Pommiers, and Arnaut-Gassie de Thouars, were all still due *restaur* from the war of St Sardos.<sup>71</sup> And in 1342 Pey de Cazalis of Bellegarde, Bernat de Toulouse, and Guilhem Barbe, the mayor of Bourg, would all request 'replacement of horses' for their participation in Edward III's early Gascon campaigns.<sup>72</sup> It is worth adding here that Guilhem Barbe had most likely purchased the office of mayor, a common occurrence particularly amongst French officials where they were known to have 'farmed' their office.<sup>73</sup> Guilhem was the younger brother of Aiquart Barbe, clerk to Edward II, who was retained by the Crown at 100*l.t.* a year, and at 30*s.t.* a day for his expenses, and with family members in influential positions, it is not difficult to see how a knight, such as Guilhem, could have purchased his way into the higher echelons of society.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 236-237.

<sup>69</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 237.

<sup>70</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/40: 56 and 56.1; TNA SC8/39/1932; TNA SC8/288/14380.

<sup>71</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/43: 211 and 212.

<sup>72</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/54: 180, 180.2, 180.3, 180.4.

<sup>73</sup> Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 37.

<sup>74</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/42: 27, C61/32: 216, C61/36: 236.

The geographical aspect of warfare may have had some bearing on the allocation of funding. For example, during Edward II's Scottish wars the Spanish mercenary troops (the *almogavers*) of Valenti de Ispannia were paid far more promptly than their counterparts in Gascony. In 1312, for instance, Valenti received 16 marks in *restaur* for the loss of a bay horse at Dundee, whilst his supporting knight, Gonçal de la Roca, received 100s.; in 1313 Valenti's mounted retinue was also paid around £33 for garrison service at Berwick, and in 1314, part of the £70 19s. 4d. was paid in compensation for the loss of six horses at Stirling whilst in the company of Aymer de Valence.<sup>75</sup>

Yet the explanation for Edward II's compensation for the *almogavers* in Scotland was more than certainly due to the nature of their military service. These were mercenary troops and had only contracted to serve on the promise of payment, they could threaten to withdraw from the conflict should their terms not be kept. Furthermore, Edward II was in a financially stable position in the early part of his reign and, having sworn at his knighting ceremony in 1306 'that he would not rest two nights in the same place' until Robert Bruce was defeated, may also suggest that the Scottish matter was one of higher priority than that of the war of St Sardos.<sup>76</sup> Victory in Scotland was certainly at the forefront of English military strategy at the start of the fourteenth century, and it was during the mass knighting ceremony at the palace of Westminster in 1306 (The Feast of Swans) where individuals — whose fathers had been knights — were ordered to come forward by the county sheriffs so they could be 'provided with the necessary equipment from the royal wardrobe'.<sup>77</sup> Around three hundred young men were knighted by Edward I at the ceremony, including his own son who had his spurs attached by both Henry de Lacy and Humphrey de Bohun.<sup>78</sup>

The allocation of funds during wartime, however, was certainly an issue, and even when the quality of warhorse had seemingly reached its apogee between 1324 and 1350, according to Ayton, English armies (along with their Gascon and Aragonese allies) were turning to different forms of battlefield strategy: the dismounted man-at-arms and the strategically positioned longbowman.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/32: 180.

<sup>76</sup> Phillips, *Edward II*, 111; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 236.

<sup>77</sup> Phillips, *Edward II*, 109; *CCR, 1302-1307*, 434, 438.

<sup>78</sup> Phillips, *Edward II*, 110-111.

<sup>79</sup> Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 195.

Matthew Raven has suggested that ‘the Crown was almost always committed to paying out far greater sums than it actually had in cash’ in times of war, and when this is set against a series of cavalry failures across Western Europe from Bannockburn and Courtrai, to Crécy and Poitiers, then what was the incentive to maintain high cavalry numbers?’<sup>80</sup>

### **Demilitarising the English Heavy Cavalry**

Although Edward had been a traditionalist in battlefield tactics, particularly when it came to deploying the heavy cavalry in a domestic setting, the realities of maintaining large and well-equipped mounted units in the field became all too apparent throughout the reigns of Edward II and Edward III. The pressures the Crown faced when financing a war, certainly during an overseas one, were compounded by the introduction of wages and topped-off by the promise of *restaure* which were all part of a ‘package’ of military terms.<sup>81</sup>

High calibre horses were also expensive and in theory a top-quality warhorse could equate to the same value as the landed wealth of the knight bachelor who was involved in Edward’s distraint of knighthood. When this is factored in with the hazards attributed to battlefield encounters there was almost certainly less incentive to risk a prized destrier, certainly as compensation was hard to come by. It should therefore come as no surprise that ‘by the middle of the fourteenth century’, according to Ayton, ‘the warhorse no longer occupied a place of primary importance in the military practice of the English’, and in fact, during the siege of Calais in the aftermath of the Crécy campaign many knights were ‘keen to send their expensive horseflesh back to England’, rather than risk the inevitable financial losses.<sup>82</sup> Needless to say, horses of any calibre would have been entirely useless and completely vulnerable outside the walls of a well-defended town.

The change in the operational role of the English heavy cavalry had developed through their own unfortunate experiences, coupled with numerical inferiority and in the declining number of knights taking part in campaigns; English armies subsequently took up defensive positions on the

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<sup>80</sup> M. Raven, ‘Financing the Dynamics of Recruitment: King, Earls and Government in Edwardian England, 1330-60’, in *Military Communities*, 107; Davis, *Medieval Warhorse*, 90-91.

<sup>81</sup> Ayton, ‘English Armies in the Fourteenth Century’, in *Arms, Armies and Fortifications*, 23.

<sup>82</sup> Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 22, 73.

battlefield in France having perfected the tactical role of the longbowmen and, therefore, had numbed the threat of the French cavalry charge.<sup>83</sup> The immediate catalyst for change came after the ‘grim slaughter’ at Bannockburn less than two decades after the victory at Falkirk.<sup>84</sup> Yet, whereas at Falkirk the Scottish military leaders (including William Wallace) had left the field prior to the end of the battle, abandoning the ordinary soldier to the English heavy cavalry charge, at Bannockburn the use of marshy ground riddled with pot-holes was used to their advantage in order to slow down the English cavalry advance.<sup>85</sup> The constricted landscape meant that the heavy cavalry could not break through the ‘mass of spears’ and many knights, including the earl of Gloucester, were subsequently killed by ‘the press of men and horses’.<sup>86</sup> Of course, English armies under Edward III would learn from the lessons of Bannockburn.

According to Bennett, English armies, having fought together for a season or over several years, quickly learnt ‘how to combine horse, foot and missile weapons to best effect’, as most significantly demonstrated at Poitiers.<sup>87</sup> Their French counterparts, on the other hand, maintained the cavalry charge throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, yet by persisting with the chivalric custom the French aristocracy were dealt a series of humiliating defeats. Courtrai, Crécy and Agincourt are three of the more infamous occasions where the cavalry was defeated by “lowly peasants” through their use of projectile weaponry and pre-battle choice of terrain; the Florentine chronicler, Giovanni Villani, had even claimed shortly after the battle at Crécy that on leaving the field “there were no French horses which were not wounded”.<sup>88</sup>

And even though La Gravelle, in 1423, gave the French commander, Jean d’Harcourt, a short-lived victory against the English longbow, the following year at Verneuil a Franco-Italian cavalry force (although successful in shattering the English line) returned to the field of battle to find that the duke of Bedford’s men-at-arms and mounted archers had quickly taken the upper hand in the ensuing

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<sup>83</sup> Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 18.

<sup>84</sup> Phillips, *Edward II*, 232.

<sup>85</sup> MacDonald, ‘Fear and Experience’, 204-206; Phillips, *Edward II*, 231.

<sup>86</sup> Phillips, *Edward II*, 231-232.

<sup>87</sup> Bennett, ‘The Development of Battle Tactics’, 2.

<sup>88</sup> Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 220; C. Phillips, ‘The French Plan of Battle during the Agincourt Campaign’, *The English Historical Review*, 99:390 (January, 1984), 59-66.

mêlée; according to Michael K. Jones, Verneuil for the English was ‘an extraordinary recovery, seizing victory out of the jaws of defeat’.<sup>89</sup>

### Summary and Observations

The aim of this study has been to ascertain the operational role and martial capabilities of Edward’s heavy cavalry in Gascony. The study has demonstrated that there was a significant household contingent present, of both bannerets and bachelors, who would serve throughout the entirety of the campaign, or would complete one term of service (that being a single expedition) before being summoned to another front in Edward’s inter-frontal warzones. Closer inspection of the *restauro equorum* accounts has also highlighted the significant contingent of Gascon and Aragonese knights (and mercenaries) involved in the Anglo-French war, as well as in the subsequent campaigns of Edward II and Edward III. Judging by their requests for horse compensation in the Anglo-French war alone it would seem that they were an active force who suffered high rates of horse fatalities prior to 1297. Moreover, Edward’s heavy cavalry were, for the most part, an experienced unit having served in Wales throughout the 1270s and 1280s. And given that the Vegetian cavalry charge had been a main feature of Edwardian battlefield strategy from the 1260s, it should be expected that the household knights banneret, at the very least, could coordinate and conduct an effective strategy, should they have faced Robert of Artois’ army in the field.

This, however, is only a hypothetical theory, and in fact the main operational role of the cavalry force in Gascony was one of long-distance field movement, frontier patrol, garrison, and naval service, as well as raiding. Furthermore, during the protracted sieges in Gascony the heavy cavalry could be deployed within an ‘auxiliary’ capacity in a similar manner to the nimbler hobelar (see chapter eight).<sup>90</sup> The heavy cavalry’s involvement in these particular roles would reflect those of subsequent English armies to Gascony in the mid-fourteenth century, such as when Henry Grosmont focussed his expedition on the ‘capture of fortresses and plunder’.<sup>91</sup> Yet, they were also traditional

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<sup>89</sup> Jones, ‘The Battle of Verneuil (17 August 1424)’, 375-411.

<sup>90</sup> Bachrach, ‘*Caballus et Cabballerius*’, 173-211.

<sup>91</sup> Curry, ‘The Hundred Years War’, 88.

features of early medieval cavalry units. At Hastings, for instance, Harold Godwinson's march south from York could only have been achieved by 'elite troops with horses', whilst William, duke of Normandy, had deployed his cavalry forces on reconnaissance to 'learn more about the lie of the land', while conducting 'pre-battle ravaging' with the intention of goading Harold into an engagement.<sup>92</sup>

The operational role of Edward's heavy cavalry in Gascony was nothing out of the ordinary. The absence of a pitched battle during the Anglo-French war was only highlighted due to its popular use in Edwardian battle strategy, particularly at Lewes, Evesham, Falkirk, and fatally at Bannockburn. Casualty rates amongst the elite were high in all four of these encounters, even when the Crown was victorious, and to have suffered similar losses overseas would have undeniably proven catastrophic both for Edward's chances of regaining the dukedom in the later 1290s, but also in Edward III's ambitions to obtain the French Crown. Inevitably the reliance upon a decisive cavalry charge began to subside, according to Hefferan, as the military strategy of English kings centred around 'the swift raiding of enemy territory with mounted troops... coupled with set-piece battles that increasingly relied on archers working in tandem with dismounted men-at-arms to systematically overpower an opponent'.<sup>93</sup>

The study has been able to offer a window into the social standing of the veteran of the Anglo-French war through a closer look at the Falkirk roll of arms and horse valuation roll, as well as within the chivalric representation of some of the knights who had previously served in Gascony and were to take part in the Caerlaverock campaign. Initial impressions point to an itinerant force (as some of the English and Gascon knights had served throughout Wales, Gascony, Flanders, and Scotland) as well as to a group of knights banneret and bachelor of significant prestige (represented by their martial prowess, coupled with the value of their mounts). This would suggest that the military elite in Gascony had distinguished themselves to some considerable degree, as demonstrated by the rise of John Botetourt in particular.<sup>94</sup> However, what is apparent is that many of the Anglo-French war

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<sup>92</sup> Bates, *William the Conqueror*, 234-238.

<sup>93</sup> Hefferan, *The Household Knights of Edward III*, 93.

<sup>94</sup> Botetourt's allegiance wavered during Edward II's reign when he had 'served as a spokesman for the baronial cause following Gaveston's death, in which he was involved'. Botetourt would later escape abroad when

veterans were either reluctant to bring their most valuable horse flesh to battle, most likely a result of the slow process of *restaur*, or they were unable to do so through a lack of funds (a product of the distraint of knighthood), or the lack of quality horses available (as seen with Edward's importation of valuable horses after the second Welsh war).

The rising physical and financial costs attributed to cavalry losses would certainly contribute to a change in strategy for English armies; throughout the Hundred Years War English armies, according to R.J. Moore-Colyer, would 'come to rely on infantry forces rather than the cavalryman', and by due process the "great horse" became 'obsolete for cavalry purposes'.<sup>95</sup> In contrast to Edward I's heavy cavalry, English knights under Edward III chose to dismount prior to battle, rather than risk the financial implications attributed to *restaur*; in the process the knight would 'bolster the lines of foot soldiers, both physically and in terms of morale', yet at the same time the knight resigned himself to 'the same outcome as the *pedites*'.<sup>96</sup> The suggestions that the aristocratic elite became demilitarised as a result would certainly fit within this framework; from the late 1330s through to 1342-43, for example, 'only around a quarter of the 1,500 or so men-at-arms had been knights', and by the very end of the Hundred Years War 'barely any knights were being recruited', according to Bell.<sup>97</sup> This has been demonstrated in the retinue of Sir Thomas Kyriel during 1450 who lead a retinue of just 99 men-at-arms into defeat at Formigny, while Viscount Lisle's retinue of just '2 bannerets, 4 knights, and 74 men-at-arms' joined Lord Talbot at Castillon in 1453.<sup>98</sup>

Any signs of demilitarisation in Edward I's armies, however, is limited, as demonstrated in this chapter by the wide involvement of knights banneret and bachelor taking part in Edward's domestic and overseas wars. Notably, English knights were called upon for military service no less than thirteen times for the king's campaigns in Wales, Scotland, Gascony, and Flanders, between 1294 and 1307, compared to just 3 campaigns in the first twenty-two years of the reign.<sup>99</sup> The

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Edward II ordered his arrest. See Given-Wilson, *Fourteenth-Century England II*, 3; Dodd and Musson, *Reign of Edward II*, 93.

<sup>95</sup> R.J. Moore-Colyer, 'Horse Supply and the British Cavalry: A Review, 1066-1900', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 70:284 (1992), 246.

<sup>96</sup> Jones, *Bloodied Banners*, 16.

<sup>97</sup> Bell, et. al., *Soldier in Later Medieval England*, 55-59.

<sup>98</sup> Bell, et. al., *Soldier in Later Medieval England*, 59.

<sup>99</sup> Spencer, 'The comital military retinue', 46.

introduction of the distraint of knighthood, at varying intervals throughout Edward's reign, was a way of increasing the number of knights in times of war and therefore forming a highly effective cavalry force, as pointed out by Morris and Powicke, rather than highlighting a decline in knighthood.

Furthermore, at Falkirk alone over a hundred bannerets were listed in the roll of arms, many having made the journey especially from Gascony to take part in the campaign such were the ties of feudal bonds, as well as the incentives of Crown wages.<sup>100</sup> Overall, it must be acknowledged that the heavy cavalry of the later 1290s was a conventional mounted unit, one that was in its prime due to Edward's ambition to strengthen this force at an early stage in his reign. Significantly, it was still to play a key part in English battlefield strategy after the Gascon campaign.

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<sup>100</sup> Prestwich, 'Edward I's armies', 234.

## Seven

### “Bind yourselves to live and to die together”: The Angevin policy of encirclement renewed

By the late summer of 1297, the Anglo-French war had entered a new phase. The main theatre of war — at Edward’s instigation — had now shifted dramatically from Gascony towards Flanders and the north-eastern frontier of Philip IV’s territory. This third and final phase of the war began to see the rivalries between England and France spill over into a wider Western European context. So far, the thesis has focused upon the military strategy of the king of England in Gascony yet, as the conflict ground to a steady halt after the ambush at Bellegarde and the earl of Lincoln’s *chevauchée*, a new *modus operandi* was pursued. Edward would lead the Flanders expedition in person, but the king’s ignorance towards the region’s political tensions, coupled with French military superiority and an increasing network of inter-frontal warzones stretching from Gascony to Scotland, severely hampered any chances of success.



Map 2. The Low Countries during the late thirteenth century.

This chapter will aim to develop our understanding of Edward's intentions to form an alliance of continental European princes: it will lay-out the basis for Edward's league, in the process highlighting the influence for the enterprise — namely the Angevin policy of encirclement that had begun under Richard I and King John — before addressing the inevitable successes and failures of the expedition. Philip's intentions to check Edward's progress through a series of counter-alliances, impacting upon Edward's domestic and continental ambitions, will also be explored. Yet despite Philip's interventions, the events in Flanders would do more to bring about the end of hostilities in Gascony than anything that had taken place during the first or second expeditions; the scramble for allies which ensued would finally lead to the peace treaty at Vye-St-Bavon by the end of the year. The end of the Anglo-French war, however, did not mark the end for Plantagenet alliance making. For this reason, the study will demonstrate how Edward's grand alliance was renewed and adapted during successive continental wars, firstly by Edward II in the war of St Sardos, and then by Edward III from 1337.

### **The Flanders Initiative**

From the outbreak of the Anglo-French war Edward's intention had always been to campaign in person alongside his allies on Philip's north-eastern border.<sup>1</sup> This strategy was to form a pincer movement; the expeditionary forces were to hold Gascony, making inroads where they could, whilst a coalition army composed of Edward and his allies were to draw Philip's army to the far north of his kingdom. To have achieved this at an early stage of the Anglo-French war would have required domestic peace in the British Isles, or something close to stability. Edward was unable to leave England in 1294 due to the Welsh uprising, and neither could he depart in 1295 or 1296 because of increasing political and military tensions in Scotland. Domestic issues were the foremost hindrance to Edward's plans for a grand alliance, they would play a large part in the events which forced Adolf of Nassau, the Holy Roman Emperor, and Edward's greatest ally, to open negotiations for peace with

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<sup>1</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 381.

Philip IV in May 1297, while the Franco-Scottish treaty, or Auld-Alliance, caused the greatest threat to England's northern frontier: the Auld-Alliance's objectives and efficacy will be discussed shortly.<sup>2</sup>

It was not until mid-1297 that Edward was able to fulfil his ambition to leave for the continent but even then, this was under a cloud of instability. Both the marshal and constable of England, Roger Bigod and Humphrey de Bohun, the earls of Norfolk and Hereford, along with Archbishop Winchelsey, had abandoned Edward's cause. The former argued that they were not obliged to fight in Flanders, for 'they nor their predecessors or ancestors ever did service in this land' (unlike in Gascony), whilst Winchelsey refused the war tax on the grounds that it breached the papal bull, *Clericis Laicos*, which had forbidden the clergy from paying taxes to secular rulers in order to supplement their ambitions for war.<sup>3</sup> There were also claims of neglect of the clauses of both Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest for which the commonalty, voiced by the baronage and the Church, had felt 'greatly aggrieved'.<sup>4</sup> Edward must have been under remarkable pressure to remain in England during what was, undoubtedly, a turbulent period in English government. According to Andy King, England 'teetered on the cliff-edge of civil war', yet Edward did not let this hinder the first real opportunity to open the third phase of the Anglo-French war; Edward perfectly demonstrated both resolve and ambition, while he was also obstinate in the face of political backlash.<sup>5</sup>

Edward's arrival in Flanders on 22 August 1297 shows clear similarities with the first and second expeditionary forces that embarked for Gascony, despite arriving with a considerably larger force. The 273 ships that arrived in the Zwyn estuary carrying the royal army consisted of a wholly paid force numbering 895 cavalry and around 8,000 infantry troops, made up of archers and foot-soldiers: Edward's efforts to impose restraint of knighthood at £20 during the muster had been abandoned due to the confrontation with the earls of Norfolk and Hereford over precedence,

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<sup>2</sup> G. Barraclough, 'Edward I and Adolf of Nassau. A Chapter of Mediaeval Diplomatic History', *The Cambridge Historical Journal*, 6:3 (1940), 243-244; *Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, A1296/2/1, [www.rps.ac.uk](http://www.rps.ac.uk), [accessed 18 January 2021].

<sup>3</sup> *EHD*, 1189-1327, 472; *PROME*, 'Edward I: Lent 1297', [accessed 7 March 2019]; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 406

<sup>4</sup> *EHD*, 1189-1327, 472. The 1297 June/July parliament was most likely used to discuss the granting of a subsidy to the king for his Flanders expedition in return for the confirmation of the charters. *PROME*, 'Edward I: Summer 1297', [accessed 7 March 2019].

<sup>5</sup> *Documents Illustrating the Crisis of 1297-98*, 1; King, 'Crisis? What Crisis?', 163, 172.

according to Bartholomew Cotton.<sup>6</sup> Once in Flanders Prestwich has suggested that the expedition became ‘anticlimactic’, achieving far less from a military point of view than the “futile” campaign in Gascony.<sup>7</sup> The most notable fighting came between the royal fleets’ crew on arrival, and although the Bury St Edmunds chronicler had laid the blame with Portuguese sailors trading out of Flanders, claiming that they had ‘burnt seventeen ships... and cruelly butchered the sailors’, it was in fact a localised dispute, born out of rivalry, between the sailors of Yarmouth and those of the Cinque Ports.<sup>8</sup>

That the Flanders expedition has been viewed as a disappointment is certainly no understatement. A battlefield encounter had surely been Edward’s primary motivational factor for leading a force to Flanders in the first place, and for a clear military victory not to have taken place must be marked as a failure in the king of England’s strategy. What was perhaps most irritating for Edward was that he had arrived shortly after the battle of Furnes (20 August 1297), which had set the scene for one of Robert of Artois’ great victories against a Flemish-German army under the command of Edward’s seventy-year-old ally, Guy Dampierre, Count of Flanders.<sup>9</sup> The count’s grandson, Willem van Jülich the elder, was the most notable death during the battle, and five days later Artois accepted the surrender of Lille: the Flanders initiative was, according to Prestwich, ‘already half-lost’ by the time Edward set foot on Flemish soil.<sup>10</sup>

However, pitched battles were a rare occurrence — as highlighted throughout the study — and the efficacy and finality of armed combat should not be overplayed. Siege warfare and the control of fortifications or walled towns was a far more effective way of securing a stranglehold over an area (see chapter eight for further discussion), as became the common pattern of warfare in Gascony, and Edward was far too experienced in military strategy to have pinned all his hopes on the outcome of a battlefield encounter, one that hinged on the competence of his continental allies: allies which he had

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<sup>6</sup> Lyon, ‘The Failed Flemish Campaign of Edward I’, 34; *EHD, 1189-1327*, 207, 210, 215; *Knighton*, 369; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 381, 392; N.B. Lewis, ‘The English Forces in Flanders, August-November 1297’, *Studies in Medieval History presented to F.M. Powicke*, eds., R.W. Hunt, W.A. Pantin and R.W. Southern, (Oxford, 1948), 310-318.

