

NEVILLE, PERCY, AND YORK, 1461-1485
A STUDY IN THE SUBORDINATION
OF THE NORTH

by

EILEEN ROESLER

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Major Professor

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INTRODUCTION

Most scholars have regarded the subordination of the North as a Tudor innovation. Rachel Reid, the leading authority on northern history, wrote that between the times of John of Gaunt and Henry Tudor, "no other means could be found to keep the Marches even nominally under control than to divide them between the Nevilles and the Percies."¹ It is true that, in a book she published three years later, she modified that view somewhat by giving brief mention to the role of Richard, duke of Gloucester, later King Richard III, in the North; but her conclusion that the Tudors were the first to secure royal authority there remained essentially the same.²

Scholarship both before and after Reid has shared this opinion. Writing nearly a generation before her, G. T. Lapsley, for example, swept past the Yorkist period altogether in an eight-century survey of royal government in the North,³ while those who have followed her have accepted her interpretation implicitly. In the 1950s, F. W. Brooks, himself a northerner, gave some credit to King Richard's Council of the North but ignored the important groundwork laid by his brother,

¹"The Office of Warden of the Marches: Its Origin and Early History," English Historical Review 32 (1917):495.

²The King's Council in the North (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1921), p. 21.

³"The Problem of the North," American Historical Review 5 (April 1900):440-66. The only mention of the period at all is a brief reference to the earl of Northumberland, p. 449.

Edward IV, for this innovation; and Robin Storey, whose article of 1957 gave him what amounts to the last word on the subject to date, concluded with the standard observation that it was Henry VII who broke the power of the northern magnates.⁴ This cannot remain the final word, however, for the simple observation that in twenty-four years of troubled Yorkist rule the strongly Lancastrian North shifted the full weight of its sympathy to the House of York indicates that the reigns of Edward IV (1461-83) and Richard III (1483-85) were important milestones in the relationship between the central government and a region famed for its independence. It is my intention, therefore, to re-examine the standard interpretation of northern history by focusing on the important achievement of the Yorkists in the North.

The changes the Yorkists initiated were not revolutionary, as both Edward and Richard still relied on the assistance of the aristocracy and did not deny a certain amount of authority to an important northern magnate. Similarly, their intensely personal rule in the North was a typically medieval approach to government, though the object of the Yorkist personality cult, one must note, was to woo the hearts of commoners more than the hearts of lords. Indeed, Bertie Wilkinson, a leading authority on the fifteenth century, has argued that the "dependence of the Yorkists on the people . . . provided the hallmark of the Yorkist rule," while Reid has pursued the way in which this

⁴Brooks, The Council of the North (London: George Philip and Son, Ltd., for the Historical Association, 1953); pp. 9-12; Storey, "The Wardens of the Marches of England towards Scotland, 1377-1489," English Historical Review 72 (1957):608-609.

Yorkist theme found judicial expression in Gloucester's household council in Yorkshire.⁵ Despite the fact that the Yorkist approach was not revolutionary, it was a modest adjustment in established tradition, and if the disappearance of two small princes in the Tower of London had not paved the way for Henry Tudor, it is possible the Yorkist solution would have endured.

A study of Yorkist policy in the North, therefore, seems long overdue, especially when one considers that historians, who have given considerable attention to the policies of Richard II, the Lancastrians, and the Tudors in the North, have virtually ignored the important work of the Yorkists there. The chief aim of this thesis, then, is to provide such a study. One might say at the outset that the Yorkists provided an intermediate stage between the reliance on local magnates, which the Lancastrians favored, and the introduction of an official class responsible to the central government, which the Tudors devised. More specifically, the Yorkists retained the aristocratic flavor of northern rule, but they began, from 1471 on, to decrease the authority of the local magnates, first by elevating a prince of the blood to a position of wealth and authority in the North, and later by establishing a regional council there headed by an "outlander" royal lieutenant.

This was not exactly an innovation. In the late fourteenth century, John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, had tried to secure the North for himself by setting up a council in the Marches, appointed by Richard II but packed with Gaunt's own retainers. He had even gone

⁵Wilkinson, Constitutional History of the Fifteenth Century, 1399-1485 (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1974), p. 141; Reid, Council, pp. 56-58.

so far as to take the title "Lieutenant of the North" for his own. All of this was an insult to Henry Percy, the earl of Northumberland, who finally took his revenge in 1381 by refusing the duke refuge from his enemies and forcing him to spur his way across the border. Eventually, however, the renewal of war with Scotland made clear the necessity of Percy cooperation in the North; and by 1384, the duke had restored Percy to power and returned south. Robin Storey, who has described these events, has concluded that the attempt to place an outsider in control of the Marches failed in 1384 "because the north of England was too remote from the capital, its inhabitants more devoted to their immediate lords than to the king and his ministers. . ."⁶ At least until Yorkist times, then, kings had no alternative but to govern the Marches through local families, and it should come as no surprise that the eventual consequence of this state of affairs was that north of the Trent men would "know no prince but a Neville or a Percy," the mightiest of over-mighty subjects.⁷

Actually, no study of the political history of the fifteenth century can afford to ignore the issue of the over-mighty subject, and a word on the topic is certainly in order here. In recent years, K. B. McFarlane, a leading authority on the later Middle Ages, has rejected the notion of the over-mighty subject altogether, preferring to view fifteenth-century violence as the inevitable result of "under-mighty" kings, like Henry VI.⁸ It seems to me, however, that

⁶Storey, "Wardens," p. 599. The details of Gaunt's activities in the North are also described by Reid, "Office of Warden," pp. 494-95.

⁷Hunsdon to the Privy Council, 31 December 1569, cited in Reid, Council, p. 21.

⁸The Nobility of Later Medieval England (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 179.

this kind of word-play, though it may shift the blame, cannot refute the fundamental contention that a quarrelsome aristocracy had the upper hand in fifteenth-century England. Sir John Fortescue, a Lancastrian Chief Justice and supporter of Margaret of Anjou, certainly viewed the crisis of government in terms of aristocratic one-upmanship, and his work The Governance of England set forth a program designed to secure royal authority.

Moreover, one cannot neglect the fact that four of the century's six monarchs were themselves thrust onto the throne by juggernauts of aristocratic power which any medieval king would have found difficult to stop. To be specific, Henry IV had the help of the disaffected Percys; Edward IV, a Neville alliance. Richard III, himself the ultimate example of aristocratic wealth and power, took the throne with the assistance of the duke of Buckingham. And, finally, Henry Tudor, whose exile in Brittany and France had left him small wealth at home, found succor in the camp of the powerful Stanleys. These kings, in turn, were plagued by a kind of turncoat tradition of the period. The Percys, having put Bolingbroke on the throne in 1399, rebelled against him in 1403 on behalf of the Mortimer earl of March. Edward's ally, Richard Neville, earl of Salisbury and Warwick, turned his back on Edward in 1469 to support the king's more easily controllable brother, George, duke of Clarence; failing this, he took up with his former Lancastrian enemies and fought to restore Henry VI, a feat for which history has dubbed him the "Kingmaker." It took the duke of Buckingham only a few months to turn against Richard III, and, in his turn, Henry VII eventually lost the support of the Stanleys. All in all, then, I think one is safe in saying that the foremost problem facing practically every fifteenth-century king was the problem of the

over-mighty subject.

Historians still disagree over whether the Yorkist kings were able to bring order to such a disorderly society. C. H. Williams, a professor at the University of London, has accused the Yorkists of lacking purpose and direction, charging that since they could not adapt the machinery of government to the needs of a changing world, lawlessness flourished.⁹ Most historians, however, have seen purpose enough in the Yorkist period, and debate has centered on the nature of that purpose. William Stubbs, England's esteemed constitutional historian, once characterized the Yorkists as petty, unscrupulous men bent on destroying the aristocracy; but Wilkinson has taken the attitude that the entire Yorkist period, beginning with Duke Richard in 1450, was a sort of populist experiment.¹⁰ J. R. Lander, a specialist in Yorkist history, takes a middle course. His important study of Edward's frequent use of attainder has led to the conclusion that Edward did in fact seek to control, though not to ruin, the aristocracy.¹¹ My research generally confirms Lander's position on this particular point though I have to take issue with his general

⁹"England: The Yorkist Kings, 1461-83," in The Cambridge Medieval History, 8 vols., gen. ed. J. B. Bury (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), vol. 8: The Close of the Middle Ages, eds. C. W. Previté-Orton and Z. N. Brooke, p. 442.