<sup>7</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 381.

<sup>8</sup> *EHD, 1189-1327*, 215; *Rishanger*, 25; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 392.

<sup>9</sup> *Chronique Artésienne*, 15; M. Prestwich, ‘Edward I and Adolf of Nassau’, *Thirteenth Century England III: Proceedings of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Conference 1989*, eds., P.R. Coss and S.D. Lloyd, (Woodbridge, 1991), 128; Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 392.

yet to see arrayed in the field. Despite what may have seemed like an aimless exercise, the Flanders expedition — as the final phase of the Anglo-French war — should best be judged by its diplomatic successes (and failures, for there are some of note), as well as in its immediate tactical achievement. The news of Edward's imminent arrival had led to the withdrawal of Artois' army from Gascony, which in turn had eased the pressures on both the earl of Lincoln, despite his very own attempts to draw the French lieutenant to battle, as well as the Anglo-Gascon garrisons.

Edward's greatest feat in 1297 was most certainly his plans to unite a coalition of European princes against Philip IV. It was an ambitious plan which stretched, according to Charles Bémont, from Germany to beyond the Pyrenees.<sup>11</sup> More specifically, in the words of Powicke, Edward had hoped to 'range the princes of the Rhineland and Netherlands against King Philip'.<sup>12</sup> The main figureheads for Edward's grand alliance included the Holy Roman Emperor, Adolf of Nassau, King of Germany; the aforementioned count of Flanders; the count of Holland, Florence V (and primary claimant to the Scottish throne); Duke John II of Brabant; Henry, Count of Bar; and a group of Burgundian noblemen led by Jean de Chalon-Arlay.<sup>13</sup>

This was far from a randomly selected group of wealthy, and militarily influential, princes and lords though (supported by such mercantile cities as Antwerp, Ypres, and Douai), rather it was a carefully orchestrated league encouraged by the bishop of Durham, Anthony Bek, who was supported in his attempts to persuade Edward by the English nobility while they were gathered for the council meeting in 1294.<sup>14</sup> Notably these types of "leagues" would become a common occurrence when European powers were faced with the same enemy; the "Holy League" of 1511, for instance, formed as a result of Louis XII's military gains in Northern Italy, as well as the French king's ambitions to remove the pope, Julius II. The collective powers of Spain, Venice, the Papal States, and the Holy Roman Empire, joined a coalition to curb the incursions of the king of France, bringing the nineteen-year-old king of England, Henry VIII, into the fold. The Holy League urged Henry to win "praise and

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<sup>11</sup> *RG*, iii, cxxxii.

<sup>12</sup> Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, 658.

<sup>13</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 387-389; E.B. Fryde, *Studies in Medieval Trade and Finance* (London, 1983), II, 1172-1173. For Florence's claim to the Scottish throne see Durham Archives Special Collections, writ for claimants to the Scottish throne, 2.2. Regalia 9.

<sup>14</sup> *Knighton*, 369-371.

glory” by invading France, while the English king’s nobles also encouraged Henry to take the initiative. Henry needed little persuading, however, and in 1512 and 1513 the young king waged two campaigns in France where he firstly aimed (but ultimately failed) to recover the Plantagenet lands of Gascony, before reviving the claims of Edward III as rightful king of France during the Tournai campaign.<sup>15</sup>

In comparison, the alliance of 1297 was drawn together by marriage and familial links, a dependency on the export trade of English wool, but perhaps most significantly through the prospect of large subsidies being granted by Edward and the English exchequer. The payment of large subsidies would end up being Edward’s biggest mistake, for he paid large proportions to his continental allies up front before any military action had been taken, and then would fail to pay the rest that was owed when the war was finally over. Although the domestic political unrest had not unnerved Edward prior to his departure, his dealings with the coalition powers betrays a level of anxiety and naivety in the king’s plans; Edward would inevitably purchase allies at a high price before seeing any evidence of their commitment, yet perhaps this is understandable.

Not only was Edward spearheading a campaign in person for the first time on the continent, but he was also dealing with the military elite of Western Europe on the international stage. It was to be expected that the allies would have been far from enthusiastic, if not completely reluctant, to enter a war against Philip IV should the English king have been unable to bankroll the initiative, and neither could Edward afford to lose the loyalty of his Flemish allies (along with the ports in which they controlled, and where Edward intended to land his army): the promise of large subsidies was Edward’s way of purchasing a foothold in the region. This is in stark contrast to the first expedition to Gascony where Edward had simply ordered his commanders to lay siege to, and take back, what was once in Plantagenet possession.

According to Langtoft, Anthony Bek had urged Edward to “Seek for thyself friends with power of money, The king of Allemaigne, the bishop of Cologne, The king of the Aragonese, that he keep not aloof from thee, The count of Savoy, the count of Burgundy, And then deal with Philip,

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<sup>15</sup> N. Murphy, ‘Henry VIII’s First Invasion of France: The Gascon Expedition of 1512’, *The English Historical Review*, 130:542 (February, 2015), 25-26.

without further difficulty”. This was supported by the barons who had expressed their will that Edward “Send messengers to the king of the Alemains, And write by letter to the king of the Arragonese, And to all the others who are before named; Bind yourselves to live and to die together. If thou wilt succeed, spare no money. So great force and power has the king of France, That thou hast no other way of recovering thy fees”.<sup>16</sup> Although this report by Langtoft is far from solid evidence for the actual events of the council meeting of 1294, it is interesting that Edward would pursue this policy almost to the letter.

It has been proposed that Edward promised his allies a total of £250,000: this would include around £60,000 to Adolf of Nassau; two instalments of 10,000 marks and £2,000 to the archbishop of Cologne for a return of 1,000 cavalrymen; 200,000 *livres tournois* for the count of Flanders, and 80,000 *livres tournois* for the count of Holland.<sup>17</sup> Additional clauses were also added to the agreements, such as the marriage between Edward of Carnarvon and the count of Flanders’ daughter (who was then subsequently held hostage by Philip at the Louvre so the marriage alliance could not take place), whilst Florence V’s allegiance was expected given that he had been the benefactor of a trade deal with the king of England since 1285.<sup>18</sup>

Some alliances were made on the continent as a result of pre-existing marital links. The duke of Brabant, for instance, was married to Edward’s daughter, Margaret, and would offer the military services of 2,000 cavalrymen in return for 200,000 *livres tournois* and £4,000 out of the customs revenue.<sup>19</sup> The marriage between Margaret and John had been negotiated in 1278 when Margaret was just three-years-old, yet in what seems to be impeccable timing the two would not join one another until 1297, seven years after their betrothal had actually taken place.<sup>20</sup> In similar circumstances Margaret’s sister, Elizabeth, who was fourteen-years-old at the time of her marriage to John, Count of Holland, in January 1297, did not pass over to meet her new husband until Edward had left for Flanders, highly suggesting that both marriage alliances were arranged with the intention of

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<sup>16</sup> Langtoft, 203-205.

<sup>17</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 399, 387-388.

<sup>18</sup> *RG*, iii, 218.

<sup>19</sup> *RG*, iii, 588; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 387; *EHD*, 1189-1327, 213.

<sup>20</sup> L.J. Wilkinson, ‘Royal Daughters and Diplomacy at the Court of Edward I’, in *Edward I: New Interpretations*, 87-90.

‘facilitating the king’s military initiatives’ first and foremost; Edward most likely prevented the departure of his daughters to the continent until he could be assured of military aid.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, the count of Bar had also been married to Edward’s eldest daughter Eleanor, since 1293, and had offered 1,000 cavalry for six months service at a cost of around 30,000 marks.<sup>22</sup> Undeniably, Bar would prove to be a militarily strategic asset. The neighbouring region of Champagne had recently become a fiefdom of the kingdom of France through the countess of Navarre’s marriage to Philip IV and the ‘dynastic union’ between the English Crown and the count of Bar, suggests Louise Wilkinson, gave both Edward and Henry ‘a mutual source of support against the Capetians’.<sup>23</sup>

Lesser nobles were also drawn to Edward’s cause purely through monetary incentives. For instance, Edward would offer Jean de Chalon-Arly and the Burgundian noblemen £60,000 for the first year of their assistance, followed by £30,000 for every year that the alliance continued, along with a gift of £2,000.<sup>24</sup> The Burgundians offered in return just 500 cavalymen, yet this is most likely due to the fact that they had not received the agreed amount; it was not until May 1306 that the outstanding sums reached John de Chalon-Arly and his companions.<sup>25</sup> This was not uncommon, for it has been suggested by Prestwich that of the promised £250,000 only £165,000 was actually received by the allies; Fryde was not too wide of the mark when he claimed that Edward I (and later, Edward III) actually promised more to his allies than he could have realistically paid.<sup>26</sup>

The process of building a grand alliance, however, was far from simple for Edward, and even before his arrival some of the king’s allies had announced their neutrality or had abandoned the league, either a result of personal displeasures or the lack of military means to fulfil their own obligations; although Philip’s counter-alliance will be explored in greater detail it is important to note at this juncture the unpredictable nature of European politics. Jaume II of Aragon, for instance, was — after the Treaty of Anagni in 1295 — married to the daughter of Charles of Salerno, and even though

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<sup>21</sup> Wilkinson, ‘Royal Daughters and Diplomacy’, 90-92.

<sup>22</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 389; *EHD*, 1189-1327, 213.

<sup>23</sup> Wilkinson, ‘Royal Daughters and Diplomacy’, 89.

<sup>24</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 389.

<sup>25</sup> *CPR*, 1301-1307, 432.

<sup>26</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 399; Fryde, *Studies in Medieval Trade*, 1169.

he was ‘respected, if not liked, by all the rulers of Western Europe’, he was joined to the Capetian dynasty through marital contract.<sup>27</sup> The Treaty of Anagni had been proposed by Pope Boniface VIII in an attempt to bring to an end the war of the Sicilian Vespers. The formal treaty consisted of a whole host of agreements, but the principal terms involved the return of Sicily to the papacy (having previously belonged to the Crown of Aragon), while Jaume in return was promised Sardinia and Corsica, duly becoming the liegeman of the pope.<sup>28</sup> As a result, Jaume’s hands were tied; the Aragonese king could not have come to Edward’s aid without breaking the treaty with France or the papacy.

Furthermore, at the end of 1295 Florence V would, quite dramatically, abandon Edward’s league entirely, in turn siding with the king of France.<sup>29</sup> It has been suggested by Prestwich that Florence was moved to exchange allies ‘because he resented the favour Edward showed to the duke of Brabant’, yet also because he had been promised ‘a fee of 4,000 *livres* for life, and a lump sum of 25,000 *livres*’ by the king of France.<sup>30</sup> In retaliation, Edward placed a trade embargo on Holland in January 1296, before the count was kidnapped, and later assassinated by a close adherent of the duke of Brabant, John, lord of Cuyck.<sup>31</sup> The *status quo* was ultimately restored when Florence’s Anglophile son, John, renewed the Anglo-Dutch alliance in June 1296 at Dordrecht, before negotiating a compromise with the duke of Brabant at Ipswich in January 1297 in the aftermath of his marriage to Edward’s daughter.<sup>32</sup>

The most notable absence in Edward’s Flanders expedition, and one whose failure to fulfil his military obligations has drawn greatest discussion by historians, is that of Adolf of Nassau. Having been promised a rather exceptional sum of money to form an alliance by Edward, Adolf’s omission from the expedition is somewhat surprising. The first English historian to tackle this issue was

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<sup>27</sup> J.N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms, 1250-1516*, Volume I, (Oxford, 1976), 262-264; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 389-390.

<sup>28</sup> Hillgarth, *Spanish Kingdoms*, 262-264; J. Lee Schneidman, ‘Ending the War of the Sicilian Vespers’, *Journal of Peace Research*, 6:4 (1969), 343.

<sup>29</sup> Cotton, *Historia Anglicana*, 303.

<sup>30</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 388; *Acta Imperii Angliae et Franciae*, ed. F. Kern, (Tübingen, 1911), 279-280.

<sup>31</sup> Cotton, *Historia Anglicana*, 303; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 388.

<sup>32</sup> *Acta Imperii Angliae et Franciae*, 76-77; *Foedera*, 850, 853; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 388-389; TNA C47/29/3/27; *EHD*, 1189-1327, 202-203.

Barraclough during 1940. In his opinion Adolf was the victim of successful French diplomacy and having waited thirty months for Edward's arrival without obtaining 'a single political advantage', he decided to enter peace talks with Philip in May 1297, subsequently accepting 80,000 *livres tournois* to stay away.<sup>33</sup>

The acceptance that Adolf received this large sum, however, has only formed due to the evidence noted within a memorandum acknowledging the German king as an ally of Philip IV, and listing a series of numbers that accumulate to "80".<sup>34</sup> In fact, only five years earlier than Barraclough's study, Vincenz Samanek had concluded that the reference to Adolf in the memorandum was not the Adolf of Nassau associated with Edward's grand alliance but it was instead Albrecht of Habsburg; Albrecht would replace Adolf in 1298 and the two individuals could easily have been confused by someone drafting the memorandum elsewhere, particularly as it seems to have been written between 1304 and the later 1330s.<sup>35</sup>

Recently, both these arguments have come under some scrutiny. Prestwich, for instance, believes that Barraclough's determination of events was based on a random set of figures, and therefore is wholly unreliable, whilst Samanek's "confused" argument is more tempting yet still not completely trustworthy.<sup>36</sup> Instead, Prestwich has viewed Adolf's absence as a product of Edward's failure to pay the complete subsidy payments, coupled with the fact that the Holy Roman Emperor 'faced conspiracy in Germany'; this is also supported by Langtoft's claims that the German king sent word to Edward, who was residing in Ghent, 'That he was overtaken by war, Through which he could not come'.<sup>37</sup> The war that Langtoft refers to derived from an Austrian uprising, led by Albrecht of Habsburg, and culminated in Adolf's death and defeat on the battlefield the following year at Göllheim.<sup>38</sup> This argument makes the question of French bribery less likely, for even if Adolf had

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<sup>33</sup> Barraclough, 'Edward I and Adolf of Nassau', 225-262; F. Funck-Brentano, 'Document pour servir à l'histoire des relations de la France avec l'Angleterre et l'Allemagne sous le règne de Philippe le Bel', *Extrait de la Revue historique* (Paris, 1889), 1-2.

<sup>34</sup> *Documents Illustrating the Crisis of 1297-98*, 33-34.

<sup>35</sup> V. Samanek, "Der angebliche Verrat Adolfs v. Nassau", *Historische Vierteljahrsschrift*, xxix (1935), 302-41; *Documents Illustrating the Crisis of 1297-98*, 34.

<sup>36</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 390; Prestwich, 'Edward I and Adolf of Nassau', 128-129.

<sup>37</sup> Prestwich, 'Edward I and Adolf of Nassau', 133-134; *Langtoft*, 295.

<sup>38</sup> R. Skorka and M. Caples, 'With a Little Help from the Cousins — Charles I and the Habsburgs Dukes of Austria during the Interregnum', *The Hungarian Historical Review*, 2:2, Angevin History (2013), 245.

wanted to he could not have come to Edward's aid while insurrection grew domestically. Prestwich's argument certainly takes on a more considered approach, rather than tempting to put forth conspiracy theories or fanciful ideas for the German king's absence.



Image 7. An eighteenth century French portrait of Adolf of Nassau. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Although Edward's efforts to lead a third expeditionary force to Flanders, with the support of his Low Country allies, never fully materialised in the sense that the king of England was able to take the war onto northern French soil, it was in fact a policy that had precedent amongst kings of England. By 1297 what Edward had embarked upon was, in Vale's terms, a 'coalition of encirclement' begun by his Angevin ancestors; it was one of the last matches 'in a game which had begun under Richard Coeur-de-Lion and Jean Sans Terre', only 'replayed with a larger team by Edward I'.<sup>39</sup> The Angevin policy of encirclement certainly had a great effect upon Edward's military strategy during the Anglo-French war; it can, unquestionably, be viewed as the blueprint for the grand alliance during the third phase of the conflict. Edward exploited marital links and the superiority of the English wool trade to the Low Countries, just as his Angevin ancestors had done, to form bonds of allegiance and to strong-arm would-be allies to his side; the pincer movement that Edward had also envisaged for the start of the Anglo-French war had previously been attempted by John prior to the battle of Bouvines in 1214.

<sup>39</sup> Vale, 'The Anglo-French Wars, 1294-1340', 15-35.

For example, it was most likely Richard's diplomatic abilities to secure his southern frontier in Gascony through an alliance with Alfonso II of Aragon and Sancho VI of Navarre, during the summer of 1190, that had influenced Anthony Bek and the barons to persuade Edward that he would be wise to reach out to his Aragonese counterpart in 1294. The benefits to Richard's alliance had granted his seneschals in Aquitaine with a lifeline as military reinforcements could be summoned from across the Pyrenees rather than having to wait for a relief force to arrive from England. In return Alfonso had gained a powerful Anglo-Norman ally against his 'great enemy' the count of Toulouse, Raymond V, and Sancho was able to offer his daughter, Berengaria, in marriage to the king of England.<sup>40</sup>

Marital links were also pursued to strengthen the Angevin policy under Richard I, just as they were by Edward; in Richard's case it was key to making a 'friend and ally' of a former enemy.<sup>41</sup> In 1197, for example, Raymond V's successor, Raymond VI, married Richard's sister Joan. To appease his new ally Richard also promised to renounce his claim to Toulouse (a claim previously made by the English king, Henry II, through the familial links of his wife Eleanor of Aquitaine), and to restore Quercy and the Agen to Raymond: in return the counts of Toulouse would hold the Agen as a fief of Aquitaine, promising to send 500 knights in defence of Richard's duchy.<sup>42</sup> The future of the king of England's dukedom was as unpredictable in the 1190s as it was in 1294, yet a policy of alliance building was pursued to strengthen its defences.

Edward, like his great uncle, had also understood the value of the English wool trade to the cloth industries across the many ports and cities of the Low Countries, such as Bruges and Ghent. According to T.H. Lloyd, English wool 'was essential to the economy of the Low Countries and by threatening to cut off supplies the King of England could influence the allegiances of those princes'.<sup>43</sup> Trading links had been founded since the Norman Conquest and wool would make up nearly all of England's export trade.<sup>44</sup> Richard I had used this to his advantage as he was able to force Baldwin IX,

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<sup>40</sup> Gillingham, *Richard I*, 124-126.

<sup>41</sup> Gillingham, *Richard I*, 307.

<sup>42</sup> Gillingham, *Richard I*, 306-307; R. Huscroft, *Ruling England, 1042-1217* (London, 2005), 140.

<sup>43</sup> T.H. Lloyd, *The English Wool Trade in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1977), 6.

<sup>44</sup> Lloyd, *English Wool Trade*, 1-4.

Count of Flanders, away from his alliance with the king of France in 1197 by promising to lift the trade embargo which had been in place since 1194.<sup>45</sup>

Edward would use these same principles when the count of Holland reneged on his promise of alliance, and to ensure that the count of Flanders, after seeing his daughter removed to Paris, did not follow the same route. The pressures of the English trade embargo in 1296 had tempted the civic authorities of the merchant towns and ports to look to Philip IV for aid, yet Guy renewed his allegiance to Edward so as to ‘win the support of the artisans in the cities’.<sup>46</sup> According to Walter of Guisborough, Guy expelled all Frenchmen from his land ‘to be the more acceptable to the king of England’, but also because his citizens had become ‘exhausted’ for they did not have ‘English wool hides to work with’.<sup>47</sup> New taxes imposed in England on exports had merely exacerbated the situation whilst building Edward’s military coffers; a sack of English wool had increased from its pre-war rate of 6s. 8d. to 40s. at the outbreak of war, and for this reason pricing the Flemish merchants into submission.<sup>48</sup> It was perhaps because of this that Edward avoided Bruges, having faced ‘an insurrection of the townspeople’, whilst the gates at Ghent were closed (during one of Edward’s sorties) and the English soldiers stationed inside were attacked by the citizens.<sup>49</sup>

It is clear to see how Edward had miscalculated the political tensions in the region. Since the 1280s the lower classes in Flanders (the *gemeen*) had felt ‘economically exploited’ by the political rulers (the *patricians*) as they had been forced to pay high taxes for town financing, but had failed to see any outcome, nor had the *patricians* been held accountable for the money spent. Social unrest had followed as the commoners ‘strove for control over the town finances, for participation in the administration and the establishment of their professional associations as recognised bodies with political power’.<sup>50</sup> So, when Edward’s suffocation of the wool industry forced prices to exceptionally high levels, the mercantile towns of Bruges and Ghent, for example, each with population sizes far in excess of 30,000 and 50,000 inhabitants, would have been hotbeds of dissent and far from willing to

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<sup>45</sup> Gillingham, *Richard I*, 307-309.

<sup>46</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 389.

<sup>47</sup> *EHD*, 1189-1327, 218; *Foedera*, 850.

<sup>48</sup> Fryde, *Studies in Medieval Trade*, 1179.

<sup>49</sup> *EHD*, 1189-1327, 210; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 393.

<sup>50</sup> Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, 3-4.

accommodate the king of England, particularly when large proportions of the citizens were settler traders, having moved to the towns in search of work, and were dependent on trade and commerce with England.<sup>51</sup>

Edward's actions in Flanders mirror the uncompromising approach of Richard I, certainly in threatening to cut-off vital economic supply-lines, but perhaps surprisingly, it was to Edward's grandfather's military strategy on the continent where the influences are more profound. The league of allies that John had formed prior to the defeat at Bouvines was achieved, as C. Warren Hollister claims, through a 'diplomatic ability of the highest order'.<sup>52</sup> John had been able to muster a coalition that drew together his own nephew, Otto IV, King of Germany, and Holy Roman Emperor, as well as the Portuguese infante Ferrand, Count of Flanders, as well as Renaud, Count of Boulogne.<sup>53</sup>

Binding this league together were the shared grievances towards the French Crown. Otto, for instance, was not the candidate that Philip II had wanted elected as emperor to the Holy Roman Empire; Ferrand had been taken hostage by the French king's son Louis, in 1212, and was forced to promise the cessation of a large portion of Flemish territory to the French for his early release; whilst in the same year Renaud had refused Philip's summons to answer a dispute of land in a court of law.<sup>54</sup> In Hollister's words, this was a coalition which was intended to crush the French king 'on the anvil of Poitou by a hammer from the Low Countries', yet even though it ended in defeat before John could arrive (John had landed his forces at La Rochelle, intending to meet his allies on the road north-east), it had highlighted the frailties between France and its north-eastern neighbours which could be exploited by the English.<sup>55</sup>

However, just as Edward's grand alliance followed a well-worn route previously laid out by English kings, Philip IV's counter-alliance was also far from novel. Richard I, most notably, had fallen victim to the machinations of French alliance building between Philip II and the viscount of Limoges in 1198 when, besieging the viscount's castle of Châlus-Chabrol, the Lionheart was mortally

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<sup>51</sup> Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, 1-3.

<sup>52</sup> Warren Hollister, 'King John and the Historians', 6-7.

<sup>53</sup> W.L. Warren, *King John* (London, 1961), 223; S.E. Dean, 'The oriflamme vs. the eagle', *Medieval Warfare*, 1:1 (2011), 27-28.

<sup>54</sup> Dean, 'The oriflamme vs. the eagle', 27-28; Warren, *King John*, 223.

<sup>55</sup> Warren, *King John*, 218; Huscroft, *Ruling England*, 150.

wounded.<sup>56</sup> Yet, Philip IV's counter-alliance during the Anglo-French war was far more adventurous than this as it almost reversed the policy of encirclement towards England and effectively prevented Edward from fully focusing his military ambitions in either Gascony or Flanders.

### **From both sides of the Treaty Table**

The Gascon phase of the Anglo-French war was, for all intents and purposes, a regional dispute. Although Edward had sent some of his most trusted lieutenants to the duchy, along with two expeditionary forces, and had recruited loyal Gascon and Aragonese servants for the war on arrival, the conflict never fully threatened the French king's interior fiefdoms, and neither did it head further south into Castile, as the Hundred Years War would do during the 1360s. The wider events surrounding the Anglo-French war, however, certainly had all the hallmarks of an impending international crisis of the highest order. Anne Curry has suggested that the Hundred Years War should be viewed as the 'first pan-European war', yet if this is the case then the search for alliances by Edward and Philip during the Anglo-French war may be deemed to be the preliminary run, certainly regarding the agreements that were made at the treaty table: Western Europe was at the brink of open warfare in the mid-1290s.<sup>57</sup>

As has already been discussed, Edward endeavoured to form a league of continental princes in Flanders and the Rhineland to settle the dispute that was continuing over six hundred miles away in Gascony. Yet, this would only explain one half of the diplomatic initiatives that were taking place at the time. From 1295 Philip had aimed to neutralise Edward's coalition and as a result it was inevitable, according to Vale, that 'many other powers became embroiled, or at least implicated, in the Anglo-French conflict'.<sup>58</sup> As Edward followed the Angevin policy of encirclement in the same guise as his grandfather, Philip exploited a network of allies that had the potential to isolate Edward entirely. Philip's policy was to militarily threaten England's northern border, and to also remove a long-standing mercantile partner; this was achieved on 22 October 1295 when a Franco-Norwegian

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<sup>56</sup> Huscroft, *Ruling England*, 147.

<sup>57</sup> Curry, 'The Hundred Years War', 84.

<sup>58</sup> Vale, *The Ancient Enemy*, 40; R. Nicholson, 'The Franco-Scottish and Franco-Norwegian Treaties of 1295', *The Scottish Historical Review*, Part 2, (October, 1959), 115.

alliance was formed — severing a trade link between England and Norway that had been in place since 1223 — and the following day when a Franco-Scottish alliance would also begin, causing Edward ‘another major problem’.<sup>59</sup> Yet, how effective was this Capetian policy of counter-alliance when, just two years later, a detente between Edward and Philip was reached?

Firstly, it must be considered that the Franco-Norwegian alliance was little more than a piece of political showmanship. The alliance suggested that Philip could match Edward’s grand alliance by removing a previous friend and ally of the king of England. The Anglo-Norwegian trade agreement — the first such trade agreement made in either country — had been renewed as recently as 1284, yet little over ten years later the king of Norway, Eric II Magnusson, was willing to side with Philip.<sup>60</sup> It would seem, however, that Eric, commonly understood to have been a ‘weak ruler’ amongst his contemporaries according to Knut Helle, was pursuing a policy of appeasement across the northern shores of the continent; whilst the royal envoy, Audun Hugleiksson, was in Paris formalising the treaty with Philip’s council, similar terms had also been agreed in Denmark and across the Hanseatic League.<sup>61</sup>

If trade had been at the centre of Eric’s policy, it would have surely made more sense to remain closer to Edward for the benefits that the English east coast fishing trade offered. Instead, it is more likely that Philip, having negotiated with the Scottish envoys beforehand, promised to ‘restore the lands and goods which the Norwegian king was known to have in Scotland’; the tripartite agreement worked in Eric’s favour, certainly in laying claim to his ancestral rights in the Western Isles.<sup>62</sup> Yet the naval support that Norway offered was never called upon, and in fact all Philip had gained from the treaty was the neutralising of an old Scottish adversary; the Franco-Norwegian treaty

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<sup>59</sup> Nicholson, ‘The Franco Scottish and Franco-Norwegian Treaties’, 116; K. Helle, ‘Norwegian Foreign Policy and the Maid of Norway’, *The Scottish Historical Review*, 69:188, Part 2, (October, 1990), 144; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 388.

<sup>60</sup> Helle, ‘Norwegian Foreign Policy’, 144-148.

<sup>61</sup> Knut Helle suggests that the Norwegian baronage and the Crown’s royal officials were in full control of Norway’s foreign policy, even after the king’s minority had ended in 1282. See Helle, ‘Norwegian Foreign Policy’, 147, 154.

<sup>62</sup> Helle, ‘Norwegian Foreign Policy’, 144, 154.

proved ineffective after Edward's conquest of Scotland in 1296, and neither had it seemed to be a profitable foreign policy after the Anglo-French peace treaty the following year.<sup>63</sup>

The Franco-Scottish treaty (or Auld-Alliance, as it was affectionately termed), ratified on 23 February 1296, was a different prospect for Edward altogether, it was far more menacing in its design than the simple interruption of trading partners.<sup>64</sup> The treaty, from Philip's perspective, stipulated that if the 'king of England perchance leaves England in person, or has denuded that land of a notable number of armed knights or foot soldiers, while the war between us and him is still continuing', then it was incumbent upon John Balliol, as king of the Scots, 'to enter the land of England with all his forces, to as wide and as deep an extent as possible, making war and a pitched battle, besieging and laying waste and assailing the king of England and his aforesaid land, using every means he can, at his own expense'.<sup>65</sup> The Auld-Alliance would eventually gain legendary status between the French and Scottish, particularly throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries where there was a very real belief that the alliance had actually first been ratified during the reign of Charlemagne, King of the Franks, in the late eighth century.<sup>66</sup>

The Auld-Alliance, however, was a clear and open threat to Edward for it created the prospect of a Scottish invasion of the king's northern frontier with the potential military backing of the French army, whilst it simultaneously prevented Edward from focusing his military strategy in either Gascony or Flanders. The Auld-Alliance undoubtedly gave Edward grounds for an invasion of Scotland and as a result Edward also seized the castles of Roxburgh, Jedburgh, and Berwick, as well as all the possessions of Scotsmen living in England; it was then stated that the castles would not be returned until the Anglo-French war was over ('finito bello Franciae').<sup>67</sup>

Edward's military strategy had been hampered at every stage throughout the Anglo-French war as armed insurrection had taken place in each year in either Wales or Scotland. However, it was Edward's treatment of John Balliol and the Scots during the Great Cause, claims Prestwich, that had

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<sup>63</sup> *RG*, iii, clxv-clxvi; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 215.

<sup>64</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 372-373.

<sup>65</sup> *Records of the Parliaments of Scotland*, [www.rps.ac.uk](http://www.rps.ac.uk), [accessed 18 January 2021].

<sup>66</sup> E. Bonner, 'Scotland's "Auld-Alliance" with France, 1295-1560', *History*, 84:273 (January, 1999), 11.

<sup>67</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, ed. D. Macpherson et al., I, (Record Commission, 1814-1819), 22; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 373-374; Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 42.

forced them into an alliance with Philip.<sup>68</sup> The origins of this dispute are representative of Edward's position in Gascony between 1293 and 1294, and the irony of the scenario could not have escaped the king of England. As supreme overlord, Edward had allowed Scottish appeals to be heard in English courts, most notably the Macduff case — who had claimed to have been disinherited by Balliol and duly imprisoned — whilst at the outbreak of the Anglo-French war Edward had also demanded military aid through Balliol's feudal obligation to the English Crown; this, according to Pollock, was 'the final straw' for the Scots.<sup>69</sup>

In many respects the Scots were far more committed, militarily at least, to the Auld-Alliance than the French were, yet it had certainly done very little to aid the Scottish cause against Edward in 1296. In April, for instance, the Scottish army suffered a significant defeat at Dunbar, whilst later that year Balliol surrendered to Edward, earning the ever-lasting sobriquet of 'Toom Tabard' when his coat of arms was ripped from his surcoat.<sup>70</sup> The greatest example of the Auld-Alliance in action, however, came the following year when, according to the Bury St Edmunds chronicler, 'the Scots rose against the English because they had been informed that the king of England had crossed the sea'.<sup>71</sup> William Wallace's victory against earl Warenne at Stirling Bridge was certainly a significant step for the noble rebellion and had been timed to perfection as Edward had only been in Flanders for little more than two weeks. Yet, the defeat did more to turn the tide of a potential civil war in England after the disagreement with the earls of Norfolk and Hereford, than it did for Scottish Independence. In fact, the English 'united in outrage and consternation at this unthinkable defeat', later taking their revenge at Falkirk.<sup>72</sup> This, according to King, 'was a mark of the fundamental strength of Edward's regime and a vote of confidence, however grudgingly, in his rule, and in his wars', particularly those which took place in Scotland from 1298.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 372-375.

<sup>69</sup> *Foedera*, 132; M.A. Pollock, *Scotland, England and France after the Loss of Normandy, 1204-1296: 'Auld-Amitie'* (Woodbridge, 2015), 212-213; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 371-372.

<sup>70</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 473; Pollock, 'Auld-Amitie', 215-216; Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 289.

<sup>71</sup> *EHD*, 1189-1327, 215.

<sup>72</sup> Watson, *Under the Hammer*, 51, 61.

<sup>73</sup> King, 'Crisis? What Crisis?', 178.

Although the Auld-Alliance was of particular concern for Edward and, undoubtedly, it had marked another failure in an expedition which had seemingly faltered from the very beginning, it was not until March 1298 that Edward returned to English shores.<sup>74</sup> Despite the fact that Philip had an ally who could occasion some misfortune to England's northern border, it would seem that the French king was not ready to gamble all on an invasion of Edward's territory even when he was absent and, therefore, 'at his mercy'.<sup>75</sup> Philip's failure to mount an invasion would also suggest that the letter from Thomas Turbeville to the provost of Paris, explaining that Philip would "benefit forever" should he send a force to Scotland, was surely dismissed.<sup>76</sup> Philip's intentions were quite clearly set on removing Edward from Flanders, and the most efficient way of doing so was to agree to the truce proposed by the papal intermediaries; Philip would even go as far to agree to a marriage alliance between Edward and his sister Margaret in 1298, as well as between Edward of Carnarvon and his daughter, Isabella, in order to strengthen royal familial links in the wake of the Anglo-French war.<sup>77</sup>

Both Edward and Philip were quick to abandon their allies in 1297 after the detente at Vye-St-Bavon. As a consequence, the Flemish nobility were reduced to becoming 'direct vassals to the King of France', according to Verbruggen, as their possessions were robbed by Philip's men such as the governor Raoul de Nesle, and they were ultimately forced to accept Philip as their liege lord.<sup>78</sup> The Scots, on the other hand, entered into a period of 'sustained aggression' towards the English which, suggests King and Penman, led to an 'almost reflexive acceptance of the need for a military treaty with the French', particularly throughout the later fourteenth century.<sup>79</sup>

Nevertheless, despite all the political machinations wide-scale warfare had been avoided in 1297, which may say more about the military commitments of Edward and his allies, along with his abilities to pay their subsidies, than it did for the effectiveness of Philip's counter-alliance. Had the

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<sup>74</sup> Watson, *Under the Hammer*, 61.

<sup>75</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 394.

<sup>76</sup> Cotton, *Historia Anglicana*, 305: "Dunt jeo vous conseyl, ke vus hastivement maundeiz granz genz en Escoce, kar si lenz poez entrer, a tuz jurs gayne le avezez".

<sup>77</sup> 'Regesta 48: 1296-1297' and 'Regesta 49: 1298-1300', *Calendar of Papal Registers*, 563-574, 574-591, *British History Online*, [www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk), [accessed 5 March 2019]; *Foedera*, 894-895; Hallam, *Capetian France*, 280; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 215; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 393.

<sup>78</sup> Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs*, 19.

<sup>79</sup> A. King and M. Penman, eds., *England and Scotland in the Fourteenth Century: New Perspectives* (Woodbridge, 2007), 3-4.

grand alliance materialised on Edward's arrival in Flanders it is most probable that some form of warfare, whether that was a siege or battlefield encounter, would have been fulfilled. Though perhaps it was fortuitous for Edward that the alliance had stalled from the beginning for the king was able to return to England to deal with matters in Scotland. Nevertheless, the third phase of the Anglo-French had witnessed a call-to-arms of Western Europe's main military forces, although as Nicholson has pointed out, their terms were not as 'binding in practice as they were on parchment'.<sup>80</sup> This, however, would not prevent subsequent English kings, and their French counterparts, from pursuing similar coalitions.

### **Old Enemies, Older Allies**

Edward I's grand alliance had shown that the military commitment of his continental allies could never be fully assured, yet it would take another forty-three years for his successors, Edward II and Edward III, to realise the costly mistakes of the Angevin policy of encirclement; although Edward II would demonstrate a certain degree of understanding as to the difficulties of a Flanders expedition, and therefore avoided the Low Countries entirely during the war of St Sardos, Edward III would follow an almost identical route to that of his forefathers in his initial campaigns of the Hundred Years War. The old game of allegiance building was pursued through the tried and trusted measures of marital contracts, trade embargoes, and most importantly, the promise of large subsidies. In fact, Edward III would promise his potential allies such vast amounts of money (up to £400,000) that he was forced to pawn the crown jewels to fund the coalition; for a second time since the 1290s the formation of a continental league of princes threatened to financially destroy the king of England.<sup>81</sup>

The extent that both Edward II and Edward III were influenced by the events of 1297 can be viewed in their choice of allies. Edward II, for instance, turned to Castile for support in 1324 when war broke out in the Agenais. The proposed alliance with Castile was a natural foreign policy for the king of England because he was half-Castilian himself (through his mother's side), and it also

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<sup>80</sup> Nicholson, 'The Franco-Scottish and Franco-Norwegian Treaties', 132.

<sup>81</sup> Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare*, 339; Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 152; Hefferan, *The Household Knights of Edward III*, 81-82, 87.

neutralised the threat of a Franco-Castilian alliance, or even a Castilian invasion into southern Gascony.<sup>82</sup> The Castilian claim to Gascony stretched back as far as 1170 when Henry II agreed to the marriage between his daughter, Eleanor, and Alfonso VIII of Castile, yet in 1205 Alfonso had launched a campaign into the duchy capturing Blaye and Bourq, and besieging Bordeaux, on the grounds that Gascony had not been delivered to him ‘as the marriage portion of Eleanor’.<sup>83</sup> The duchy was eventually secured with the aid of Sancho of Navarre yet, as Nicholas Vincent points out, ‘England’s involvement with the kingdoms of northern Spain is to be regarded as yet further evidence of the degree to which the Plantagenet’s lands in France drew them into both alliances and wars with their continental neighbours’.<sup>84</sup>

This involvement with the kingdoms of northern Spain had continued into Edward II’s reign, where the diplomatic initiatives would aim to ensure the defence of Gascony during what was the re-emergence of the Anglo-French war. Although Edward II would request military aid he also guaranteed protection for the ‘men and merchants of the kingdoms of Spain, Castile and León’ to trade freely in England so as to set the alliance on firm ground; Edward II also made it clear to his brother, Edmund of Woodstock, earl of Kent, that the Castilians should be ‘fully satisfied for the price’ of purveyances taken from that land.<sup>85</sup> This was a carefully orchestrated diplomatic initiative aimed at maintaining the *status quo* rather than stirring up old resentments.

Edward II’s foreign policy largely differed from his father’s because it looked south beyond the Pyrenees for allies rather than immediately across the Channel, yet this was in large part due to his own domestic issues rather than an abandonment of the Angevin policy. In 1323, for instance, Roger Mortimer had managed to escape from prison in the Tower of London ‘by night’, and fled to France; Mortimer was seeking allies in Picardy, the Low Countries and Germany, so that he could gather a fleet and land an army in East Anglia, with the intention of deposing Edward II.<sup>86</sup> Although royal officials were unsure of Mortimer’s exact whereabouts on the continent, the threat of an invasion had

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<sup>82</sup> Dodd and Musson, *The Reign of Edward II*, 106, 116.

<sup>83</sup> N. Vincent, ‘A Forgotten War: England and Navarre, 1243-4’, *Thirteenth Century England XI: Proceedings of the Gregynog Conference 2005*, ed. B. Weiler, (Woodbridge, 2007), 112-113, 116.

<sup>84</sup> Vincent, ‘A Forgotten War’, 116, 137.

<sup>85</sup> ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/36: 205 and 210; Phillips, *Edward II*, 466.

<sup>86</sup> *CCR, 1323-27*, 132-133; Phillips, *Edward II*, 460-461.

prevented any chances, if Edward II harboured any, of forming alliances in the Low Countries. At the same time, the Auld-Alliance — which had been suspended since the official ending of the Anglo-French war in 1303 — was once again renewed in 1326, coinciding with Mortimer's invasion; the Treaty of Corbeil was formed between France and Scotland as each party promised 'mutual assistance in any war against England'.<sup>87</sup>

Edward II did not necessarily face a greater threat in Charles IV than Edward had done with Philip during the Anglo-French war, yet Edward II was not as military minded as his father had been and therefore lacked the impetus to take the war of St Sardos further than a defensive — albeit successful — operation. Edward III, on the other hand, would completely renew the Angevin policy of encirclement, at least between 1337 and 1339. According to Prestwich, Edward III's advisors, during the first phase of the Hundred Years War, were 'strongly influenced by past precedent', and like both Edward I's and King John's policies, the initial stages of the conflict were to take place along Philip VI's north-eastern border, with the military aid of the Low Countries and the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>88</sup>

In strikingly similar fashion to Edward forty years earlier, allegiances were formed between the rulers of Hainault, Guelders and Juliers — drawn together by the close contacts of Edward III's wife, Philippa of Hainault — coupled with the duke of Brabant, who was promised £60,000 for his assistance, and Ludwig IV of Germany; in anticipation of the alliance Ludwig granted Edward III the title of Imperial Vicar-General, meaning that the king of England was granted the privilege of summoning the German king's vassals to fulfil their military obligations in the war against France.<sup>89</sup> It has been estimated that Edward III was promised a force of around 6,200 men-at-arms from his continental allies, which was a welcome addition to the 4,600 troops that had arrived from England.<sup>90</sup>

Furthermore, there was considerable hostility towards the French in many of the Flemish towns, and although the count of Flanders had sided with Philip VI, it was fairly straightforward for

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<sup>87</sup> Phillips, *Edward II*, 459; G.W.S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1988), 251.

<sup>88</sup> W.M. Ormrod, 'Edward III and His Family', *Journal of British Studies*, 26:4 (October, 1987), 407; Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 151; Hefferan, *The Household Knights of Edward III*, 85.

<sup>89</sup> Ormrod, 'Edward III and His Family', 402; Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 149, 151-152.

<sup>90</sup> Curry, 'The Hundred Years War', 87.

Edward III to obtain the support of the commercial towns of Ghent, Bruges and Ypres.<sup>91</sup> This alliance was undoubtedly prompted by the lifting of the trade embargo on English wool which had been in place since 1336.<sup>92</sup> Le Patourel has also suggested that ‘Edward’s need for an alliance with Flanders provided the occasion’ to publicly claim the French throne during January 1340, giving the Flemings a justifiable excuse to rebel against their liege lord, Philip VI.<sup>93</sup>

Edward III’s supporters in England had been optimistic of the achievements made in forming a *new grand alliance*, and it was said that support for the king of England was so great that he “need not bring anyone with him except [his chamber servant], as he would be strong enough with his allies over there alone to conquer his heritage of France”.<sup>94</sup> Yet, like in 1297 and 1214, the initiative was less than successful. The failed siege of Cambrai in 1339 was primarily fought for the German king — rather than for Edward III’s own personal strategy — as the French held enclave was firmly situated within the territory of the Holy Roman Empire, while the siege of Tournai the following year also failed to capitalise on the English naval victory at Sluys, resulting in the truce of Esplechin.<sup>95</sup>

Perhaps inevitably the *new grand alliance* ruptured as Ludwig IV ‘revoked’ Edward’s title of Imperial-Vicar, whilst Edward III also backed away from aiming to secure what were costly and unconvincing continental troops.<sup>96</sup> After the collapse of the *new grand alliance*, Edward III immediately fell back on scorched earth policies; the sudden change of tactics would set Edward III’s campaign apart from Edward I’s Flanders expedition. From this point on, Edward III would focus on recruiting cheaper Welsh infantrymen and English archers, having learnt of their capabilities in Scotland.<sup>97</sup>

Prior to 1340, English kings had often allowed the reliance of an Angevin policy of encirclement to dictate their military strategy against successive French kings. It was in the very

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<sup>91</sup> Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 112; Curry, ‘The Hundred Years War’, 87-88.