¹⁰Constitutional History of England, 3 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1896), 3:292; Constitutional History of the Fifteenth Century, 1399-1485 (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1964), pp. 138-40, 166-68.

¹¹"Attainder and Forfeiture, 1453-1509," Historical Journal 4 (1961):148.

observation elsewhere that Yorkist monarchy was conservative by nature.¹² Cautious it was, but not conservative, and it is in the Yorkists' treatment of the North that one can best see their cautious modification of feudal tradition.

It is easier to put the issue in perspective when one considers that the aforementioned rebellions of Bolingbroke, Mortimer, York, March, Warwick, Clarence, Gloucester, and Richmond all took at least part of their impetus from the North. As I have shown, the kings of the fifteenth century had been in the practice of elevating northern magnates to positions of regional autonomy, and it is hardly surprising that the Nevilles and the Percys would become chief meddlers in the disorders of the period. Their positions as Wardens of the Marches furnished them with royally financed armies packed with their personal retainers, and the opportunities for private aggrandizement which this state of affairs allowed was a principle catalyst to the Wars of the Roses, as more than one student of the period has concluded.¹³

By the time Edward came to power in 1461, the situation was somewhat changed from what it had been throughout the Lancastrian period. Henry Percy, third earl of Northumberland, had been killed at Towton a few weeks before Edward's coronation, and his son and heir, about whom I shall have much to say, was either in exile or in prison for the first eight years of Edward's reign. Unfortunately, Edward was too young and,

¹²Conflict and Stability in Fifteenth-Century England (London: The Anchor Press, Ltd., 1969; Hutchinson University Library, 1971), p. 194.

¹³See Robin Storey, The End of the House of Lancaster (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1966), pp. 124-29; and Ralph A. Griffiths, "Local Rivalries and National Politics: The Percies, the Nevilles, and the duke of Exeter, 1452-1455," Speculum 43 (1968):589.

perhaps, too naive in 1461 to realize the limits of trust, and his greatest error, as I shall show in some detail below, was in concentrating excessive regional authority in the hands of his now unrivalled Neville allies. It was the violation of that trust which taught Edward, and Richard after him, to decrease the authority of regional magnates. It may even be true that the northern strategy of the Yorkist kings, if I may borrow a phrase, is the clearest example of the Yorkist attitude toward the aristocracy, in general. At any rate, one can say that the attempt of the Yorkist kings to subordinate the North by balancing regional with royal authority, though it contributed ultimately to the fall of the House of York at Bosworth Field, nevertheless marked a significant break with tradition and anticipated Tudor administrative reforms by several decades.

I. THE CHARACTER AND ECONOMY OF THE NORTH

There are five major differences which set the North of England apart from the rest of the kingdom--geography, economy, the Scottish presence, the border ethic, and the traditional administration of the border counties. Of these, geography, both geological and political, is paramount and, therefore, deserves first consideration in any discussion of regional separatism.

If one identifies "the North" as the area between the Anglo-Scottish border, on the one hand, and the southern boundary of Yorkshire, on the other, it is possible to state that geologically the North was a harsh land from which its inhabitants coaxed a bare subsistence. The most obvious geological feature in the North is the Pennine mountain range which spans practically the entire length of the North, dividing the eastern from the western neck of the country. These mountains, in combination with the Cheviot Hills along the Scottish border and the Cumbrian Mountains, which only fall away in the west at the Irish Sea, make the North a predominantly upland area with all the consequent transportation and agricultural problems such terrain entails.

The subject of medieval transportation in the North involves an analysis of both roads and navigable waterways. The best source of information on roads is the fourteenth-century Gough Map which, according to one authority, may even have been composed by a person living in

northwest England.¹ This map shows two roads running into the North, the main north road and a more westerly route, the two of which came together in Cumberland at Penrith from whence a single road stretched to its termination at Carlisle near the Solway. The more westerly of these roads began at London, passed first through Barnet and St. Albans, and then, after some intermediary stops, through Coventry, Lichfield, and Stone. Though no road appears between Stone and Chester, there was a coastal route connecting Chester and Liverpool. From Stone, the main road moved on to Newcastle under Lyme whence it veered northwest again on the old Roman road to follow the "king's street" through Preston, Lancaster, Kirkby Kendal, and Shap on the way to Penrith where it joined the main north road for Carlisle.