<sup>92</sup> Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 149.

<sup>93</sup> Le Patourel, *Edward III and the Kingdom of France*, 180; Curry, ‘The Hundred Years War’, 87-88; Ormrod, ‘Edward III and His Family’, 406.

<sup>94</sup> Rogers, ‘Edward III and Dialects of Strategy’, 89-90.

<sup>95</sup> Curry, ‘The Hundred Years War’, 87; Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 152; Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 120-121.

<sup>96</sup> Prestwich, *Three Edwards*, 152; Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers*, 62.

<sup>97</sup> Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers*, 62.

‘strengths and limitations’ of a military strategy, as Clifford Rogers notes, that would shape the direction of these campaigns.<sup>98</sup> The strengths could be found when a body of highly militarised states were ranged against a solitary force, yet most often than not the Anglo-European alliances led to haphazard tactics that were either restricted due to the lack of funds or were hijacked by interrelated warfare between third party members. Chapman states quite rightly that ‘the methods employed by English armies.... took time to change’, but once they did it was clear to see the advantages of arraying a wholly English and Welsh force prior to departure, such as during the Crécy campaign.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, French kings were no different in this respect, and it can be argued that their continual interference in Anglo-Scottish relations outlasted English interventions in the Franco-Germanic borderlands; it was most certainly in their continued ‘offensive and defensive’ alliances with the Scots that led to the proliferation of the Anglo-French wars under the three Edwards.<sup>100</sup>

### Summary and Observations

The Anglo-French war had perfectly demonstrated the unpredictable nature of Western European warfare and diplomacy. Alliances were abandoned as quickly as they had been formed, whilst it was not uncommon to find cross-Channel families changing their fealties between successive monarchs. The count of Brittany, Peter of Dreux, for instance, would interchange his allegiance between Louis IX and Henry III in the 1230s, yet his son, John of Brittany, proved to be a staunch supporter of the king of England, leading the first expeditionary force against the French Crown.<sup>101</sup>

The nature of Edward’s expedition to Flanders was certainly far removed from the previous two phases in Gascony, and even more so compared to the king’s campaigns in Scotland. On a domestic front Edward resembled the warrior king, and although he had attempted to carry this through into the Flanders campaign, he was ultimately left with large financial debts, little military support, and unwanted by the local citizens due to his failure to grasp the political nuances of the region. However, the king’s *modus operandi* had shown signs of genuine military ambition. A larger

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<sup>98</sup> Rogers, ‘Edward III and the Dialects of Strategy’, 88-89.

<sup>99</sup> Chapman, *Welsh Soldiers*, 62, 66.

<sup>100</sup> Curry, ‘The Hundred Years War’, 84.

<sup>101</sup> Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, 97.

force had been assembled for an overseas campaign than previously witnessed — suggesting that the domestic opposition to the campaign, headed by the earls of Norfolk and Hereford, did not have wide-scale support — whilst an alliance with Flanders gave Edward the footing to land an army with the potential to strike deep into Philip's kingdom.<sup>102</sup> Unfortunately, Edward arrived too late as the key moment of battle passed the royal expeditionary force by whilst it was still out at sea. The only military action that the expeditionary force was involved in was the naval dispute between the men of Yarmouth and the Cinque Ports, as well as the plundering of villages and fairs in the count of Hainault's territory by Edward's Welsh infantry.<sup>103</sup>

Edward did not turn to the use of scorched earth, as Edward III would do, most likely because a detente at this stage in the war was the most satisfactory way out Flanders; interestingly, both Edward and Philip were quick to come to an agreement by October which suggests that both armies were feeling the pressures of prolonged warfare, an overstretching of resources, as well as the exploitation of border rivals.<sup>104</sup> Yet, Edward must have had some form of military target upon landing in Flanders as it would have been unwise to have embarked on an expedition into the French frontier without an immediate plan of action, certainly as Robert of Artois' forces were billeted in the region.

Naturally, the attention to military strategy has centred on purchasing allies, landing troops in Flanders and, by due process, easing the pressures on the expeditionary forces in Gascony after three long years of siege warfare. Yet, what was Edward to do with a continental force should all the king's political dealings have aligned? The most obvious explanation for mounting a campaign would have been to occupy Ponthieu. The county had been bequeathed to Edward through Eleanor of Castile's inheritance, and it had given an English king the first northern French territory since the losses of 1204 until, like Gascony, it was confiscated in 1294.<sup>105</sup>

The region had been governed by Edmund of Lancaster since 1290, but upon his death in 1296 it is likely that Robert of Artois, whose lands neighboured Ponthieu, may have had his own

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<sup>102</sup> King, 'Crisis? What Crisis?', 172.

<sup>103</sup> *EHD*, 1189-1327, 210; *Knighton*, 369-371.

<sup>104</sup> Lyon, 'The Failed Flemish Campaign of Edward I', 32.

<sup>105</sup> H. Johnstone, 'The County of Ponthieu, 1279-1307', *The English Historical Review*, 29:115 (July, 1914), 435, 448; Huscroft, *Ruling England*, 148.

ambitions to annex the territory.<sup>106</sup> This is only a theory yet, should Edward have won what was clearly a vulnerable and isolated region in Northern France, then a real signal of intent would have been sent out; it may also go some way to explaining the absence of a *chevauchée* on what was seen to be English Crown territory. Still, this does not explain why Edward felt the need to campaign in person. Perhaps the third expedition should, instead, be viewed as an act of political, and military, propaganda, one that signalled Edward's intentions as a warrior king certainly when compared to Philip who preferred to leave military affairs to his lieutenants.

Despite this, the third phase of the Anglo-French war also portrayed Edward as an anxious and somewhat naive military leader. He was anxious for he opened an unsustainable front in the Anglo-French war before Gascony was secured and whilst English and Welsh forces were heading north to Scotland. And Edward was naive for he paid large sums of money (and promised even more) to the princes of the Rhineland and the Low Countries before any tangible military gains had even been made. Unsurprisingly the personal motives of the European princes, as well as a lack of military means coupled with their own domestic issues, prevented Edward from executing his plan. However, what is perhaps most remarkable about the Angevin policy of encirclement is that consecutive kings of England would follow the exact same principles of allegiance building, each achieving the same unavailing outcome.

As has also been demonstrated, Philip embarked upon his own plans for alliances during the Anglo-French war, where it could even be argued that the 'Auld-Alliance' had a far more lasting effect — psychologically if not militarily — than Edward's attempts to unite the Germanic princes against his French enemy. Nevertheless, the Flanders expedition did achieve a truce between England and France which, in a roundabout way, concluded the increasingly entrenched conflict in Gascony, although there were many more matters to be resolved over the next six years. These included Edward's position as duke; the removal of French forces from Gascony; the disruption to trade and the compensation for merchants' losses; as well as what to do with the Flemings and the Scots. In the

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<sup>106</sup> Johnstone, 'The County of Ponthieu', 447.

end it was a simple matter of allowing both Edward and Philip 'free to pursue their designs upon their northern neighbours'.<sup>107</sup>

The cold war nature of the Anglo-French war had, by 1297, evolved from a regional dispute between lord and vassal in a remote part of south-western France, to a conflict which touched upon nearly all the Western European states. It became an entanglement of diplomatic and military disputes which threatened to boil over into a wider pan-European war. This, however, was as far as the situation developed before breaking off into a series of smaller, yet no less hostile, domestic and border disputes. The Anglo-French war was ultimately settled by Rome, with the aid of English and French envoys, yet such was the nature of allegiance building in the late thirteenth century that on the road to Vye-St-Bavon, what had started as an argument over homage in Gascony, eventually involved at one point or another the Flemings and the Scots, the Holy Roman Empire, the Low Countries, the Norwegians, and the northern kingdoms of Spain.

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<sup>107</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 395-396; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 215-216.

## Eight

### **Re-examining the Military Revolution Debate: The view from thirteenth century Gascony**

The military techniques of Edward I's reign have fallen outside of the current parameters of the military revolution debate. In general terms Edward, as a progressive military tactician, has been overlooked by many late medieval – and early modern – historians simply because there are very few examples of real “revolutionary” change within the military strategies and tactics of the English army during the late thirteenth century. Michael Prestwich has provided the stand-out study, yet this only aims to further emphasise the occasional, short-term impact of military change in the period.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, there are aspects within recruitment, weaponry and fortification which require further analysis. This chapter will aim to expand the boundary of the military revolution debate by proposing that Edward's armies marked a key *evolutionary* stage in the development of English military techniques because of the introduction of the mounted infantryman; experimentation with gunpowder weaponry; and in the supremacy of fortification design. This evolutionary process will then be judged against the backdrop of the Anglo-French war to determine its immediate impact in Gascony, as well as the long-term impact on subsequent English expeditionary forces under Edward II and Edward III.

#### **Revolution or Evolution?**

The military revolution debate has expanded considerably in its scope since Michael Roberts' inaugural lecture in 1956. Here, Roberts laid the groundwork for a subject which has sparked an almost continual discussion amongst historians of late medieval and early modern Europe.<sup>2</sup> Roberts' thesis argued that the period between 1560 and 1660 was the most crucial in terms of development of

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<sup>1</sup> For Michael Prestwich's in-depth study of the military revolution debate during the reign of Edward I, see M Prestwich, 'Was There a Military Revolution in Medieval England?', *Recognitions: essays presented to Edmund Fryde*, eds., C. Richmond and I. Harvey, (Aberystwyth, 1996), 19-38.

<sup>2</sup> The main scholarly works which address Roberts' theory are: *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*, ed. C.J. Rogers, (Oxford, 1995); G. Parker, 'The "Military Revolution," 1560-1660 - a myth?', *The Journal of Modern History*, 48:2 (June, 1976), 195-214; C.J. Rogers, 'The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years' War', *Journal of Military History LVII* (1993), 241-278; Prestwich, 'Was There a Military Revolution in Medieval England?', 19-38; A. Ayton and J.L. Price, eds., *The Medieval Military Revolution: State, Society and Military Change in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (London, 1995); C. Storrs and H.M. Scott, 'The Military Revolution and the European Nobility, c.1600-1800', *War in History* (January, 1996), 1-41.

military technique in Western European warfare, from raising and paying standing armies, to training, victualling, armouring, and transporting those recruits. This premise, according to Geoffrey Parker, consisted of four essential categories: tactics, strategy, army size, and overall impact.<sup>3</sup> The truly “revolutionary” steps on the battlefield, Roberts proposed, included the ‘linear formations’ of infantrymen and their firearms (an *arquebus*, or wheel-lock pistol, required less training and skill than that of a late medieval longbowman, allowing for larger cohorts of infantry to be recruited and armed at short notice); as well as the return to the cavalry’s ‘proper function’, that being to charge the enemy with ‘sword in hand’, rather than, as Parker notes, ‘trotting up to the enemy, firing, and trotting back again’ in what was termed the *caracole*.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, both medieval and early modern historians have found exception to this premise. Jeremy Black, in his 1660-1792 perspective, certainly disagrees with Roberts’ thesis. The problem, according to Black, rests with the terminology; Black suggests that ‘Not only is revolution a tricky concept, but clearly many tactical developments were hardly innovative in the sense of being truly original’, they were nothing more than the ‘clever adaptation of existing ideas’.<sup>5</sup> Clifford Rogers also claims that there was nothing particularly novel about Roberts’ theory. Rogers claims that Western Europe witnessed ‘not one but several military revolutions between 1300 and 1800’, and while primarily focusing his study on the Hundred Years War, Rogers divided the theory into two categories: infantry and artillery revolutions.<sup>6</sup>

The former focused on the development and impact of the English archer who was, by the 1330s, skilled in the use of the 6ft longbow and was able to make an impact on the battlefield, while the latter took into account the introduction of new forms of gunpowder artillery on the battlefield and in the siege, the “crakkis of wer” according to John Barbour; changes in fortification design inevitably ensued and the ‘sunken-profile’ of the *trace italienne* replaced the existing medieval castle structure giving grounds for the prospect of a third revolution, that of the “Artillery Fortress”.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately,

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<sup>3</sup> Parker, ‘The “Military Revolution,” 1560-1660’, 195-197.

<sup>4</sup> M. Roberts, ‘The Military Revolution, 1560-1660’, in *The Military Revolution Debate*, 13-14; Parker, ‘The “Military Revolution,” 1560-1660’, 196

<sup>5</sup> J. Black, ‘A Military Revolution? A 1660-1792 Perspective’, in *The Military Revolution Debate*, 111.

<sup>6</sup> Rogers, ‘The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years War’, 276.

<sup>7</sup> Rogers, ‘The Military Revolution of the Hundred Years War’, 258.

Rogers advocates for a “punctuated equilibrium” rather than a revolutionary process: this, Rogers claims, was ‘evolution proceeded by short bursts of rapid change interspersed with long periods of near stasis rather than constant, slow alteration’.<sup>8</sup> Both Roberts and Rogers’ proposals, however, have been brought into question.

Kelly deVries argues for a process of ‘slow technological evolution’, drawing on the fact that many types of field artillery and fortification design found in Europe during the early modern period had their origins in the Middle Ages (particularly during the final decade of the thirteenth century, as will be demonstrated).<sup>9</sup> And similarly, N.A.M. Rodger has voiced his concerns that Roberts had offered very little ‘convincing proof’ for a military revolution, stressing that this terminology was no more than a ‘big name for the ordinary process of development over time’, one that in England alone could be recorded as early as the Norman conquest of the eleventh century.<sup>10</sup>

Yet, as Anne Curry pinpoints, the military revolution debate has become a very ‘current obsession’, and in championing significant military change to a specific period historians ‘run the risk of trying to make our evidence fit another general theory’.<sup>11</sup> That being said, Curry proposes that the change from the feudal to the contractual army was a significant step for medieval armies (although this has been termed a social revolution, rather than military, by Michael Prestwich) while also joining Andrew Ayton and J.L. Price in targeting three elements for determining a military revolution in the later Middle Ages: the change of focus from the heavy cavalry to the infantry; the steady (if not sporadic) introduction of gunpowder weaponry; and the size of armies.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, Ayton and Price propose “time” as a fourth element. This, naturally, stems from the proliferation of siege warfare which could last weeks, months, or even years, ‘often with indecisive results’: importantly, all these

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<sup>8</sup> Rogers, ‘The Military Revolution of the Hundred Years War’, 277.

<sup>9</sup> K. DeVries, ‘Catapults Are Not Atomic Bombs: Towards a Redefinition of “Effectiveness” in Premodern Military Technology’, *War in History*, 4:4 (November, 1997), 470; See also, R.A. Buchanan, ‘The Structure of Technological Revolution’, *History of Technology XVI* (1994), 209.

<sup>10</sup> N.A.M. Rodger, ‘From the ‘military revolution’ to the fiscal-naval state’, *Journal of Maritime Research*, 13:2 (November, 2011), 119-120; D. Cook, ‘The Norman Military Revolution in England’, *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies I* (1978), 94-102.

<sup>11</sup> A. Curry, ‘Medieval Warfare. England and her continental neighbours, eleventh to the fourteenth centuries’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 24:1 (1998), 84, 99.

<sup>12</sup> Curry, ‘Medieval Warfare’, 99; Ayton and Price, *The Medieval Military Revolution*, 2; Prestwich, ‘Was there a Military Revolution in Medieval England?’, 20.

concepts fit within the context of Edward I's reign, either for the wars waged in Gascony, or in Wales and Scotland.<sup>13</sup>

For this reason, the chapter will set the Anglo-French war, and by due process Edward's domestic campaigns, within the parameters of the military revolution debate, focusing specifically on Rogers' categorisation of infantry, artillery, and artillery fortress concepts. Edward's reign marks a crucial landmark for this study because many of the developments within the English armies of the first phase of the Hundred Years War had been foreshadowed in the latter stages of the thirteenth century. Edward I was renowned for the unprecedented nature in which infantry numbers were raised, and in their developing formation; the king also had an innovative, if not macabre interest, in the destructiveness of siege artillery, one that had not necessarily carried through in his scorched earth policies; and Edward had also instigated a domestic castle-building project that was never rivalled in the British Isles.

These concepts were at the heart of Edward's campaigns and would continue to be so throughout the wars of his immediate successors. The arrival of the mounted infantryman in 1296 (the Irish hobelar), presaged the mounted archer of the 1330s; experimentation with gunpowder weaponry enhanced royal sieges from c.1303; and the superiority of strategically designed fortifications not only prolonged the outcome of campaigns, but proved so innovative that in many features they mirror the "revolutionary" fortresses of the early modern period. Ultimately, the study will determine the extent to which an evolutionary process began to take shape during the Anglo-French war, before highlighting the impact upon the military techniques of English armies that are currently well-established within the military revolution debate.

### **The Irish Hobelar and the Infantry's Evolution**

Edward I's infantry forces showed signs of breaking away from the traditional feudal structure of previous English armies in the mid-1290s. They were paid (from the start of the Anglo-French war), and they were recruited, domestically at least, in unprecedented numbers. At the battle of

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<sup>13</sup> Ayton and Price, *The Medieval Military Revolution*, 2.

Falkirk, for instance, Edward was able to array over 25,000 infantrymen from England, Wales, and Ireland, a feat not matched again until 1347 when Edward III had at his disposal 32,000 men at the siege of Calais.<sup>14</sup> In comparison, Henry VIII was able to muster the largest overseas force through the late medieval military obligation to serve – the commission of array – accumulating around 40,000 infantry troops for the siege of Boulogne, between 1544 and 1546; Elizabeth I, on the other hand, could only muster 12,620 to go to Ireland in 1601.<sup>15</sup>

The numbers for Edward's Falkirk campaign are certainly impressive when compared with his Tudor successors, yet the steady advancements in military recruitment during the late 1300s were checked at each stage by perennial issues: Edward's armies – particularly in Scotland – would revert to a mixture of paid and voluntary recruits (the 'contractual, "national" army', would not fully develop until the reign of Edward III).<sup>16</sup> Further still, they were overall poorly equipped, lacking the skill and training of their fourteenth century successors (especially in the deployment of the longbow), and they were partial to desertion on a large scale, particularly because there was no natural barrier such as a seaway to prevent their escape; although it must be said that this was not something that was unique to Edward's reign.<sup>17</sup>

However, desertion was a major issue, and during the Scottish winter campaign of 1299, for instance, the king had summoned 16,000 troops, only for 2,500 to arrive before deserting '*en masse*', most likely due to the poor seasonal conditions. This forced Edward to single out the Yorkshiremen, who had obviously formed a large part of the infantry for this campaign, claiming that they had 'maliciously deceived and treacherously failed him', and were therefore 'to be immediately imprisoned and their lands and chattels seized'.<sup>18</sup> Despite the threat's desertion remained a persistent problem throughout the reign. Moreover, Edward still relied on the traditional methods of raising revenue to pay for his armies, ranging from: direct taxation, forced loans and credit finance; to

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<sup>14</sup> Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 372; Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 108, 113.

<sup>15</sup> J.J. Goring, 'Military Obligations of the English People', (Queen Mary University of London Ph.D, 1955), 266-270; Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 113.

<sup>16</sup> Curry, 'Medieval Warfare', 88-91.

<sup>17</sup> A. King, 'A Good Chance for the Scots? The Recruitment of English Armies for Scotland and the Marches, 1337-1347', in *England and Scotland at War*, 149.

<sup>18</sup> Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 95-96.

levying tallages on demesne lands, capitalizing on the English wool trade through custom duties; as well as borrowing from merchants, Italian bankers such as the Riccardi (until they were forced into bankruptcy at the outbreak of the Anglo-French war), and straight from the nobility and the military leaders who were to take part in the campaigns.<sup>19</sup>

Inevitably, Prestwich has suggested that Edward I did not achieve his military successes ‘as a result of any brilliant strokes of generalship’, either in ‘tactical or strategic terms’.<sup>20</sup> In part this is a fair portrayal, for Edward often relied on the sheer scale of numbers and force of man and steed to overpower the enemy. In the final years before the man-at-arms dismounted to fight alongside his fellow infantryman, Edward was still deploying the cavalry charge because it remained highly effective against ill-equipped troops. At Dunbar in 1296, for instance, it was the English cavalry charge that won the day, rather than the infantrymen, while at Irvine in 1297 the Scottish army surrendered to an English force of mainly cavalry troops; the Lanercost chronicler even reports that it was the English cavalry, rather than the infantry, who were effective in outflanking the Scottish schiltroms at Falkirk.<sup>21</sup>

But Edward did comprehend the advantages of combining both horse and foot, and it was in Scotland where the tactic of forcing the enemy out of hiding that prompted the deployment of a new form of mounted infantryman: the Irish hobelar. The introduction of the light cavalryman, first involved in the activities of an English royal army in 1296 when the earl of Ulster and the justiciar of Ireland arrived with 366 men of ‘*equis discoopertis, qui dicuntur hobellarii*’, to take part in the king of England’s Scottish campaign was, according to Morris, an ‘evolution of the cavalry’, yet this evolutionary process would draw in the socially inferior infantryman.<sup>22</sup>

Overtime the hobelar’s military obligation along the Anglo-Scottish border became one of defence rather than invasion (from an English perspective at least) as the common petition of the parliament of 1371 demonstrates, and in some instances they were expected to serve unpaid as part of that obligation so as to defend their homes; this was the case for the 4,000 northern hobelars who were

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<sup>19</sup> Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 177-223.

<sup>20</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 564.

<sup>21</sup> Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 109; *Lanercost*, 166.