The main north road also began at London but followed the Roman road due north through Waltham to Huntingdon, then took a more north-westerly course through Ogerston, Walmesford, Stamford, and Grantham on the way to Doncaster, which was the point of divergence for a secondary road travelling through what is now England's center of industry. This secondary road connected Wakefield, Bradford, Skipton, and Kirkby Lonsdale, while the main road continued northward through Pontefract, Wetherby, Boroughbridge, and Leeming Bar. At Leeming Bar, a second diversion sent a road across the Pennines to connect with the aforementioned secondary road at Kirkby Lonsdale. From Kirkby Lonsdale, a road joined the "king's street" at Shap, and eventually all the roads,

¹Oxford University, Bodleian Library, The Map of Great Britain circa A.D. 1360 Known as the Gough Map, reproduced in facsimile from the original (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958); F. M. Stenton, "The Road System of Medieval England," Economic History Review 7 (1936):11. Appendix 1 below contains a map describing the network of northern roads and waterways.

including the main north road, converged at Penrith. A single road then continued on to Carlisle.

The Gough Map shows five secondary roads out of York. The first apparently joined the main road at Leeming Bar, travelling first through Helperby. The second went straight north out of York, probably to one or more of the Cistercian estates in the North Riding. The third is the only road designated on the Gough Map to cover northeast England. It travelled east to Beverley, then north along the coast, connecting Bridlington, Scarborough, and Guisborough. The fourth and fifth are minor roads, one connecting York and Howden, and the other York and Pocklington.

Identification of these roads, important as that is, is not sufficient without further comment on road conditions in the North. Sir Frank Stenton, a leading English medievalist, has remarked that in the Middle Ages every part of the country was within a fortnight's ride of London.² Stenton intends this as a compliment to English traffic, but a fourteen-day journey was certainly no sprint even under good road conditions. The weather, which was a nuisance to travel anywhere in that age, must have been a frequent menace to northern travel, in particular. Winter winds twisting across the wastes between York and Penrith heaped drifts of snow upon the Roman road connecting these important northern crossroads, and spring could only bring rain to swell a thousand rocky becks beyond the Trent. Though many a Scottish reiver must have enjoyed what was to him a downhill ride into England, northern horsemen found terrain as much an obstacle as northern weather. Furthermore, just as they could not

²Stenton, "Road System," p. 21.

keep the Scotsmen out, they found their own southward meanderings inhibited by the strip of marsh and fen stretching between Doncaster and the North Sea. According to the Gough Map, this natural barrier between the northern and the southern parts of the realm required southerners with business at York to outdistance their destination as far as Leeming Bar before returning southeastward for the city. No doubt, there were alternate routes to York, but the fact remains that before the draining of the fens in the eighteenth century, the North's inaccessibility hindered the northern economy as much as it heightened southern disdain.

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that waterways were more highly developed in the North than elsewhere; and in Yorkshire alone, there were at least nine navigable rivers--the Humber and its tributaries, the Ouse, Aire, Ure, Wharfe, Swale, Nidd, Derwent and Hull.³ What is more, the Gough Map, which shows virtually no roads in Northumberland, suggests extensive river transportation in that county on the Tyne through Haltwhistle, Corbridge, Newcastle, and ultimately to Tynemouth. A traveller from Carlisle to Newcastle evidently reached this waterway through a troublesome route first by water to Brampton, then overland to Thirlewall and the banks of the south Tyne. The map further suggests travel on the Wear through Durham to Stanhope; on the Tees through Hartlepool and Darlington to Barnard castle; and on the Ouse to Malton, thence to Thirsk and Allerton on the Rye, though modern cartography suggests the improbability of the latter. The maker of the Gough Map evidently intended to suggest the predominance of water travel in the northeast, but in at least one

³Angelo Raine, ed., York Civic Records, 2 vols. (Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Ser., 1939), 1:3.

spot, he showed the necessity of water travel even on the main north road. That is, the stretch of road from Doncaster to Penrith required an interruption at Stanesmore where the traveller had to cross the Eden to Appleby whence overland travel continued once again to Penrith and Carlisle.

This emphasis on water travel provides the necessary link between the geography and the economy of the North, for the River Humber and its tributaries were certainly the lifeblood of an area otherwise hampered by hill and fen. The most important port on the Humber was Hull, to which goods might travel south from Beverley on the River Hull itself or north from Nottingham or Lincoln on either Foss Dyke or the Trent.⁴ The Ouse, like the Trent, could accommodate sea-going ships as far as York, but smaller vessels could ply the Ouse as far as Boroughbridge. South of York, a fork in the Ouse sent a navigable tributary, the Wharfe River, on to Tadcaster.

Obstruction of these rivers was an emotional issue, the most common fluvial obstructions being fishgarths, specially designed weirs made of net and wicker "rooms," which, when placed into a river to catch fish, became the bane of shippers, downstream fishermen, and poor men whose simple fishing gear could not compete with the elaborate traps of the rich.⁵ In 1475, the city of York, bolstered by a recent act of Parliament, undertook to rid its environs of this perennial menace; and thrilling to the fight, it chose for its first target the bishop of

⁴K. J. Allison, ed., The City of Kingston upon Hull, in The Victoria History of the Counties of England, gen. ed. R. B. Pugh et al, A History of the County of York, East Riding, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 1:54.

⁵One list compiled by the corporation of York shows that many of the troublesome garths were owned by northern clerics, including the bishop of Durham and the archbishop of York. The largest, a garth of thirty-five rooms, belonged to the duke of Suffolk. See YCR, 1:98-100.

Durham himself. The mayor and aldermen wrote to the bishop "with alle deue honour and reverence" to notify him that the king had commissioned them to examine the rivers of Yorkshire for fishgarths and all other impediments. The council further alleged its authority to cause offenders to destroy their fishgarths within three months on pain of a fine. The records do not show the bishop's reply, but two years later, the city officials were advancing their cause against officials of the duchy of Lancaster. At issue were the duchy's fishgarths on the River Aire at Goldale in the parish of Snaith. Apparently, the civic authorities received permission to pull this fishgarth down in 1477, but within five years, the problem had reached such a pitch that riots broke out at Snaith. York was not alone in its struggle to preserve inland navigation, and on more than one occasion, the merchants of medieval Hull had registered their complaint about the obstruction of Foss Dyke.⁶

All of this may seem like a lot of civic energy expended on a trivial matter, but not when one considers how important navigation was to a troubled northern economy which had begun to lag behind that of the wealthier South. To understand this economic inferiority, one must return once again to the subject of northern geography.

The narrow strips of glacial drift which lined the northern shores were agriculturally inferior to areas of southern drift, especially in the northeast where the boulder-clay was quite coarse and rocky.⁷ Though certainly more suitable for farming than the upland

⁶YCR, 1:3-4, 19-20, 24-25; VCH: Hull, 1:54.

⁷My comments on the historical geography of northern England derive from a work edited by H. C. Darby entitled An Historical Geography of England Before A.D. 1800 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963). For references to glacial drift, see pp. 97-98.

area, this drift land, nevertheless, stopped its coastal path just below the mouth of the Tees whence its eastern edge roughly followed a line connecting Rievaulx and Byland abbeys. At the risk of over-simplifying, I am obliged to suggest that this strip of drift land, which runs through the political entities known as the North and West Ridings of Yorkshire, was bound to have a distinctly different economic history than the rest of the North where the terrain was less hospitable. Indeed, one finds that just as the aforementioned Cistercian estates of the North Riding were important sheep-farming centers in the fourteenth-century, the small villages of the West Riding became centers for the upsurgent textile industry in the fifteenth century. Encrusted guild regulations have taken much of the blame for this transition in the medieval economy, but the rocky brooks which spilled from the Pennines were certainly a positive factor in the re-establishment of an industry which relied heavily on water-powered fulling mills.⁸

The facts will not permit me to argue that the West Riding of Yorkshire was the sole operational center for the northern woolen industry, for Westmorland's "Kendals" brought an affluence to that county which had certainly been unknown there before. Nevertheless, it is important to note that outside Yorkshire, which itself was only third in importance behind the Cotswolds and East Anglia, the North was poor indeed. In fact, ulnage returns, which exist for every other county between

⁸ Among those boom towns in the West Riding which enjoyed this revolution in the medieval economy were the modern industrial cities of Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, and Halifax. See E. Carus-Wilson, "The Woolen Industry," in Cambridge Economic History of Europe from the Decline of the Roman Empire, 4 vols., gen. ed. J. H. Clapham et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), vol. 2: Trade and Industry in the Middle Ages, eds. M. M. Postan and E. E. Rich, p. 419.