<sup>22</sup> *Documents illustrative of the History of Scotland*, vol. ii, 124; Morris, ‘Mounted Infantry’, 80-81.

arrayed in August 1344.<sup>23</sup> On most occasions, however, they were raised by commission of array, at the expense of the Crown rather than the commonalty; notably, the hobelar was often included within the fifteenth century commissions of array regarding the defence of the northern frontier, but can more readily be found in paid garrison service throughout the borderlands.<sup>24</sup>

The hobelar was a light armoured infantryman, alternatively known as ‘moss-troopers or border pickers’, and they were accompanied by their own smaller, nimbler, horses which were ideal for scouting ‘in rough country’.<sup>25</sup> However, although their participation in the campaign of 1296 was a welcomed source of military recruitment for the Crown, the hobelar’s way of warfare, coupled with the ‘militarisation of the border’ during the late thirteenth century gave way to banditry and the famed border reivers.<sup>26</sup>

*Schavaldores* and Northumbrian Scots (‘*Northumbria Scotorum*’) are just two groups of brigands that surfaced from c.1312 in the wake of the arrival of the hobelar.<sup>27</sup> These were natives of Northumbria who had turned to robbery considering the fragile political situation on the Anglo-Scottish border; armed and mounted in the same manner as their hobelar counterpart they could be hired – or ventured into extortion – to protect local communities either side of the border, but often they conducted their own raids.<sup>28</sup> Thomas Walsingham recorded an account of a raid deep into Northumbria during 1317 where the brigands resorted to taking loaves of bread, livestock, hens, and even cheese, from local communities.<sup>29</sup> Despite their contribution to the breakdown of law and order the hobelar, as Prestwich has noted, did indeed become the first step in the process towards the

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<sup>23</sup> Bell, et. al., *Soldier in Later Medieval England*, 179; King, ‘A Good Chance for the Scots? The Recruitment of English Armies for Scotland and the Marches, 1337-1347’, 142; *PROME*, Parliament of February 1371, item 24, *British History Online*, [www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk). In 1314-1315 Edward Bruce’s men turned to ‘hobelar warfare’ during their post-Bannockburn raids deep into Northumbria, see McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces*, 160-162.

<sup>24</sup> Bell, et. al., *Soldier in Later Medieval England*, 180.

<sup>25</sup> Morris, ‘Mounted Infantry’, 80-81.

<sup>26</sup> McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces*, 299. The term *schavaldore* most likely derived from chevalier, meaning ‘horseman’. See also ‘A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue (up to 1700)’, [www.dsl.ac.uk](http://www.dsl.ac.uk).

<sup>27</sup> The term ‘*Northumbria Scotorum*’ was recorded by Thomas Walsingham in *Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani: Thomae Walsingham, Quondam Monachi Sancti Albani, Historia Anglicana*, (1272-1381), ed. H.T. Riley, (London, 1863), 150.

<sup>28</sup> J. Aberth, *From the Brink of the Apocalypse: Confronting Famine, War, Plague, and Death in the Later Middle Ages*, second edition, (Abingdon, 2000), 35; *Crime, Law and Society in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. and trans., A. Musson, with E. Powell, (Manchester, 2009), 71.

<sup>29</sup> Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, 150.

extremely effective mounted archer of Edward III's reign.<sup>30</sup> Yet, although arriving two years after the outbreak of the Anglo-French war, what impact could these light armoured cavalrymen have had on the war in Gascony? And, if they were surpassed by the mounted archer in the 1330s, then how effective can their role have been?

There is very little tangible evidence of hobelars embarking for Gascony with the first or second expeditionary forces, despite a pardon granted to a Devonshire individual known as Richard Cok "hobel" in April 1297.<sup>31</sup> This, however, is far from conclusive evidence of any hobelars being present with the English expeditionary forces, and their absence would certainly fit within Prestwich's statement that 'the English were not capable of completely remodelling their armies at short notice'.<sup>32</sup>

The second expeditionary force had embarked for Gascony at the same time as the Irish hobelar had arrived in Scotland and their primary military purpose was one of scouting the hidden enemy; the hobelar's purpose at this stage in the Anglo-French war was not pivotal to the outcome of the conflict in Gascony, and neither had their effectiveness been tested when faced with a competent force. Nevertheless, the hobelar would certainly play a significant role during the Scottish wars of Edward's reign before reaching their height, in terms of recruitment, during the war of St Sardos. The evidence here suggests that it had taken the best part of twenty years for the English to completely adopt the concept of the mounted infantryman into their ranks, preferring instead a conservative approach to military composition rather than a complete overhaul of the current system.

Nevertheless, the hobelar's *modus operandi* had changed within a few years of its arrival, becoming a regular recruit in siege warfare and garrison service. This is not surprising for the hobelar's unique attribute was his ability to cover the difficult terrain of the Scottish Lowlands much quicker than the ordinary foot-soldier, before dismounting to fight or defend a stronghold. John of St John, shortly after his release from captivity, looked to recruit 'as many hobelars' as he could for the siege of Caerlaverock, while 300 hobelars were also to come over from Ireland to Carlisle ready for the campaign.<sup>33</sup> Hobelars were also garrisoned in English held castles throughout Scotland, at places

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<sup>30</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 513-514; Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 113.

<sup>31</sup> *CPR, 1292-1301*, 246.

<sup>32</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 514.

<sup>33</sup> *CCR, 1296-1302*, 334; *CPR, 1292-1301*, 488, 490, 493-494, 592; *CDS*, vol. v, 159.

such as Edinburgh, Livingstone, Linlithgow, Dumfries, and Caerlaverock, between 1299 and 1306.<sup>34</sup> This was a strategic appointment as the hobelar allowed for a body of mounted infantry to conduct frontier patrols, stretching out from the garrison into areas where foot-soldiers had been unable to reach or were vulnerable to attack; the hobelar was still deployed in this fashion after the defeat at Bannockburn so as to ‘defend the north of England’.<sup>35</sup>

The hobelar clearly made a vital component of garrison service and siege warfare for their continued involvement in English military strategy and tactics can be followed well into the mid-fourteenth century, and occasionally beyond this point. For instance, payment was made eleven years after Edward I’s death to hobelars previously stationed at Berwick during the reign, to the likes of John de Stratton, William Simple and Robert de Hirst.<sup>36</sup> Similarly hobelars were stationed at Bamburgh Castle in 1327, whilst at Roxburgh in 1355 the hobelars stationed there under the command of William de Felton were to remain in their post, despite the rest of the garrison having been ordered to disband.<sup>37</sup> The hobelars military duties beyond conducting frontier patrols is unclear, yet a detailed (if not disturbing) account of the hobelar’s capabilities surfaces during the siege of Rouen in 1418. It was noted that a contingent of 1,500 hobelars under the command of Thomas Butler, a warrior prior of the Knights Hospitaller near Dublin, set to ‘scavenging the villages around the besieged city’, in which it was later said that ‘men long remembered the spectacle they presented as they came back from their raids, with beds, baggage, and even babies in cradles tied to the backs of the cattle they were driving’.<sup>38</sup> Accounting for exaggeration, it is clear from this account the value of the hobelar in retrieving forage or plunder for the besieging army.

The hobelar had arrived too late to have played a decisive role in the Anglo-French war, even though the conflict had occasioned for garrison service and siege warfare, and where it is expected that the duties of frontier patrol were conducted by the knights who were having to adapt to their new position in the absence of any battlefield activity. By 1324, however, the situation had drastically

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<sup>34</sup> *CDS*, vol. v, 181, 185, 191.

<sup>35</sup> Phillips, *Edward II*, 236.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/32:380

<sup>37</sup> TNA SC8/53/2605B; *CDS*, vol. v, 261.

<sup>38</sup> Bell et. al., *Soldier in Later Medieval England*, 180; J.H. Wylie and W.T. Waugh, *The Reign of Henry the Fifth*, iii, (Cambridge, 1929), 131-132.

changed. During the muster of the English army, orders were delivered to the commissioners of array, from Northumberland to East Anglia, to recruit over 700 hobelars, each paid 6*d.* a day, ‘for passage to Gascony’, whilst Edward II had even made plans to incorporate a contingent of hobelars as his royal bodyguard during his proposed expedition to the region.<sup>39</sup>

Although it had taken two decades for the hobelar to become truly amalgamated into the English expeditionary forces, it is clear to see that they were already developing into an Anglicized unit. Presumably, due to the length of time it had taken to send orders to Ireland for the recruitment of these troops, to then assemble and transport them back to England, it was far more expedient to provide English infantrymen with a horse rather than to await the arrival of the Irishman. Yet, although the commissioners’ orders clearly stated that they were to provide the English hobelar with horses, ‘and suitably arm them’, there were still many issues to be resolved. In the royal orders sent to four commissioners in the border counties of northern England on 20 February 1325 – John de Fenwick, William de Felton, Richard de Denton and Richard de Huddleston – it was expressed that the horses provided to the hobelars were not to be ‘draught animals’.<sup>40</sup> Clearly here is an insight into the unsatisfactory recruitment of English hobelars who, on this occasion, had most likely been provided with heavy working animals; the draught horse was certainly unsuitable for swift movements across undulating ground compared to its Irish counterpart of the mid-1290s.

It seems that these poorly equipped English hobelars had reached Gascony for in early April 1325 concerns had been raised by one of the military leaders taking part in the war, Robert de Wateville. In a letter to Hugh Despenser the younger, Wateville stressed that the ‘type of ground’ in Gascony was unsuitable for the hobelar.<sup>41</sup> It is clear to see why; the terrain heading south-east along the Garonne through the Entre-Deux-Mers was carved up by its river valleys, steep cliffs and forests, making movement with a cumbersome draught horse towards the Agenais difficult, particularly when fast flowing waterways had to be crossed, and plagued by ‘horse-flies and wasps’, a typical nuisance

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<sup>39</sup> ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/36:181; 278, 278.1; 279-279.4, 280-280.6.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/36:278 and 278.1.

<sup>41</sup> *CDS*, vol. v, 255.

in the region that had been famously singled out by a Poitevin priest, Aymery Picaud, in the twelfth century.<sup>42</sup>

The setbacks from deploying poorly equipped hobelars in Gascony were quickly learned for they were only mustered on one more occasion for a campaign in Gascony during 1337; as most of the opening stage of the Hundred Years War would take place in Northern France, the hobelar's presence in Gascony became one of garrison service. From this point onwards the hobelar's military capacity was solely concentrated in the Scottish wars of Edward III's reign, particularly between 1337 and 1347, and in very small units throughout Northern France; Nicholas Dagworth, for instance, had been ordered by the king to find 'one hobelar and one archer' from his lands and to send them to the muster at Portsmouth in March 1346 in preparation for the Crécy campaign.<sup>43</sup>

The hobelar, from his Irish origins in Edward I's Scottish campaigns, through to his Anglicization and participation in the first phase of the Hundred Years War, had certainly had an impact in the organisation of English armies. Their purpose as a swift moving force of infantrymen armed with little more than a targe (a small rectangular or round shaped wooden shield), a long knife and 'a bundle of small darts', had not only encouraged mounted banditry, but they had been the precedence for the mounted archer, and therefore a key evolutionary process in the transformation of the infantryman of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>44</sup>

Yet they were to be replaced by a more skilled individual who could not only keep up with the main cavalry force but they could release around 20 arrows per minute at the enemy line.<sup>45</sup> That Edward did not arm his newly found mounted infantryman with the bow suggests that the tactics of deploying the archer had not been fully realised; at Falkirk the English archers, having run out of arrows, ended up throwing stones at the Scottish enemy, a far cry from the successes of the Agincourt

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<sup>42</sup> Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 8-9.

<sup>43</sup> King, 'A Good Chance for the Scots? The Recruitment of English Armies for Scotland and the Marches, 1337-1347', 121-155; 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/49:165; C61/49:249; *CCR, 1343-1346*, 15; *CCR, 1354-1360*, 114; *CPR, 1334-1338*, 131-132; *CPR, 1345-1348*, 59.

<sup>44</sup> Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 113; Wylie and Waugh, *The Reign of Henry the Fifth*, 131.

<sup>45</sup> R. Hardy, 'The Longbow', in *Arms, Armies and Fortifications*, 162.

longbowman for instance.<sup>46</sup> This did not mean, however, that Edward was unfamiliar with the concept of the mounted archer.

Although the war in Gascony did not witness the arrival of the Irish hobelar, it was in fact Edward's Gascon mounted crossbowmen who had first made an appearance earlier in the reign. The crossbow became synonymous with Gascon troops, a result of its effectiveness when released from the relative safety of a fortifications walls, and as will become clear, Gascony, like Wales, was well furnished with fortifications, making the Gascon crossbowman 'valuable auxiliary' in frontier regions.<sup>47</sup> During the first Welsh war of 1277, 30 mounted crossbowmen ('arbalétriers à cheval'), had arrived in Wales from Gascony, which was matched with Edward's large order for the manufacture of around 200,000 crossbow bolts.<sup>48</sup> And again, during the second Welsh war in 1282, 52 mounted crossbowmen joined a Gascon contingent of 21 knights and 533 foot soldiers.<sup>49</sup>

Although these recruits would have most certainly dismounted to engage the enemy, it shows Edward's keen interest in utilizing their firepower in battle; not only could they manoeuvre at a quicker pace than the foot soldier, but their impact with the crossbow meant they could reach a target at around 200 yards distance, twice per minute.<sup>50</sup> Here, Edward was not only deploying a rudimentary form of mounted archer, but was combining the mounted infantryman with a weapon that the Crown actively 'concerned' itself with, certainly by ensuring that there was a ready supply of crossbow bolts.<sup>51</sup> Little had changed by the opening stage of the Hundred Years War when, on one occasion, Nicholas Corrand, 'the maker of the king's artillery', was ordered to supply 10,000 heads for quarrels and to ready them for transportation to Gascony in 1338.<sup>52</sup>

The clear presence of a Gascon mounted infantry corps from the late 1270s may suggest that there was little need for the arrival of another light mounted infantryman in the form of a hobelar

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<sup>46</sup> Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 105.

<sup>47</sup> D. Simpkin, 'The King's Sergeants-At-Arms', 82; Bell et. al., *Soldier in Later Medieval England*, 185; D.S. Bachrach, 'Crossbows for the King: The Crossbow during the Reigns of John and Henry III of England', *Technology and Culture*, 45:1 (2004), 103; D.S. Bachrach, 'Crossbows for the King, Part II: The Crossbow during the Reign of Edward I of England (1272-1307)', *Technology and Culture*, 47:1 (2006), 82.

<sup>48</sup> *CPR, 1272-1281*, 184; *RG*, iii, xl; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 179.

<sup>49</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 193.

<sup>50</sup> Hardy, 'The Longbow', 161-162.

<sup>51</sup> Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 106.

<sup>52</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/50:29.

during the Anglo-French war and may account for their absence in the campaign. Similarly, there was already an understanding, in the local Catalan dialect, of a type of “scout”, closely related to that of the hobelar. The term ‘*adaliz*’ or ‘*adalil*’ denoted either a captain or a scout amongst the *almogavers* of Northern Spain and although the aforementioned Pascal Valentin, the *Adaliz* of Aragon, was of the former classification (due to the evidence for his pay and restoration costs), it is not unreasonable to suggest that there were “scouts” within his contingent; these individuals would have performed recognisable duties to their Anglicized counterparts on the Scottish border.<sup>53</sup> Such were the similarities between the hobelar and the *adaliz* that Gascons, like John de La Grave, were to serve alongside ‘other hobelars’ in the English garrisons stationed along the Scottish border in the years leading up to the battle of Bannockburn.<sup>54</sup>

The mounted archer of the 1330s may be recognised as a “revolutionary” concept in the way the infantry fought, yet his inception into the English army was not an overnight phenomenon. Since the 1270s, mounted infantry recruits had been integrated into Edward I’s armies at varying intervals, from the mounted Gascon crossbowman, to the Irish hobelar and his Iberian counterpart. However, English kings were relatively slow to the process of remodelling their armies, either through reluctance or because traditional methods of military technique were still relevant and there was very little need for sudden overnight change. Perhaps what is more unusual is that Edward understood the concept of the mounted archer from at least 1292, yet did little to raise these troops for his campaigns in Gascony; the king of Hungary had offered Edward the service of a ‘thousand knights and mounted archers’ for his proposed crusade, and although the crusade was abandoned Edward had replied that ‘their arrival would be a source of joy to him’.<sup>55</sup> The Anglo-French war may have been deprived of its part in the evolutionary process of the mounted infantryman, and the hobelar’s attributes may have been far too limited to have played a vital role in the campaign, yet an evolutionary process had taken shape in the Edwardian infantry, with the king-duke’s Gascon subjects at the forefront.

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<sup>53</sup> ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/32:180.

<sup>54</sup> *CDS*, vol. v, 233; ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/71:8.

<sup>55</sup> *CCR*, 1288-1296, 266-267.

## The Wolf Unleashed

The artillery revolution, according to Curry, Ayton, Price, and Rogers, centred on the innovations in gunpowder weaponry of the early fifteenth century, for the English at least: the development of the handgun, or “*hanaspecies*”, of c.1415, and the cannon, between 1400 and 1430, changed both the strategy and tactics of warfare, mainly as a result of the ‘design and manufacture of the guns themselves, in loading methods, and in powder formulation’, as highlighted by Rogers.<sup>56</sup> In Gascony, by the mid-1430s, the development of the “revolutionary” weapon of the cannon was achieved in both quantity and quality; *The Brut* chronicler recorded that there were ‘gret gunnes of brasse called Gedcon, & many other gret gonnes & serpentines’ in the region.<sup>57</sup>

Yet, Edward I would initiate an artillery *evolution* from the early 1300s, albeit one built on tradition and progress combined. The developments of the cannon were still a long way off during Edward’s reign, and although Roger Bacon had first drawn-up a gunpowder recipe in c.1267, it was not until Walter de Milemete’s original illumination of a cannon in c.1326 that such weaponry begins to develop; from this point on Edward III began the process of stockpiling early forms of cannon at the armouries of the Tower of London and the castles of Dover and Queensborough, later to be used in the sieges of Cambrai (1338), Tournai (1340), and Calais (1346-1347).<sup>58</sup>

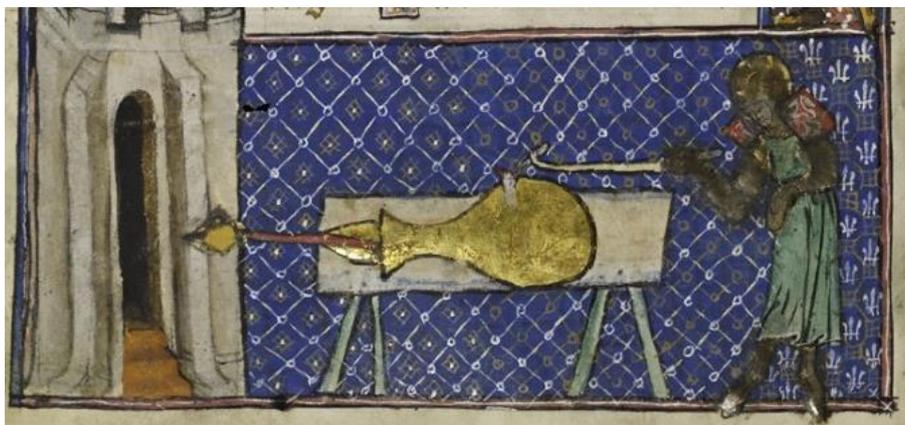


Image 8. An early depiction of a cannon from Walter de Milemete’s, *Liber de nobilitatibus, sapientiis et prudentiis regum*, England, c.1326. (Christ Church MS 92 70v. © The Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford.)

<sup>56</sup> A. Curry, ‘Guns and Goddams: was there a Military Revolution in Lancastrian Normandy 1415-50?’, *Journal of Medieval History VIII* (2010), 173; Ayton and Price, *The Medieval Military Revolution*, 2; Rogers, ‘The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years War’, 267; K. DeVries, ‘Gunpowder Weaponry and the Rise of the Early Modern State’, *War in History*, 5:2 (1998), 127; *CDS*, vol. v, 285.

<sup>57</sup> *The Brut*, 505.

<sup>58</sup> Rogers, ‘The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years War’, 258; DeVries, ‘Gunpowder Weaponry’, 130, 139; K. DeVries, ‘The Impact of Gunpowder Weaponry on Siege Warfare in the Hundred Years War’, *The Medieval City under Siege*, eds., I.A. Corfis and M. Wolfe, (Woodbridge, 1995), 228-229.

It is worth noting, however, that the rudimentary form of cannon did not guarantee success in the siege, as Cambrai and Tournai demonstrated, whilst at Calais the inhabitants only surrendered eleven months after the siege had begun due to starvation. An intercepted letter addressed to the French king had read: 'The town is in desperate need of corn, wine and meat. There is nothing in the place which has not been eaten, no dogs, cats or horses, and nothing to keep us alive unless we eat human flesh'.<sup>59</sup>

In similar fashion to the infantry evolution of 1296, the artillery evolution would also side-step the Anglo-French war. During the Gascon conflict it is still clear to see the traditional siege artillery of the twelfth century in use. Torsion, tension and lever action engines are widely recorded, from the mangonel and the springald, to the *ballista* and a host of other machines that either propelled quarrels or stones; these machines were operated by skilled "*artilleurs*", such as Jordan *trubechetarius*, and often built at short notice on campaign by skilled craftsmen like Gerard the engineer: little under £14,000 was spent on wages and machines throughout the Anglo-French war.<sup>60</sup> Yet, if revolutions in military technique such as the cannon were still out of reach for Edward and his expeditionary forces, then where does the king's evolutionary process in siege warfare fit within this timeframe? And, further still, what can the developments in siege tactics during the turn of the fourteenth century tell us about the type of warfare engaged throughout the Anglo-French war, as well as in the campaigns waged in the duchy by Edward II and Edward III?

The landmark moment in the use of gunpowder weaponry in the British Isles came during the sieges of Brechin and Stirling castles in 1303 and 1304.<sup>61</sup> At Brechin, sulphur had been used to burn the castle walls, while the following year 'stoves of earthenware' (*poeles de terre*) were used to contain the sulphur, saltpetre and cotton thread, which was then 'hurled into the castle to burn the houses in it'.<sup>62</sup> Notably, this was a different incendiary to what contemporaries called Greek fire

<sup>59</sup> Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, 74, 120-121, 246-253.

<sup>60</sup> D.S. Bachrach, 'English Artillery 1189-1307: The Implications of Terminology', *The English Historical Review*, 121:494 (December, 2006), 1410-1413, 1421-1423; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 203; *RG*, iii, cxi, clxviii.

<sup>61</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 499; and Prestwich, 'Edward I's armies', 239.

<sup>62</sup> *Documents illustrative of the History of Scotland*, vol. ii, 479-480; *CDS*, vol. v, 183; Prestwich, 'Edward I's armies', 239. The cotton thread provided an alternative for the carbon usually found in gunpowder, a result of its charcoal contents.

which was a petroleum based substance that consisted of naphtha, sulphur, pitch and quicklime; Greek fire was a very difficult substance to extinguish and often required sand or vinegar to put out.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear to see the efforts that Edward went to in order to bring a highly novel, combustible, missile weapon to the walls of Stirling Castle, but for the very same reasons would also highlight why Edward had not attempted to replicate a similar strategy in Gascony.