1468 and 1478, fail to record any interest on the part of the Exchequer for clothmaking in Cumberland, Westmorland, or Durham; and in Northumberland, only Newcastle seems to have prospered with this industry. Evidently, these northern counties were still exempt from the subsidy primarily because they made a distinctly inferior product.⁹

Inferior woolens were the result, in turn, of inferior northern wool. The poorer pasture of the rocky north country may be blamed for the coarse fleece of the March counties; but whatever the cause, Edward IV, who had forbidden the export of wool except to Calais, had permitted the men of Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland, Richmondshire, and Northallertonshire to export their coarse wool anywhere from the port at Newcastle. Northern clothiers, moreover, put little demand on native wool and purchased the finer fleece of the midland counties for their better woolens.¹⁰

Aside from wool and textiles, the North had little to offer economically. In fact, the port at Hull, which conducted a significant Baltic trade, trafficked almost exclusively in wool and cloth; and even so, it was outstripped by the busier ports at London, Bristol, and Southampton. The only other significant northern export was the coal mined on both sides of the Tyne at Newcastle and the Whickham and Gateshead collieries in the bishopric of Durham. Newcastle became an important center for the export of hides, but this accounted for

⁹Ibid., pp. 419-20; Herbert Heaton, The Yorkshire Woolen and Worsted Industries (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1920), p. 86.

¹⁰Darby, Historical Geography, p. 246; Heaton, Yorkshire Woolen Industries, p. 118; Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Edw. 4 (1461-67): 15 December 1464, p. 390.

little in England's medieval trade. In the northwest, the ports on the Irish Sea could export only meager quantities of salt and fish, as well as the lead from the Cumberland mines.¹¹

Roger Schofield's important study on the redistribution of wealth in the late Middle Ages has shown that, in terms of lay wealth, anyway, the South pulled ahead of the North in the fifteenth century.¹² The signs of this redistribution are several. First, the textiles of the Cotswolds and of East Anglia superseded the cloth manufactured in Yorkshire. Secondly, much less international export traffic passed through the northern ports than the southern. And, third, the wool export from Newcastle and Hull, which declined from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, was not compensated by an increase in the export of cloth.¹³

Though the reasons for this redistribution of wealth are more obscure, one cannot minimize the impact of the Scottish presence on the northern economy. The Cambridge historian Edward Miller, for one, has shown that the Scottish wars of the Middle Ages were a chief contributing factor to the depression of the northern rural economy. Though the presence of hungry soldiers would have stimulated some industry in the North, Miller contends, the burning and pillaging which characterized the wars would surely have eclipsed any incentive among the region's

¹¹VCH: Hull, 1:61; Heaton, Yorkshire Woolen Industries, pp. 314-15; Darby, Historical Geography, pp. 258, 297, 319.

¹²"The Geographical Distribution of Wealth in England, 1334-1649," Economic History Review, ser. 2, 18 (1965):509.

¹³Carus-Wilson, "Woolen Industry," pp. 417-18; Heaton, Yorkshire Woolen Industries, pp. 311-12, 319.

farmers to supply the royal troops quartered there.¹⁴

The long history of Anglo-Scottish border disputes is beyond the scope of this study, but some of the highlights of these hostilities will at least illustrate the frequency of border violence. Though certainly not the sole cause, the root of the problem was the fact that Northumberland was once a Scottish property held of the English crown. Scotland's claim to Northumberland originated with the marriage of David, brother of Alexander I, to Matilda, daughter of the Conqueror's niece and Waltheof, earl of Northumberland. This David became king of Scotland in 1124 and laid claim to Northumberland despite the fact that Matilda had heirs by a previous marriage. Later, in the reigns of Stephen and John, English rebels, sensitive to Scottish designs on Northumberland, would dangle that county before the eyes of potential Scottish allies; and more than one politic member of the Scottish royal house would find the earldom of Northumberland to be a profitable Scottish by-product of civil disorder in England.¹⁵

If Scotland desired to hold Northumberland of the English crown, England desired overlordship in all of Scotland. These dreams died at the battle of Bannockburn in 1314, but border disputes persisted nonetheless. Berwick, for example, exchanged hands more than once even in the Yorkist period; and, in the west, a strip of so-called "debateable land" survived until Stuart times.

The constant belligerence engendered by these international

¹⁴War in the North: The Anglo-Scottish Wars of the Middle Ages (Hull: University of Hull, 1960), pp. 8, 10.

¹⁵Margaret F. Moore, The Lands of the Scottish Kings in England: The Honour of Huntingdon, the Liberty of Tynedale, and the Honour of Penrith (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1951), pp. 1-3, 6.

quarrels often found expression in private feuds and border raids, a record of which has survived in the minstrelsy of the border area. These ballads reveal that a volatile mixture of national feeling, clan sympathies, and sheer hunger separated the way of life in the North from that in the midland and southern counties, creating a common border ethic alien to the more peaceful interior of both countries. Thieving and cattle raids, for example, were a way of life on both sides of the border, and more than border village could share the lament:

Rookhope stands in a pleasant place
If the false thieves wad let it be, . . .¹⁶

Truce-making did little to discourage border hostilities, and at least one fifteenth-century truce actually permitted the individual taking of justice. According to the truce of 1449, that is, an injured party had up to six days to follow his aggressor at "cold trod" into the opposite realm without a safe conduct. Since the secular authorities were apparently disinclined to quell such violence, the Church, in the person of the bishop of Durham, attempted to arrest disorder in 1498 by threatening border thieves with excommunication.¹⁷ Even this drastic measure meant little to border inhabitants who, in all likelihood, had become inured to much of the bloodshed they witnessed in the North. Certainly the Northumberland ballad entitled "The Death of Featherstonhaugh" betrays a callousness that would be hard to explain otherwise even in the less squeamish Middle Ages:

¹⁶Sir Walter Scott, Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, ed. Thomas Henderson (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, n.d.), p. 29.

¹⁷Howard Pease, The Lord Wardens of the Marches of England and Scotland (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1913), p. 88. The episcopal document excommunicating border robbers is printed in Scott, Minstrelsy, pp. 86-91.

Hoot, hoot, the auld man's slain outright!
 Lay him now wi' his face down:--he's a sorrowful sight.
 Janet, thou donot [silly slut]
 I'll lay my best bonnet,
 Thou gets a new gude-man afore it be night.¹⁸

One cannot put all this violence down to Anglo-Scottish tensions, however, for a good share of the fighting was intra-national. Clan feuds were, in fact, one of the chief characteristics which identified northern Englishmen with their Scottish counterparts, and the fact that the feud flourished in the North centuries after the West Saxon kings had outlawed it elsewhere in the kingdom goes a long way toward proving the tenacity of border custom in England. The blood-feud, of which the Reed-Hall dispute in Redesdale is an example, flourished also in Tyne-dale and Coquetdale in the East and Middle Marches, as well as in Bewcastle and Eskdale in the West March.¹⁹ The survival of the feud received the formal attention of the Crown in the "Survey of the Borders" in 1542, but it is doubtful anything could be done to repress it even then.

It would have been surprising, indeed, if borderers had not dealt with the encroachment of royal authority in the same way they dealt with Scottish interlopers. One example of such northern sauciness survives from the reign of Henry VIII. Northumberland's Sir William Lisle, who had resisted his neighbor's attempts to bring his cattle stealing to an end, was reminded by the sheriff that there was a God and a king whose laws he must obey. Replied Sir William, "By God's blood, there is nother king nor his officers that shall take any

¹⁸Scott, Minstrelsy, p. 31.