For the siege at Stirling a total of 47*s. 8d.* had been spent on five workmen for over two weeks labour, as well as in the sulphur bought and transported from York by the king's yeoman, Gerard Doroms; in the earthenware pots and in yards of canvas; and for the wages of a boy 'residing at St Andrews', presumably to keep watch on the items prior to the siege.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, due to the lack of experience amongst English pyrotechnicians, Edward had designated a specialist Burgundian, John de la Mullier, at the expense of 36*s. 8d.* to conduct the attack with orders to cast 'fire into the castle'; la Mullier would presage the highly admired fifteenth century Bureau brothers' Vaubanesque system of siege craft, which included digging fosses and trenches in front of the heavy artillery before they were used to bombard the enemy on an almost continual pattern day and night.<sup>65</sup> If this had proven to be a mighty undertaking in a domestic setting, arrangements for a similar process to take shape in Gascony would have been almost impossible.

Surprisingly the siege of Stirling Castle would be made infamous, not for the introduction of gunpowder weaponry, but in Edward's refusal to let the Scottish garrison surrender before his newly prized trebuchet, Warwolf (or Ludgar, according to Langtoft), was tried out on the castle's defences; on the day the garrison surrendered (20 July 1304) it was reported by Walter Bedwin, a clerk in the wardrobe administration, that the king wills that 'none of his people enter till it is struck with the "Warwolf" (tauntqz il eit ferru ove le Lup de guerre); and that those within [the castle] defend themselves from the said "wolf" as they best can'.<sup>66</sup> Warwolf had taken the skills of five master

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<sup>63</sup> Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 343.

<sup>64</sup> *Documents illustrative of the History of Scotland*, vol. ii, 480; *CDS*, vol. ii, 406; *CCR*, 1296-1302, 516; *CPR*, 1292-1301, 524.

<sup>65</sup> Rogers, 'The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years War', 266-267; R.D. Smith, 'Artillery and the Hundred Years War: Myth and Interpretation', in *Arms, Armies and Fortifications*, 156-157.

<sup>66</sup> Langtoft, 357; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 502; *CDS*, vol. ii, 405; A.Z. Freeman, 'Wall-Breakers and River-Bridgers: Military Engineers in the Scottish Wars of Edward I', *Journal of British Studies*, 10:2 (May, 1971), 9; Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 343.

carpenters and fifty carpenters to complete and quite obviously Edward wanted to see its firepower, yet work on the engine had to be rushed for it was still not fully operational by the time the Scottish garrison had surrendered.<sup>67</sup>

Nevertheless, stone throwing, and spear-casting engines were clearly the main weapon of choice at long drawn-out sieges. During the opening stages of the siege in April, for instance, Master Reginald the engineer had accounted for a whole host of engines colourfully named: ‘Segrave’, ‘Robinet’, ‘le Vikere’, and ‘Kyngestone’, to name just a few, whilst Edward of Carnarvon had been given orders to strip the lead from the churches around Perth and Dunblane, so as to form the counterweights for the trebuchet ‘provided always that the churches be not uncovered over the altars’.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, John Botetourte, now acting in the position of an early fourteenth century Master of the Ordnance, was entrusted to make sure that ‘the great engine of Inverkip’, along with timber, stones, and ‘all the lead which you can procure’, was to arrive as ‘speedily’ as possible.<sup>69</sup> Despite the frantic energy that surrounded the attack, the siege of Stirling Castle had also become somewhat of a grand occasion for the ladies of the court, including Queen Eleanor, who arrived in time to watch the main attraction of Warwolf on display; in order to ensure their safety an oriel window was built, at the cost of £6 7s. 6d. so they could watch the assault in some comfort.<sup>70</sup>

The siege of Stirling Castle had perfectly demonstrated an evolution in siege craft, as well as in the strategy and tactics that played out in the attack on the Scottish garrison, yet it was still the more “traditional” methods, such as the deployment of large trebuchets, that occasioned most of the excitement from both Edward and the royal onlookers. The far from out-dated concept of deploying stone-throwing machines suggests that the strategy and tactics used in Gascony, a decade earlier, were in fact the accepted (and most effective) way of approaching a siege; the introduction of novel, experimental, forms of combustibles were not only an unknown substance for English military technicians, but when they were introduced they were seemingly costly, time-consuming, and were

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<sup>67</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 502; *CDS*, vol. ii, 419.

<sup>68</sup> TNA C47/22/8/2; *Documents illustrative of the History of Scotland*, vol. ii, 481; *CDS*, vol. ii, 389, 405, 419; *CDS*, vol. iv, 370; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 501-502.

<sup>69</sup> *Documents illustrative of the History of Scotland*, vol. ii, 483-484.

<sup>70</sup> *CDS*, vol. iv, 466; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 501.

presumably limited in their usage due to a lack of readily available supplies. As the Gascon conflicts perfectly demonstrate, greater effort was placed on manning strongholds with engineers, in repairing pre-existing engines, and in ensuring that there was enough ammunition to sustain a siege for long periods of time.

The missile weaponry of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries was still a very relevant part of the Edwardian siege, from the outbreak of the Anglo-French war through to the first stage of the Hundred Years War. Yet, over the next five decades there was increased focus on the expertise surrounding the use of siege artillery, and in ensuring that artillery capabilities could be fully reached. For instance, as early as 1289 Edward I had pre-empted the possibility of siege warfare in Gascony and, besides appointing a castellan to each stronghold in the region, the king-duke ensured that there were ‘two technical experts’ present within the garrisons: an engineer and an ‘artillator’ (or chief of armaments).<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, skilled carpenters were assigned to repair and build siege equipment. Bernard of Tarbes, a ‘carpentarius bridarum’ from the Hautes-Pyrénées, was employed to repair ‘bridarum’ or mangonels.<sup>72</sup> Bernard was, it seems, in constant employment with the English forces from 1294 when the earl of Lincoln had made payments to him for repairs, along with a Master Thomas de la Réole, a ‘fossator’ or trencher: in 1305 Bernard was finally paid his wages in full by John de Sandale, at the sum of £13 2s. 1d. and by Thomas of Canterbury for two payments totalling 76s.<sup>73</sup>

Although new siege engines had been delivered to the region at the outbreak of the war, it seems more likely that highly skilled carpenters would have been employed to repair pre-existing machines that had either been damaged or neglected.<sup>74</sup> From surviving accounts it is clear to see that at least two mangonels were already in the region after having been shipped to Gascony from a

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<sup>71</sup> Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 59-60.

<sup>72</sup> *RG*, iii, 482-483.

<sup>73</sup> *RG*, iii, 482-483, 521; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 204. *Fossatores* were key to strengthening English bases on the Scottish border during the later 1290s. On one occasion the English treasurer, Walter Langton, contracted with Adam le Fleming of Suffolk and a team of *fossatores* to dig two trenches, one forty feet wide and one twenty feet wide, both twenty feet deep, “around the peel of the castle of Dumfries”. See Freeman, ‘Wall-Breakers and River Bridgers’, 8.

<sup>74</sup> Bachrach, ‘English Artillery’, 1413-1414.

weapons storehouse in Winchester in 1235.<sup>75</sup> Should these devices still have been salvageable then it is likely that skilled carpenters, like Bernard, would have been tasked with bringing them back to working order.

The importance placed on maintenance and repair is demonstrable throughout the period. In July 1331, for example, Edward III appointed the constable of Bordeaux, John Travers, along with John de Hillesley, 'to survey' the defects of the castles and the engines stored there, but in February 1332 it was discovered that the houses for storing the king's artillery in the duchy's castles were so badly damaged that the engines were almost beyond repair.<sup>76</sup> Without question a large part of the king's artillery supplies were transported from England to the duchy at each outbreak of war, presumably because of neglect in the twenty-seven years between the campaigns of the Anglo-French war and the war of St Sardos, and again in the period between 1324 and 1337.

In January 1325, for instance, the abbot of Westminster was to provide 'as much timber of oak and ash from his wood at Amwell, as the king requires 60 oaks for beams of [war] engines, plus 60 oaks for springalds, lances, quarrels and other things for his expedition to the duchy', whilst later that summer the earl of Surrey was to arrive in Gascony with the first fleet carrying 'springalds and other engines'.<sup>77</sup> And again, in 1337 timber was required for the extensive building of engines and palisades around Bayonne, whilst 'the maker of the king's artillery', Nicholas Corrand, was to collect 'suitable timber sufficient for the making of 40 springalds', as well as to select 'six master carpenters to make the engines', before sending them to the point of embarkation at Portsmouth.<sup>78</sup>

From these accounts a clear picture can develop as to the continued use of traditional missile weaponry from the outbreak of the Anglo-French war through to the 1330s. Understandably, due to the factors of naval transportation, it seems that springalds and mangonels were in plentiful supply as they were far easier to transport than the large trebuchets that had 'terrified the Scots' into surrendering at the siege of Stirling Castle; they were also quicker to build, requiring little more than the timber to form the frames and the bow of the springald, along with the leather slings (or *fundae*)

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<sup>75</sup> Bachrach, 'English Artillery', 1420; *CCR, 1234-1237*, 65.

<sup>76</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/43:218; C61/44: 45.

<sup>77</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/36:189, 289.

<sup>78</sup> 'Gascon Rolls Project', C61/49:393; C61/50:29.

for the mangonel.<sup>79</sup> The role of the artillery during the Anglo-French war, in particular, falls short of an evolutionary process because there had been no move to incorporate the new gunpowder technology witnessed in Scotland; even in 1306 Edward I was still experimenting with gunpowder weaponry during the Scottish wars when he ordered a delivery of ‘combustibles’ (*fomides*) from the “dead stock” of Newcastle for the defences at Berwick.<sup>80</sup>

What Edward meant by these combustibles is difficult to tell, yet Edward III’s order in 1338, from the sheriff of Hampshire for ‘20 stones each of hemp and hair from cart-horses and other draught mares’ for the king’s springalds in Gascony, may suggest that these were a similar incendiary that was intended to be set on fire and launched at the besieged enemy garrisons.<sup>81</sup> Edward III had first used gunpowder weaponry at the siege of Berwick in 1333, where he ‘destroiede meny a fair hous’, and the incorporation of hemp and horse hair incendiaries in the expeditionary forces five years later may be a telling indication that the combustibles had been trialled on the Scottish border beforehand.<sup>82</sup>

Either way, the continual deployment with traditional methods of projectile weaponry during the siege, and the experimentation and introduction of new gunpowder weaponry, was a process that continued through to the fifteenth century. In this regard Edward’s domestic wars can certainly be viewed as the evolutionary beginnings for this pattern of siege warfare, whilst the military techniques of the Anglo-French war epitomised the established methods of the medieval siege. As Robert D. Smith emphasises, ‘gunpowder artillery did not supplant the traditional artillery of mangonel and trebuchet’, and the tried and tested techniques of siege craft were still preferable to the military tactician of English armies during the early fourteenth century.<sup>83</sup>

### **Castles, Strongholds and *Maisons-fortes***

In 1993 Clifford Rogers proposed a third kind of revolution to accompany his infantry and artillery concepts: the “Artillery Fortress Revolution”. It developed, according to Rogers, around the

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<sup>79</sup> Prestwich, ‘Edward I’s armies’, 239; Bachrach, ‘English Artillery’, 1414.

<sup>80</sup> *CDS*, vol. v, 190.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/50:41.

<sup>82</sup> *The Brut*, 281.

<sup>83</sup> Smith, ‘Artillery and the Hundred Years War: Myth and Interpretation’, 155.

1520's with the low, thick, sunken, gun mounted walls of the *trace italienne*, or Italian line; the *trace italienne* is viewed to be a crucial development of its medieval predecessor: the castle.<sup>84</sup> Undefended burgh towns could now, in theory, be turned into impregnable bastion fortifications in little time, as 2,000 English infantrymen and engineers showed over 68 days at Haddington in Scotland during 1548-49; while the specially designed walls (often little more than 18ft high in Haddington's case) could repel or absorb cannon fire, although as J.C. Sharman points out, the *trace italienne* was only of any military significance when it was manned by a large cohort of well-trained troops.<sup>85</sup>

However, DeVries has shown that many aspects associated with the new style sixteenth century bastion fortification had their precedents in the Middle Ages.<sup>86</sup> Gunports, for instance, can be found in England from the later 1340s, while during Richard II's reign they were incorporated into the Westgate at Winchester, at Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight, and in the defences of Southampton where candles provided light for the gunners along the galleries at night.<sup>87</sup> DeVries specifically pinpoints the sloping *glacis* of masonry work and earthen ramparts of the Middle Ages as the origins for the *trace italienne*, yet most important was the concept of flanking fire, protecting the "dead zones" of a castle's walls, like those incorporated into the design of Edward I's Beaumaris Castle, although on this basis alone an earlier example can be provided in Harlech Castle.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Rogers, 'The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years War', 274.

<sup>85</sup> The English garrison only surrendered to the Franco-Scottish force due to plague and starvation, see J. Cooper, 'What's Missing Here? Homing in on Haddington's Lost Defences', *Journal of Conflict Archaeology*, 5:1 (2009), 141-162; J. Raymond, *Henry VIII's Military Revolution: The Armies of Sixteenth Century Britain and Europe* (London, 2007), 2; J.C. Sharman, 'Myths of military revolution: European expansion and Eurocentrism', *European Journal of International Relations*, 24:3 (2018), 491-513.

<sup>86</sup> DeVries, 'Catapults Are Not Atomic Bombs', 467.

<sup>87</sup> DeVries, 'Catapults Are Not Atomic Bombs', 467; J. Kenyon, 'Coastal Artillery Fortification in England in the Late Fourteenth and Early Fifteenth Centuries', in *Arms, Armies and Fortifications*, 146-147; M. Hughes, 'The Fourteenth Century French Raids on Hampshire and the Isle of Wight', in *Arms, Armies and Fortifications*, 138.

<sup>88</sup> DeVries, 'Catapults Are Not Atomic Bombs', 467.



Image 9. This aerial view of Harlech Castle (eastward facing) perfectly demonstrates an early concept of flanking fire. The concentric lines of the outer curtain wall enhance the defending garrison's firepower around the "dead zones" of the inner castle walls. The castle also shows an early example of the D-shaped towers fronting the fortified gatehouse as well as the round corner towers that became common features of Edward I's fortifications. © Hawlfraint y Gordon/ © Crown copyright (2021) Cymru Wales.

Although Beaumaris was built in response to the Welsh rebellion of 1295, Prestwich has suggested that the 'magnificent series of castles' in North Wales were developed 'without the adoption of any totally radical innovations'.<sup>89</sup> Despite this, Edward's castles were at the cutting edge of military design, a result of the incorporation of concentric lines, the removal of the keep from the central focus of the layout, and the addition of mural galleries to increase firepower.<sup>90</sup> In Wales alone the castle's role had evolved between 1277 and 1295. Rhuddlan Castle, for instance, was initially designed to be an administrative base in the north, yet this was later moved to a more secure location at Flint, whilst in the sporadic breakout of war and rebellion between 1282 and 1295 building projects at Harlech, Caernarfon, Conwy and Beaumaris were all designed with military function as their primary purpose.<sup>91</sup> Unsurprisingly this all came at a heavy cost; by the end of the king's reign Edward had spent around £80,000 on his fortifications in Wales alone.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>89</sup> N. Coldstream, 'Architects, Advisers and Design at Edward I's Castles in Wales', *Architectural History*, 46 (2003), 19; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 210.

<sup>90</sup> Prestwich, 'Was there a Military Revolution in Medieval England?', 27; Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 372.

<sup>91</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 208.

<sup>92</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 214.

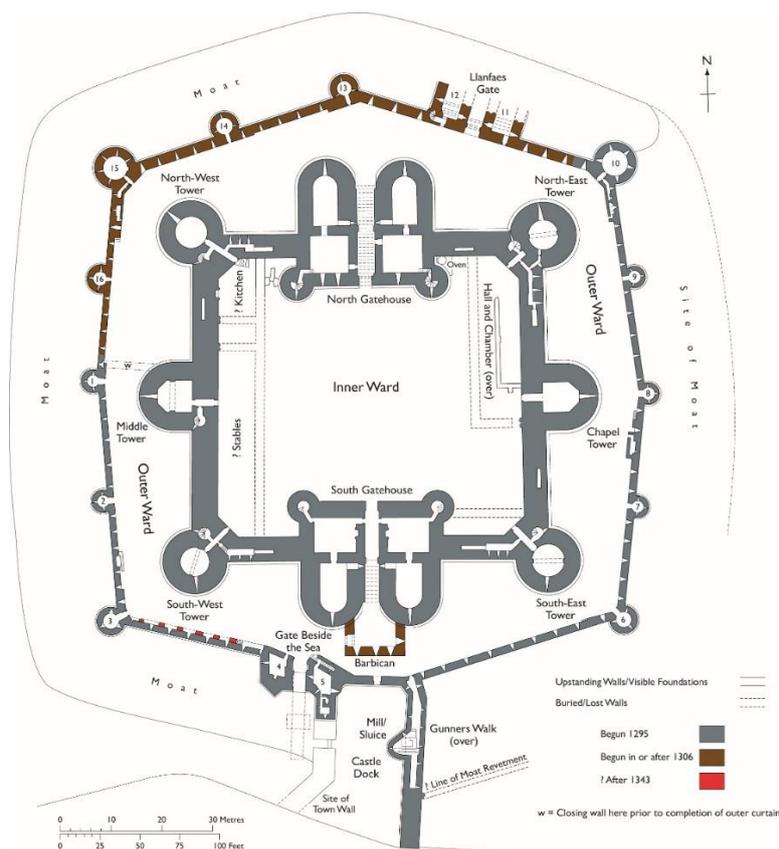


Image 10. From this diagram of the layout of Beaumaris Castle it is clear to see how flanking fire could remove the “dead zones” of a castle’s walls. © Hawlfraint y Gordon/ © Crown copyright (2021) Cymru Wales.

There has been much debate surrounding Edward’s input into the designs of these castles. The castles of North Wales were, as advocated by Arnold Taylor and Michael Prestwich, a product of the ‘specialist knowledge’ of the Savoyard masons, while one man in particular stands out: Master James of St George.<sup>93</sup> Nicola Coldstream and Marc Morris, on the other hand, believe Edward to have been the major factor behind the building works, although for Coldstream it was essentially a ‘collaboration’ between Edward and his Anglo-Savoyard masons.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, both historians in this case highlight Edward’s hands-on approach to castle design, each pointing to the fact that in Scotland in 1302 Edward ordered the same ‘master of military design’ (James of St George) to ‘build a twin-towered gatehouse and two towers on the water at either end of the palisade [at Linlithgow],’

<sup>93</sup> A.J. Taylor, *Studies in Castles and Castle-Building* (London, 1985), 82, 78-79; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 118.

<sup>94</sup> N. Coldstream, ‘James of St George’, *The Impact of the Edwardian Castles in Wales: The proceedings of a conference held at Bangor University, 7-9 September 2007*, eds., D.M. Williams and J.R. Kenyon, (Oxford, 2010), 43-44.

whilst also taking a firm interest into the depth of the surrounding ditch.<sup>95</sup> That this castle was eventually built in timber, rather than stone, also suggests that Edward was concerned with all types of fortification design, no matter how primitive, personally ensuring that royal castles were to be structurally sound and primed for military purpose.

Although Edward's castles may not be seen to be "revolutionary" the collective input from both Edward and James of St George would play a large part in the *evolutionary* process of fortification design in Wales, but also in Gascony. This collaboration has even prompted one historian to suggest that it may have resulted in the building of 'the only new castle' during Edward's reign in the duchy at Sauveterre-la-Lémance, close to Villefranche in the early 1280s, as will be discussed shortly.<sup>96</sup> The Edwardian castles of the late thirteenth century were, according to Taylor, nothing less than 'impressive monuments of military architecture', and Coldstream has rightly stated that Edward's Welsh castles represented 'all that was required in a fortified castle at that time: a visible, formidable presence that dominated its surroundings'.<sup>97</sup> For this reason it is difficult to believe that Edward would have neglected the castles, strongholds, and *maisons-fortes* in Gascony, and neither would he have expected to mount a successful defence of the duchy in 1294 with inadequate and out-dated fortification design.

The Anglo-French war essentially played out in front of the castle wall in the form of the siege, emphasising the importance of the stronghold or fortified town.<sup>98</sup> Bordeaux, where the English exchequer was located, was 'extremely defensible', as the expeditionary forces discovered, while whoever controlled Bourq and Blaye controlled the confluence of the Dordogne and the Garonne; La Réole and Marmande played a similar role in river control between the Garonne and Agen, while

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<sup>95</sup> Coldstream, 'Architects, Advisers and Design', 31; Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 370; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 118.

<sup>96</sup> M. Morris, 'Edward I's Building Works in Gascony', in *The Impact of the Edwardian Castles in Wales*, 172-173.

<sup>97</sup> A.J. Taylor, 'Master James of St George', *The English Historical Review*, 65:257 (October, 1950), 433; Coldstream, 'Architects, Advisers and Design', 19.

<sup>98</sup> Vale, 'The War in Aquitaine', in *Arms, Armies and Fortifications*, 74; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 203.

Fronsac and Libourne ‘stood as manacles’ on the frontier between Edward’s inheritance and the Capetian allied fiefdoms.<sup>99</sup>

The possession of only a few strongholds along the frontier was enough to control communication and supply across the rivers and old Roman roads which traversed the region; the fortification was, as Labarge notes, ‘of extraordinary value to both sides’, certainly between the Anglo-French war, the war of St Sardos, and the expeditions of Edward III.<sup>100</sup> Yet in a region where there were very few ducal castles to begin with (Henry III’s new building project on the île de Ré, less than twenty miles west of La Rochelle, had been turned over to Louis IX in the aftermath of the failed Taillebourg and Saintes campaigns of 1242); and ultimately no equivalent castle-building project as witnessed in Wales, coupled with a state of almost constant private war, Edward had to adopt traditional methods to ensure the regions fortifications were both loyal and fit for military function.<sup>101</sup>

In the first instance, when Edward could not purchase a key fortress, such as he had done at Talmont in 1283 for 1,322 *livres tournois*, and again at Tontoulon in 1290 for 3,500 *livres bordelais*, homage was either requested from the keeper ‘to render the castle to him when it might be needed because of war’, or through ‘seigneurial authorisation to fortify’, otherwise known as licences to crenellate, which were bestowed on an individual in return for their military allegiance.<sup>102</sup> As will be demonstrated, licences to crenellate were often granted to individuals of lesser rank, firstly to enhance their social status in the region, but also to draw them closer to Edward’s allegiance; as there was actually very little to prevent a provincial lord from going against Edward’s wishes, should the king- duke have refused authorisation, then it would prove far more expedient to simply grant authorisation and to keep would-be allies close to his side.<sup>103</sup>

In 1278, for example, the king’s valet, Eble de Puyguilhem, was granted a licence to construct a secure house (*domum securam*) close to Blésignac in the Gironde.<sup>104</sup> Edward’s trust in the Gascon

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<sup>99</sup> Vale, ‘The War in Aquitaine’, 75.

<sup>100</sup> Labarge, *Gascony, England’s First Colony*, 121; Vale, ‘The War in Aquitaine’, 75.

<sup>101</sup> Carpenter, *Henry III*, 268-270.

<sup>102</sup> Morris, ‘Edward I’s Building Works in Gascony’, 169; Labarge, *Gascony, England’s First Colony*, 43; C. Coulson, ‘Structural Symbolism in Medieval Castle Architecture’, *Late Medieval Castles*, ed. R. Liddiard, (Woodbridge, 2016), 199.

<sup>103</sup> Coulson, ‘Structural Symbolism’, 205.

<sup>104</sup> *RG*, ii, 45, no.171.

lord was rewarded when Eble played a large part, if not entirely following the laws of war, during the siege of St Macaire in 1296; a group of Gascon troops, including Eble, forced their way into the French occupied town and in the ensuing chaos ‘pillaged the inhabitants’ for their wine, corn and oats, amongst other items.<sup>105</sup> And again, in 1292, William-Arnaud de Sescas, a vassal of the king of England’s liegemen (the Albrets), was granted royal permission to build a fortified house in the vicinity of St Peter de Cameres, while at the outbreak of the Anglo-French war Arnaud-Guillaume de Marsan (Piers Gaveston’s older brother) surrendered Roquefort Castle to Edward’s forces, before receiving high acclaim for his honourable service during the siege of St Sever the following year.<sup>106</sup>

Of course, licences to crenellate were a far more common occurrence, mainly due to the need for protection, but also as a mark of prestige; these licences can be traced from the late twelfth century through to the early sixteenth, turning the ‘martial dwelling’ into a place of residence, of ceremony, of entertainment, and administration.<sup>107</sup> This was a scenario that would play out time and again from Gascony to the Anglo-Scottish border.

Edward I would grant a large proportion of licences in the immediate aftermath of the Anglo-French war, suggesting that many of the strongholds had either been damaged in the conflict, or local lords were utilising a period of peace to prepare for the next outbreak of seigneurial or private war. It was also an opportunity to reward many of Edward’s Gascon subjects who had proven their loyalty throughout the conflict with a ‘display of status’, not only strengthening the bonds of allegiance which the king-duke relied upon to maintain his dominion both in times of peace and in war but signalling to neutral or Capetian allied nobles the benefits for supporting the English king-duke.<sup>108</sup>

Moreover, Edward was well-aware, like many of his contemporaries were, of the perceived nature of his Gascon subjects; the king had once openly warned Robert Burnell, the bishop of Bath and Wells and chancellor, as well as the Savoyard knight, Otto de Grandson, that the Gascons were

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<sup>105</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 210.

<sup>106</sup> TNA SC1/19/102; *RG*, iii, 40, no. 1997; 339, no. 4248.

<sup>107</sup> Coulson, ‘Structural Symbolism’, 205, 209; Jackson W. Armstrong, *England’s Northern Frontier: Conflict and Local Society in the Fifteenth-Century Scottish Marches* (Cambridge, 2020), 82-83; Andy King, ‘Fortresses and fashion statements: gentry castles in fourteenth-century Northumberland’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 33:4 (2007), 378-379, 395.

<sup>108</sup> Armstrong, *England’s Northern Frontier*, 82; King, ‘Fortresses and fashion statements’, 386.

‘full of cavil (*cavillosi*) and changeable in their agreements, proposals, promises, and deeds’.<sup>109</sup> Yet this was perhaps an unfair judgement for many of the Gascon lords had stayed unswervingly loyal to Edward throughout the three years of the campaign, coupled with the fact that some had still yet to receive payment for their service. Nevertheless, Edward chose to bestow nominal titles on the lesser Gascon lords to ensure this commitment continued.

In November 1304, for instance, Guillaume de Lamotte, Amanieu de Sescas and Amanieu de Ententon were all granted licences to build *maisons-fortes* throughout the Gironde. Interestingly here there are specific mention of arrow slits (*arqueriis*), a ‘highly unusual’ reference according to Coulson, mainly because the designs for the building works were often vague and left to the ingenuity and architectural will of the master masons.<sup>110</sup> The specific addition of arrow slits, however, may suggest that Edward was keen to adopt some form of uniformity to castle design in the region, one which aided the fortifications firepower. Unfortunately, licences to crenellate returned to their simple instructions the following year when Bernard de Vignoles, Theobald de Preissiac and his son, Arnaud-Bernard, as well as Arnaud de Calva Penna, were all granted permission to crenellate fortified houses throughout the Gironde without any clear instructions, yet by this point the incorporation of a uniform style of arrow slit may have become a customary addition during the process of fortification.<sup>111</sup>



Image 11. A closer view of the Sea Gate at Beaumaris Castle with arrow slits (*arqueriis*). This type of design most likely became a feature of the building works in Gascony. © Hawlfraint y Gordon/ © Crown copyright (2021) Cymru Wales.

<sup>109</sup> *CCR, 1272-1279*, 493; Morris, ‘Edward I’s Building Works in Gascony’, 167.

<sup>110</sup> *RG*, iii, 428, no.4644; 430, no. 4650; 433, no.4661; Coulson, ‘Structural Symbolism’, 206, 216.

<sup>111</sup> *RG*, iii, 438, no. 4684; 470, no. 4842-4843; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 117.

In Gascony, this process can be followed up until the Treaty of Brétigny as both Edward II and Edward III pursued a policy of occupying, fortifying, and repairing pre-existing structures. For example, in 1317 the castle of Saintes was to be repaired because there were ‘various defects... in its houses, walls, towers and gates’, while the following year the castle of St Macaire needed improvements because it was deemed to be in a ‘ruinous condition’; it is highly likely that this was due to the impact of the Anglo-Gascon siege on the castle twenty years earlier.<sup>112</sup> Similarly, between 1330 and 1355, Edward III distributed licences, predominantly throughout the Gironde and the Entre-deux-Mers, to Gascon lords such as Arnaut de Tastes, Gauter Rampnol, Hélias Dupuch and Amanieu du Fossat, to crenellate walls with stone, lime and chalk ‘for the repulsion of the king’s enemies and rebels, and for the safety and defence of those parts’.<sup>113</sup>

These were traditional and expedient methods of fortifying Gascony in favour of the king-duke, and notably by 1337 there were around a thousand castles and *maisons-fortes* in Gascony, including the Agenais, compared to less than a hundred in the Welsh March.<sup>114</sup> Should these Gascon strongholds have been occupied and repaired by the English Crown in times of war, as it seems they were, then there was very little need to embark upon an expensive and time-consuming castle-building project as witnessed in Wales during the late thirteenth century.

The evolutionary process associated with the fortification of Gascony’s strongholds can be gauged in the type of building works and repairs that were being adopted in the duchy, particularly that of the fortified gatehouse, a completely English innovation and one that even Edward’s Savoyard masons would have been unfamiliar with prior to their arrival in Wales.<sup>115</sup> According to Vale, it was common for the king-dukes ‘to provide fortified gates for a town, while the inhabitants enclosed the rest at their own expense’.<sup>116</sup> This particular interest in the construction of fortified gates occurred most prominently in the reign of Edward II, becoming a signature feature of royal fortification.

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<sup>112</sup> ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/32:42; C61/32:311.

<sup>113</sup> ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/54: 133; C61/42, 77, 118; C61/67: 4.

<sup>114</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 114-115.

<sup>115</sup> Coldstream, ‘James of St George’, 41.

<sup>116</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 118.

In 1319, for example, the consuls of Castillonès in the Agenais petitioned the king of England to build four new gateways ‘for the defence of their town’, while ‘they would build the rest of the walls and defences’; and at the outbreak of the war of St Sardos, Edward took a keen interest like his father had done at Linlithgow in ‘the manner in which’ the fortified gates were being constructed at Marmande.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, by 1326 the mayor and jurats of Bordeaux were strongly urged to complete the ‘new *enciente*, or ring of walls, around the city’ because the king of England had provided them with the money to do so.<sup>118</sup> This was a scenario akin to Henry III’s efforts to enclose the towns of Bayonne and Bergerac late in the summer of 1242.<sup>119</sup>

Although this may seem, on the face of it, like Edward II wanted a quick return on his investment, the evolution of the English designed fortified gatehouse (and the curtain wall) had been taking shape in North Wales since the later 1270s, most notably at Rhuddlan, Harlech, and Beaumaris castles, and may have so impressed upon Edward I and his successors that they wished to incorporate it into the design of the Gascon fortification. It is worth noting that each of the fortifications in Wales followed ‘a common pattern’, and although Rhuddlan had used the traditional round shaped plan for the gate towers the later constructions at Harlech and Beaumaris developed the new, and stronger, D-shaped plan; these three castles were also built on fairly level ground, they each have an outer curtain wall, a concentric layout, and round corner towers which complemented the flanking fire concept proposed by DeVries.<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, they were all seemingly the product of the chief master mason, James of St George.

James of St George had a long and promising career building castles for Edward I. He was most likely first encountered in Savoy on Edward’s return from the Holy Land in 1273 where he had been working as either a mason or a supervisor for Count Philip of Savoy, Edward’s great uncle, at St Georges d’Esperanche and Yverdon.<sup>121</sup> Not only did Edward and the Savoyards have close family ties, but English kings were feudal overlords in places such as Avigliana, close to Turin, the towns of

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<sup>117</sup> ‘Gascon Rolls Project’, C61/33:40; C61/35:351.

<sup>118</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 245.

<sup>119</sup> du Rausas, ‘*Ad Partes Transmarinas*’, 75; *CPR, 1232-1247*, 314, 319.

<sup>120</sup> Coldstream, ‘Architects, Advisers and Design’, 19, 21; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 208-210.

<sup>121</sup> Taylor, *Studies*, 5, 38-39; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 84.

Susa and St. Maurice, as well as the castle and palace of Bard; Henry III had even managed to become 'nominal lord' in the Alpine passes, taking possession of the towns and castles of Mont Cenis, Grand St Bernard and Petit St Bernard, although this was in return for money incentives, an annual pension for Amadeus of Savoy, and marriage alliances.<sup>122</sup> It is not surprising that Edward chose to travel through this region on his return to England highlighting the multi-functional purpose of a castle as demonstrated by Armstrong and King.

Savoy is key to Edward's iron ring of fortifications in Wales, as Taylor discovered in the 1950s when he visited the region west of Lake Geneva, and it was no mere coincidence that Edward should have embarked upon a similar enterprise so soon after returning. As Taylor discovered, Edward was certainly inspired by Philip's extensive Alpine projects during his stay in the region, a result of the count's conflict with the bishops of Sion. The expansionist ruler had been building towers and fortifications at La Bâtiaz and Saxon, to name just a few, between 1263 and 1280, and it was even noted by Taylor that the castle of San Giorio in the Val di Susa closely resembled that of Conwy.<sup>123</sup>

The unsurprising connection here is the master mason, James of St George, who arrived in England in April 1278; the Savoyard mason's influences have subsequently been identified at the sites of Rhuddlan, Flint, Aberystwyth, Denbigh, Harlech and Beaumaris, all ranging between 1278 and the later 1290s.<sup>124</sup> Due to James of St George's clear continental-style craftsmanship, which included the introduction of novel building techniques such as 'helicoïdal or inclined scaffold paths' and 'sloping lines of putlog holes', it is likely that many of the evolutionary designs found in the 'symmetrical framework' of Edward's Welsh castles had their precedence in Savoy; here, octagonal towers and inner wards have remarkable comparisons, and even the symmetry of the segmented windows and latrine chutes can be found in the connections between Harlech and St Georges de Esperanche.<sup>125</sup>

One reason to believe that these new continental designs were then incorporated, or attempted at the very least, in the Gascon stronghold, was James of St George's visit to the region at some stage

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<sup>122</sup> Taylor, *Studies*, 5; Carpenter, *Henry III*, 254, 494, 587.

<sup>123</sup> Taylor, *Studies*, 15.

<sup>124</sup> Taylor, *Studies*, 68-74; Coldstream, 'James of St George', 37.

<sup>125</sup> Taylor, *Studies*, 3, 79, 40-41; Coldstream, 'Architects, Advisers and Design', 21; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 210-211.

between 1286 and 1289.<sup>126</sup> James of St George most likely accompanied the justiciar of North Wales, John de Havering, to the region in November 1287 when it is recorded that Havering journeyed to meet Edward at Bordeaux ‘to speak with the king there upon certain of his special affairs’.<sup>127</sup> At the same time James of St George was paid 5s. for his expenses to also go to the king in Gascony.<sup>128</sup>

It has been proposed by Taylor that the visit was either a consultation surrounding the Welsh castles, or it was in connection with Edward’s bastide building projects in Gascony; from 1274 sites for bastides had been purchased by Edward’s seneschals, and the mid-1280s would witness the king’s most active years in the founding of bastides. During the timeframe for James of St George’s visit to the region no less than thirteen new sites had either been acquired or planted by the king’s seneschals at places such as *Burgus Reginae* (Queensborough), Baa, Camparian and Artus.<sup>129</sup> Many of Edward’s knights would give their names to the new bastides, such as John of Hastings who founded Hastings, and Roger Leyburne at Libourne; by the end of the king’s reign around 58 bastides had been founded, yet none more impressive than Monpazier, which was centred on a square and an open market hall.<sup>130</sup>

The extensive creation of the bastides in south-western France served two purposes for Edward. Firstly, they were a profitable initiative, merchants visited the new sites and markets creating economic activity that had not been witnessed before in some of the poorer, more remote areas; subsequently the merchants were taxed by Edward’s officials while the customs revenue at Bordeaux reaped the rewards of the economic upturn. And secondly, ducal authority increased in a similar fashion to that of the licences to crenellate. *Paréages*, for example, were agreed upon between a local lord and the king-duke; the lord would provide the land in which the Crown could build on, in turn entering the king-duke’s protection whilst also being granted a share of the economic profits.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Taylor, *Studies*, 73; Coldstream, ‘Architects, Advisers and Design’, 23.

<sup>127</sup> *CChRV*, 311; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 67; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 553.

<sup>128</sup> *Calendar of Ancient Correspondence concerning Wales*, ed. J.G. Edwards, (Cardiff, 1935), 120.

<sup>129</sup> Taylor, *Studies*, 70-73; M.W. Beresford, *New Towns of the Middle Ages: Town Plantation in England, Wales and Gascony* (London, 1967), 354-359; Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 212-213.

<sup>130</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 75; Morris, *A Great and Terrible King*, 212.

<sup>131</sup> Morris, ‘Edward I’s Building Works in Gascony’, 170-171; Beresford, *New Towns of the Middle Ages*, 359.

On this evidence it would seem far more likely that James of St George's expertise were required in the design and fortification of the king- duke's town planning exercise; James of St George had already influenced the civic town planning at Maenan near Conwy, and it is not too far out of the bounds of possibility that Edward wanted his most influential master mason in the region to assess the structure of the current strongholds, as well as to provide plans for the accompanying settlements. The need to discuss plans for Edward's Welsh castles hardly seems pressing enough to summon the master mason to Gascony at the height of winter. Marc Morris, however, has suggested that there may have been a third intention for James of St George's visit to the duchy: the castle of Sauveterre-la-Lémance.

Sauveterre sits on the eastern frontier of Edward's duchy in the Agenais and is likely to have been built around the same time as James of St George visited the region. The reason for Morris' selection of this castle is that it does not feature in the survey of the Agenais for 1279 yet there is evidence to suggest that a certain Guillelmus de Cosinges was the lead mason as he petitioned the Crown in 1305 for expenses accrued whilst working on the project, as witnessed by John of St John prior to his capture in 1297.<sup>132</sup> This would mean that building work had begun long before the outbreak of the Anglo-French war, but after 1279. There is, however, no obvious similarities between the building work in the Agenais and Edward's Welsh castles like there is with Savoy, which highly suggests that James of St George took no major part in its construction and was only present, if for a brief time, in the procurement of the site, or in the laying of its foundations.

The twin-towered gatehouse was the greatest feature of Edward's castles in Wales and, although the current physical evidence is far from conclusive as to whether these types of works were carried out in Gascony, the presence of the king's most influential Savoyard master mason in the region must either suggest that similar building works had been consulted, or the current castle structure was deemed suitable. Cussac, for instance, had only recently been built during the unpopular tenure of Henry III's lieutenant and vice-regent, Simon de Montfort, between 1248 and 1252, and was

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<sup>132</sup> *RG*, iii, 455, no.476; Morris, 'Edward I's Building Works in Gascony', 172-173.

more than likely still a site of major importance as a bastide was founded close by in 1289.<sup>133</sup> Yet, even if Edward had been responsible for the new design of towering gatehouses, and James of St George was just following orders, as Coldstream believes, then this would further increase the likelihood of a uniformity in castle design across the Crown's possessions from the later 1270s.<sup>134</sup>

Edward clearly supported a policy of castle-regeneration in Gascony, stopping short of an outright castle-building enterprise like he had done with such striking success in Wales, and had later attempted in Scotland although admittedly with less time, resources, and money. This was despite the fact that the king had ordered two consecutive seneschals, Luke de Tany and Jean de Grailly, between 1274 and 1279, to 'build castles' in the duchy.<sup>135</sup> The issue here was purely financial and potential designs for fortifications at Lourdes, Gramont, and at a site close to Bordeaux, never fully materialised; in similar fashion to Henry III's two wooden constructions on the île de Ré and in the Entre-Deux-Mers ('*castri lignei*'), Edward's architects were also reduced to building in earth and timber at Miramont.<sup>136</sup>

This, however, should not be viewed as a backwards step in castle construction but, as Amicie Pélissié du Rausas points out, it was a 'technical response' to siege warfare; not only could a wooden motte-and-bailey structure be built in a short period of time, but the raised earthen-works prevented the sapping or mining of walls: stone foundations could not.<sup>137</sup> Yet, as has been demonstrated, a building project from the ground-up was not of pressing need when the region was already studded with pre-existing fortifications, and the construction of timber fortresses must surely be attributed to the expediency factor, as was the case at Linlithgow.

It is clear to see that there was a royal hands-on approach to fortification design, but this was not simply confined to the years surrounding the Anglo-French war. Time and again the right to fortify was man-managed by the English Crown, either in the build up to the war of St Sardos or in

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<sup>133</sup> Coldstream, 'Architects, Advisers and Design', 24; Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, 107; Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 23; *RG*, i, 356, no.2676. Cussac was used as a prison for Gascon rebels from 1254. *RG*, i, 499, no.3992; Beresford, *New Towns of the Middle Ages*, 357.

<sup>134</sup> Coldstream, 'Architects, Advisers and Design', 33.

<sup>135</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 310; For Luke de Tany and Jean de Grailly see 304.

<sup>136</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 310-311; du Rausas, '*Ad Partes Transmarinas*', 75; *RG*, i, 82, no. 604; *CPR*, 1232-1247, 340; *CCR*, 1242-1247,6.

<sup>137</sup> du Rausas, '*Ad Partes Transmarinas*', 75.

the preliminary stages of the Hundred Years War. The evolution in fortification design throughout Gascony has, however, been overshadowed by Edward's Welsh castles because they gave Edward, within a mere quarter of a century, a series of formidable structures which could match, if not surpass, those of his great uncle in Savoy.<sup>138</sup>

### Summary and Observations

Michael Roberts' concept of a single century of military revolution has drawn many objectors; it has even been termed as "anti-history" by one historian.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, the military revolution debate has expanded considerably over the last half-century, becoming far less convincing as a single defining moment of change in military technique in Western European warfare.<sup>140</sup> There is reason to suggest, however, that military strategy and tactics evolved over a longer period of time rather than in short, sharp peaks. David Cook, for instance, has highlighted the presence of mounted archers at the battle of Hastings through an illustration on the Bayeux Tapestry, suggesting that they had played a part in English battlefield history since at least the eleventh century.<sup>141</sup>

In this study, the evolution in military technique has been demonstrated through the introduction of the Irish hobelar, presaging Edward III's mounted archers by four decades; in the experimentation of gunpowder weaponry in Edward I's Scottish wars of the early 1300s; and in the cross-continental development of fortification design, at the behest of the English Crown, in order to meet the military standards of the day. Yet, the premise of an evolution in strategy and tactics during Edward's reign, foreshadowing the revolutionary armies of Edward III and his successors, has often by-passed the Anglo-French war. This has either been a result of time, whereby the mounted infantryman involved in the border wars against the Scots had arrived too late to play a part in the first or second expeditions, or in the proliferation of customary siege tactics and *traditional* siege

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<sup>138</sup> Taylor, *Studies*, 82.

<sup>139</sup> D. Edgerton, *Warfare State: Britain, 1920-1970* (Cambridge, 2006), 5-6. Quoted in Rodger, 'From the 'military revolution' to the fiscal-naval state', 120.

<sup>140</sup> Prestwich, 'Was there a Military Revolution in Medieval England?', 34.

<sup>141</sup> Cook, 'The Norman Military Revolution in England', 100. Cook suggests that the mounted archer was wearing spurs, removing the possibility that the horse had been stolen by an infantryman in the ensuing pursuit of the Anglo-Saxons.

weaponry. Despite this the evolutionary process in Edwardian fortification did reach Gascony prior to the Anglo-French war and would continue to be relevant well into the 1350s. In comparison Edward's impressive Welsh castles became 'unfashionable' shortly after their construction as Wales was quickly subdued because of the fortifications' imposing, although on occasion incomplete, presence.<sup>142</sup>

Understandably, the Anglo-French war must be viewed as a remnant of traditional medieval warfare where the single most revolutionary aspect was the introduction of widespread payment amongst the troops, from the military elite to the pardoned criminals. Wages, however, were only introduced as an incentive to fight at a time when Edward was eager to send a relief effort to the duchy, and the feudal levy had collapsed; once the war was over Edward's armies reverted to a combination of contractual, feudal, and voluntary troops. At Falkirk, where infantry numbers had reached an unprecedented level, for instance, only 14,800 troops were in receipt of pay, leaving around 10,000 infantry recruits to array under the age-old custom of feudal service.<sup>143</sup> Despite this, there was an evolutionary process in military technique during Edward's reign, one that involved a gradual transformation of the infantry's structure, the way the siege was conducted, and in fortification design and scale, yet for now these evolutionary concepts must be confined to the British Isles as they were either absent or only played a limited role in the Anglo-French war.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Coldstream, 'Architects, Advisers and Design', 20.

<sup>143</sup> Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 95.

<sup>144</sup> Prestwich, 'Was there a Military Revolution in Medieval England?', 34.

## Nine

### **Epilogue: The long century of fragile Anglo-French relations**

‘They used already to relate in French,  
 Who loses by default, Which is by non-appearance,  
 Land or tenement in the court of France,  
 No writ of right runs there for the recovery,  
 Except by recourse to force with sword and spear’.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the study, it has become evident that Edward I made a concerted effort to maintain a war on foreign soil and to at least consolidate a footing in Gascony, even though the English expeditionary forces were on the back-foot from the very outset of the war. This, however, could not have been achieved without the continued loyalty of Edward’s Gascon subjects, as perfectly demonstrated in the large cohorts of local troops which amalgamated into John of St John’s retinue on his way to Bayonne during the first expedition, for instance; or in the Gascon citizens’ attack on French garrisons across the region; in the contribution of the mounted contingents from the duchy or from across the Pyrenees, here demonstrated by the endless (and more often than not unpaid) petitions for *restaur*; and in the effective blockade of the seaports and the Gironde by the naval commander, Barrau de Sescas.

It should be noted, however, that this was not necessarily an inherent allegiance, born from any real sense of cross-Channel loyalty or admiration of the king of England and the English people, but a preferred alliance predominantly built upon the economic advantages that the Plantagenet king-dukes could, and did, bring to the table. Edward I developed this mercantile relationship with his continental subjects more than any other English king, a result of the ever-growing exportation of wine from Gascony to England (along with the importation of wheat, barley, fish, wood and cloth); as well as in the fortification of the lesser Gascon noble’s place of residence, in turn obtaining the fealty

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<sup>1</sup> Langtoft, 201.

of lords whose military assistance may have wavered had Edward been less inclined to curry favour with those individuals lower down the social hierarchy; and in the burgeoning new towns and marketplaces that Edward envisioned and constructed.<sup>2</sup>

For all the military might of the Capetian army, Philip IV's Achilles heel was the lack of local dynastic loyalty, which was certainly not helped when during the French occupation of Bordeaux 29 imprisoned citizens had died during their captivity, and a further 110 were detained in 'the king's hall' at Toulouse.<sup>3</sup> To put it simply, most Gascons were fiercely independent people who enjoyed the benefits of trade with those who could offer 'the greatest reward' and in the late thirteenth century this just happened to be England, a point of contention for the Capetian monarchy that would eventually boil over into retribution, most brutally demonstrated in the merciless slaughter of the Gascon inhabitants at Podensac.

Anti-French sentiments in the region would plague subsequent Valois armies until the mid-1450s, yet during the occupation of Gascony in the late thirteenth century it was local discontent which had significantly hampered any long-term ambitions Philip held for full sovereignty and by 1303 the citizens of Bordeaux eventually rebelled against the continued presence of their Capetian occupants.<sup>4</sup> The transference of Gascony back into the hands of the king of England had been a long road and the truce at Vye-St-Bavon six years earlier had only partially ended the conflict; open conflict between English and French forces may have ceased after this point yet there were still many contentious issues at hand, one which required the input of crown lawyers on either side, and further still, Philip's Capetian forces were slow to leave their posts in many of the strategic points across the region.

In 1298, for instance, Philip laid a charge of treason at Edward for waging an open war against his liege lord, the king of France, yet Edward (on the advice of Philip Martel, the king's lawyer, and keeper of the "Trésor des Chartes de Guyenne") rejected this claim outright.<sup>5</sup> The charge

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<sup>2</sup> Studd, 'A Fragile Tenure', 42; Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 9-10.

<sup>3</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 221.

<sup>4</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 376, 382; Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 219, 267; Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 41; Studd, 'A Fragile Tenure', 36.

<sup>5</sup> H. Rothwell, 'Edward I's Case against Philip the Fair over Gascony in 1298', *The English Historical Review*, 42:168 (October, 1927), 572.

of treason had been levelled at Edward on the basis that Gascony, from May 1294, was a ‘forfeited fief’, yet Edward and Martel had come up with a strong defence.<sup>6</sup> They argued that Gascony could not be a forfeited fief for it had always been held by the kings of England as an allodial possession with its own free and independent laws and customs, and the Treaty of Paris had failed to alter this status.

Moreover, the Treaty of Paris in itself was only a contract; a contract that was only valid while both parties were willing to accept its terms and seeing as though Philip had not upheld the French king’s part of the negotiation then he was as equally responsible for the rupture of royal relations as Edward was. As Rothwell claims, ‘On this ground again the king of England was no vassal of the king of France, and could not therefore be guilty of treason’.<sup>7</sup> Finally, it was proposed by the English lawyer that the terms of the feudal arrangement between the king of France and the English king, as duke, ‘was completely reciprocal in both the nature and extent of its obligations, and the penalty for infringing them was the same for both lord and vassal’.<sup>8</sup>

Unsurprisingly, these claims were unacceptable to the French, and it fell to the pope, Boniface VIII, to settle the matter. It has been claimed that Boniface once said that “He who has business with the French ought to take great care, for he who has business with the French has business with the devil”: it is likely that Boniface felt the same way after the negotiations.<sup>9</sup> According to Prestwich, the pope’s arbitration decree in June announced that ‘in territorial terms the pre-war status quo should be re-established, and that until that was done, the lands should be handed over to the papacy’. Furthermore, ‘Peace was to be ensured by the conventional means of a marriage alliance’, whereby Edward was to finally marry Margaret, the French king’s sister, and Edward of Carnarvon was to marry Philip’s daughter Isabella.<sup>10</sup> Incidentally, the betrothal of Edward of Carnarvon and Isabella meant that the previous arrangement between the prince of Wales and the count of Flanders’ daughter, Philippa, was now off, playing into the hands of the French Crown by preventing two potential northern enemies from aligning.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Rothwell, ‘Edward I’s case against Philip the Fair’, 574.

<sup>7</sup> Rothwell, ‘Edward I’s case against Philip the Fair’, 574.

<sup>8</sup> Rothwell, ‘Edward I’s case against Philip the Fair’, 574; Prestwich, *Edward I*, 395.

<sup>9</sup> Labarge, *Gascony, England’s First Colony*, 74.

<sup>10</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 395.

<sup>11</sup> Rothwell, ‘Edward I’s case against Philip the Fair’, 573.

Undoubtedly, Edward and his shrewd lawyer came out of the traps fighting in order to seem like they were making a compromise when the time came to fall back on their basic demand that the duchy, and the feudal status between Edward and Philip, should return to the state it was in prior to 1294.<sup>12</sup> Negotiations, however, continued until 1303 when, quite significantly, it was agreed that the oath of fealty would be accepted by the French Crown through an intermediary or proxy. On these grounds a more amenable truce was reached, mainly as Edward received the full restitution of his ancestral land, and in return all he had to do was acknowledge the French king in order to fulfil his duties as a vassal by proxy (which in this case was Henry de Lacy); while Philip had struck a calculated bargain, removing any realistic attempts of England and Flanders uniting in the aftermath of the Fleming's major victory at Courtrai in the previous year.<sup>13</sup> It may seem obvious that had the issue of performing fealty been addressed earlier then outright war may have been averted, but even so it was employed just short of a decade later in order to form a 'treaty of friendship and alliance' which in the process had mitigated, for the time being, the rather abrasive issue of subordination between a lord and vassal who were both equally anointed monarchs.<sup>14</sup>

This final peace agreement, however, was a slow and laborious process, and reparations for merchants effected by the war were never fully resolved. In 1305, for instance, Edward and his council received a petition from the merchants of Gascony stating that the king still owed them various debts ('*dettes*') for the money that they had loaned to those in the service of the king-duke throughout the war.<sup>15</sup> Yet in truth many of these petitions remained unanswered. An Anglo-French commission reconvened at Montreuil in 1306 to address the issue but this also came to little conclusion and, in one final farcical event highlighted by Prestwich, an English commissioner of the name of John Bakewell was sent to Paris in the Autumn to reopen proceedings 'but completely failed to locate his French counterparts there'.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Rothwell, 'Edward I's case against Philip the Fair', 575.

<sup>13</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 399; Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 75.

<sup>14</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 221, 224.

<sup>15</sup> TNA SC8/292/14577

<sup>16</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 397.

The diplomatic efforts of 1306 were as equally dismal as those in 1293 and 1294, and the agreements that were reached in principle in 1297, 1298 and 1303, were part of a process for which both kings attempted to save face and to preserve their own dignity, neither one wishing to be seen to be backing down. Yet the fact that large swathes of coastal Gascony, and the parts accessible by river, were retaken and would remain in English hands from the outset of the conflict, stands testimony to the effectiveness of the Anglo-Gascony military machine, certainly in its ability to withstand the full-on onslaught of a Capetian invasion during the initial months of the conflict. The diplomatic negotiations between the envoys of the English, French and papacy were a formality in order to draw some conclusion to the events.

What was unavoidable from the outset of Edward and Philip's tenures and would remain so even after the final peace agreement, was the Treaty of Paris. It had simply created an untenable situation for the English king-dukes who, on the wishes of Henry III, had entered into the homage of the French king almost blindly.<sup>17</sup> It was even said that Edward had never agreed to the signing of the treaty (he was 20 years old at the time) and at his coronation in 1274 the newly anointed king refused to wear the crown 'until he had recovered all the lands his father had granted away'.<sup>18</sup> The Capetian confiscation of the duchy certainly gave Edward this opportunity although Edward may have wished for better timing, or even a return to the Angevin *status quo* through the courts of law. Nevertheless, the events which unfolded from mid-1294 certainly proved troubling and Langtoft aimed to stir national sentiments as he described how 'the proud Frenchman would bring us so low, And cause us to be honoured no more than dogs'; the north-east chronicler even portrayed Anthony Bek, the bishop of Durham, as a key advocate for the war, here spurring the warrior elite to 'Arise, and bestir yourself, sleep not like a monk; Put on the hauberks, trample down the carrion, Mount the steeds, and take spear in fist'.<sup>19</sup> Whether Anthony Bek did produce such inspiring words or not, the relief of Gascony was only ever conducted by a handful of Edward's most trusted servants.

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<sup>17</sup> le Patourel, *Feudal Empires*, 32.

<sup>18</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 91.

<sup>19</sup> *Langtoft*, 201, 203, 215.

Crucially, what has become apparent throughout this study is that Edward was willing to invest large sums of money in the war effort. Firstly, in military wages to all sections of the army, whether knight or pardoned criminal (as well as in ancillary costs for carpenters, engineers, transport, and provisions), while also offering a package of benefits which most notably included horse compensation, as well as an attempt to acquire princely allies from across the Low Countries. The injection of large sums of money into the war effort though, does seem to have been a way to remedy both the dwindling numbers of infantry troops which were available for muster, and in resolving at the quickest possible speed the catastrophic diplomatic efforts between the earl of Lancaster and his French counterparts.<sup>20</sup> That being said, the war in Gascony cost Edward more than he could really afford, and neither was this the only military campaign that needed funding during the period; £750,000 was a staggeringly large amount of money to spend on a series of campaigns across four years, certainly when it could be argued that the war in Gascony was eventually resolved with the aid of lawyers and not soldiers.<sup>21</sup>

From a monetary point of view alone, the Anglo-French war was a major undertaking, not least of all for the fact that Edward and the royal wardrobe were engaged in finding large amounts of cash for several inter-frontal warzones across Western Europe and within the British Isles. And not only were English troops sent into a conflict in Gascony where previous royal armies (mainly under Henry III) had had very little success, but rebellion in Wales — where ‘it has always been full of treason’ according to Langtoft — and an invasion of Scotland, coupled with the opening of a new front in Flanders, meant that England’s fighting classes were never far from a new campaign.<sup>22</sup>

To this end, the study has shown that the Anglo-French war was far from an insignificant episode in English military history during the late thirteenth century, and given the level of attention the initial stages of the campaign received from several contemporary chroniclers it seems that it was neither a sideshow to Edward’s more celebrated military campaigns; although domestic issues particularly along England’s northern border with the Scots did take precedence during the later 1290s

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<sup>20</sup> *RG*, iii, clxvii-clxviii.

<sup>21</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 399-400; Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 175.

<sup>22</sup> *Langtoft*, 221.

as the Anglo-French war ground to a stalemate. However, it is easy to forget that Edward had planned to travel to Gascony at the start of the campaign at the head of the relief effort (a scenario which would have given the campaign more impetus and would have most probably encouraged the feudal levies to take up the call to arms) and as the king let nothing prevent him from embarking for Flanders in 1297 it may also be suggested that Edward actually relished the prospect of a war on foreign soil. It was in this third and final expedition that Edward, according to Prestwich, ‘showed extraordinary stubbornness in persisting with his plan’.<sup>23</sup>

An important note to make at this point is that Edward made sure to appoint both Geoffrey de Geneville and Thomas Berkeley in the place of the dissenting Bigod and Bohun, highlighting the support for Edward’s military ambitions overseas and the relative irrelevance of the political backlash. The defeat at Stirling bridge (while Edward was in Flanders) shocked the English military elite and from then on only helped to bolster support for the king, averting the potential for another civil war within forty years. Guisborough’s often quoted suggestion that Edward threatened to send the marshal to the gallows if he did not go on the king’s campaign overseas, (‘By God, O earl, you will either go or hang’), was most likely no more than poetic licence, particularly as Roger Bigod did indeed remain behind in England, refusing to leave for Flanders, yet neither did he hang for his insubordination.<sup>24</sup>

The final stage of the Anglo-French war gave Edward a taste of life on the frontline for the first time in over thirty years (at the age of 58) and may have reinvigorated the ageing warrior king for he was present on the battlefield the following year at Falkirk (accompanied by his former opposition, Roger Bigod and Humphrey de Bohun): the same “thirst for war” cannot be said for Edward’s French counterpart, however, who preferred to be seen as ‘the high priest of the “religion of monarchy”’ and not, like Edward, as a new Arthur.<sup>25</sup> Yet Edward’s military ambition alone could not have maintained the war on the continent for too long, as has been demonstrated in Edward’s ultimately failed attempts to unite a coalition of European princes with the intention of striking deep into the French kingdom from the north-east.

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<sup>23</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 398.

<sup>24</sup> H. Rothwell, ‘The Confirmation of the Charters, 1297. I’, *The English Historical Review*, 60:236 (January, 1945), 25-26; *EHD*, 1189-1327, 226.

<sup>25</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 481; Strayer, ‘Philip the Fair’, 30.

However, Edward's "warrior-like" personality did give Philip a worthy adversary, one who was unwilling to accept defeat even when the likelihood of outright victory seemed unachievable at the best of times: Edward's wars, suggests Prestwich, 'were not fought in a spirit of careless adventurism, but in defence of what he regarded as his lawful right'.<sup>26</sup> The sudden death of the earl of Lancaster at Bayonne on 5 June 1296, or the ambush and capture of John of St John at Bellegarde the following February, may have occasioned for a less military minded leader to strike for peace sooner, particularly as a lack of money and the onslaught of typhoid began to demoralise the army, yet Edward refused to abandon the war effort despite domestic issues in Wales and Scotland draining the Crown's military reserves.<sup>27</sup>

The military capabilities of Edward's expeditionary forces in Gascony have formed the primary concern of this study. And significantly, within a short space of time there was a major transformation in the martial qualities of the relief effort, certainly when it is considered that only a handful of England's warrior elite were initially lumped together with a large contingent of recently released criminals — some of whom had, up until the point of embarkation, been incarcerated in gaol, only to become part of a much larger outfit on arrival in Gascony; an outfit that was predominantly made up of English, Gascon and Aragonese troops.<sup>28</sup>

It would be hard to argue against the initial successes of the Anglo-Gascon army, particularly as the French had been garrisoned in the region for nearly five months beforehand, giving them plenty of time to prepare for the conflict. Despite this, the expeditionary force made a successful landing in the Garonne, and they were to exceed expectations at the turn of the year by re-capturing the major Atlantic trading outpost of Bayonne within three months of its arrival. The Anglo-Gascon position in the region was eventually strengthened as access to the Garonne through a series of inter-connecting strongholds was established. Later in the campaign the first real intent to take the war to Robert of Artois' forces in the scorched earth policy of the earl of Lincoln marked the permanence of Edward's troops in the region and perhaps signalled to Philip the ineffectiveness of mounting a war on two

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<sup>26</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 564.

<sup>27</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 385.

<sup>28</sup> Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 45.

fronts during 1297. Quite significantly, the *chevauchée* (as a form of economic warfare) was a tactic which became synonymous with English armies in France throughout the fourteenth century and the likes of the Black Prince and Henry Grosmont would eventually become the scourge of the French people due to their perseverance in deploying such effective tactics.

Although the study has predominantly focused on the Anglo-French war, the connection between the *modus operandi* of Edward I's military commanders and those of Edward III's should not be understated, certainly in attempting to bridge the divide to the first phase of the Hundred Years War. It was even understood that Edward III's advisors and administrators had 'tended to look back nostalgically to the happier era of Edward I', perhaps for military guidance.<sup>29</sup> The overarching theme of the study has been to showcase a continuity of a single English war effort in south-western France throughout the long fourteenth century. Edward II's war of St Sardos, that "great sea, filled with wreckage and having no part of refuge", has proven to be a useful indicator of Edwardian military capabilities prior to the outbreak of the Hundred Years War, particularly as the breakdown in royal relations mirrored those of 1294; the conflict in the Agenais re-opened wounds that had not yet healed in the thirty years in-between (although the conflict did give Edward II a rare highpoint in his reign, certainly from a military-logistical perspective).<sup>30</sup> Yet, more significantly, it is the resurfacing of a conflict in Gascony in the first phase of the Hundred Years War which suggests that the abrasive issue of sovereignty in Gascony had still not gone away; and more interesting still, the continuation of 'war aims and methods of warfare' within Edward III's army carried over from Edward I's initiative, highlighting an effective defensive (and when occasion allowed, offensive) strategy.<sup>31</sup>

Sovereignty in Gascony was quite clearly a major sticking point in the royal relationship between the English and the French, and the quarrel which would emanate from the question of unfulfilled homage and the ensuing French military incursions was, according to Vale, 'a struggle in which power was pitted against political reality'.<sup>32</sup> Both Edward I and Edward II bore the brunt of 'the

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<sup>29</sup> Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 117.

<sup>30</sup> Labarge, *Gascony, England's First Colony*, 103.

<sup>31</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 266.

<sup>32</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 266.

myth of an inherited Carolingian sovereignty over a greater *Francia*'.<sup>33</sup> And it is perhaps for this reason that Philip IV and his council decided to act in 1294, buoyed by popular opinion (within the French court at least) that Gascony should rightfully belong to the French Crown and that Edward I — a successful and self-determined monarch in his own right — should be removed. The merchant navy war was almost certainly used to justify French aggression in the region for when war did eventually break out it was undeniably of Philip's choosing.<sup>34</sup>

Constant Capetian and Valois encroachments in the proceeding forty years built upon the Carolingian myth and inevitably pushed Edward III to break away from the bonds that had tied the hands of his predecessors; Edward III 'categorically denied Valois sovereignty over Aquitaine by assuming the title to the French throne'.<sup>35</sup> This, according to Vale, was a 'tactical device' for the king of England was equally 'prepared to renounce his title to the French crown in 1360 in return for full sovereignty over a greatly expanded Aquitaine', certainly after the English in the Black Prince's command had asserted their dominance in the region after the victory at Poitiers.<sup>36</sup> Yet, by demanding greater terms, and then falling back on the original ambition in a show of compromise, was Edward III not following in Edward I's footsteps at the negotiating table?

Complete control in Gascony, whether as an allodial property or through acceptance of sovereignty was the ambition for both the English and French monarchs, from 1294 through to 1360. Yet, as the study has shown, war in France under Edward III (as claimant to the French throne rather than as a vassal of the king of France) certainly played out on a much larger scale and was far less compromising in its distribution of clemency, particularly on the battlefield. However, although the nature of war had changed, there were also clear similarities between Edward I's relief of the duchy and Edward III's.

For example, criminals were still being released in return for military service; hit and run tactics along the Garonne River were to form the landing base for the English expeditionary forces; the preservation of the stronghold and strength-in-depth tactics were the *modus operandi* (alongside

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<sup>33</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 266.

<sup>34</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 381.

<sup>35</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 267.

<sup>36</sup> Vale, *Origins of the Hundred Years War*, 267.

the Edwardian policy of fortification); siege equipment (and combustibles, in Edward III's case) were transported to the region in preparation for the siege; the *chevauchée* was deployed on several occasions as an economically devastating battle-seeking tactic (eventually proving effective in bringing the French to do battle at Poitiers); while the Angevin policy of encirclement (as well as attempts to form a Castilian alliance) were renewed once more to the same uncontrollable financial costs as Edward I had witnessed. Although Edward I could not have known it at the time, many of his tactics in Gascony — along with the Vegetian-styled strategies of his military captains — would prove effective not only between 1294-97, but in 1324-25, and again between 1345-56.

When the Treaty of Paris is placed at the centre of Anglo-French discord, coupled with French expansionist attitudes and military encroachments, there develops a common unifying purpose between the campaigns of all three Edwards. Not only were these war aims focused on repelling French incursions into the region, but Edwardian strategy became one of asserting and protecting both the English Crown's ancestral right as well as the allodial status of the duchy: this had the backing of the Gascons. Only once this was achieved, however, and the upper hand had been gained (in military terms) then ambitions to expand the Crown's continental territory could be pursued, as seen with Edward III's negotiations in 1360. Ultimately, the Anglo-French war may have been devoid of its defining battlefield encounter like Poitiers, which would have surely given it a more prominent position amongst the catalogue of late medieval Anglo-French conflicts, but in true cold war fashion it had a far more lasting impact than that. The Anglo-French war would eventually set the groundwork for a centuries long struggle in France over sovereignty.

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