¹⁹M. E. James, Change and Continuity in the Tudor North: The Rise of Thomas, Lord Wharton, St. Anthony's Hall, Borthwick Papers, No. 27 (York: St. Anthony's Press, 1965), p. 6.

distress on my ground, or have ado within the liberties of Felton, but I shall take another for it, if I be as strong as he, and able to make my party good." Lisle further bragged that if his autonomy were challenged, he would not hesitate to pluck Cardinal Wolsey by the nose.²⁰

All of this bravado stemmed from a curious feature of northern government, the fact that the North was a veritable patchwork of honours, liberties, and franchises. It has been convincingly argued that "the jura regalia enjoyed within the palatinates of Durham and Lancaster, the liberties of Hexham, Tynemouth, and Tynedale, and the honours of Richmond, Holderness, Pontefract, Pickering, Tickhill, etc., had their origin in the regality of the ancient kingdom and earldom of Northumbria."²¹ Whatever the source of their autonomy, however, these ecclesiastical and lay liberties were a menace to royal authority in the North. The ecclesiastical liberties were particularly abhorrent because criminals taking sanctuary beyond the Trent could escape prosecution simply by taking an oath of obedience to the lord of the liberty. St. John of Beverley was the most infamous northern sanctuary in this respect, harboring between 1479 and 1539 more than 180 murderers.²²

The owners of these baronies and liberties possessed significant judicial prerogatives, and royal officers could not enter these franchises to make an attachment or to serve a writ without the permission

²⁰ Idem, A Tudor Magnate and the Tudor State: Henry, Fifth Earl of Northumberland, St. Anthony's Hall, Borthwick Papers, No. 30 (York: St. Anthony's Press, 1966), pp. 11-12.

²¹ William Page, "Some Remarks on the Northumbrian Palatinates and Regalities," Archaeologia 51 (1888):154.

²² Reid, Council, pp. 13-14.

of the lord of the liberty or his bailiff.²³ In the thirteenth century during the reign of Edward I, the Statutes of Gloucester and Quo Warranto had encroached on franchisal autonomy a bit by requiring the holders of such liberties to justify their rights to the Crown; but these measures were meant to control more than to abolish the liberties, and even in the Tudor period, the king was having his troubles with the irrepressible northern lords, as the story of Sir William Lisle attests.

The last point I wish to make about northern political geography concerns the issue of administrative boundaries, a matter which was complicated by the existence of so many semi-autonomous liberties jealous of their rights. To begin with, then, as now, the "north parts" included the counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland, and Yorkshire, though medieval sources frequently included Nottinghamshire as part of the North since it, too, lay north of the Trent river and maintained religious affiliation with the archiepiscopal see of York. Westmorland and Cumberland had actually been created in 1176 by combining four separate honours--Carlisle, Cockermouth, Coupland, and Kendal. Carlisle was split in two, and the northern half, with Cockermouth and Coupland, came to be known as the county of Cumberland, while the southern half was joined with Kendal to become Westmorland. At the time of this reorganization, the honour of Carlisle was the only one of the four in which the sheriff had authority, and when this honour was split in two, the shrievalty in the southern half--that part which, with Kendal, became known as Westmorland--eventually became the hereditary property of the Viponts and, later, the Cliffords. As a consequence, the only part of these two new shires which could not

²³Ibid., pp. 7-9.

escape royal authority was the northern half of the honour of Carlisle, that is, the area between Carlisle and Penrith.²⁴

Superimposed over the border shires were the Marches of England against Scotland. Eventually, there came to be three Marches--the East, the West, and the Middle--each of which had a somewhat different background. The East and West Marches were established in 1249 in a treaty between Henry III and Alexander III. The East March was practically coterminous with the county of Northumberland, but, as usual, the northern liberties proved a stumbling block to uniform royal government in the North. That is to say, when the March was originally established, the liberties of Tynedale, Redesdale, Hexham, Norham with Bedlingtonshire, and Tynemouth were excluded from the East March. More than a hundred years later, in 1362, Tynedale, Redesdale, and Hexham were joined with that part of Northumberland which lay west of the road from Newcastle to Roxburgh to become the Middle March. Thenceforward, this March was frequently administered jointly with the East March.²⁵

Defining the West March is a bit more complicated. Apparently, the West March was originally called the March of Cumberland and Westmorland, but Reid claims this to be a misnomer, arguing that even when the March went by this name, the jurisdiction of the Warden was limited to that part of the honour of Carlisle which lay between Carlisle and Penrith in Cumberland.²⁶ However, I have found no evidence to

²⁴Reid, "Office of Warden," p. 486.

²⁵Lapsley, "Problem of the North," p. 445; Reid, "Office of Warden," p. 487.

²⁶Reid, "Office of Warden," p. 486

indicate that in the fifteenth century the Warden of the West March could not operate in Westmorland, and, as a matter of fact, a statute enacted by Parliament in 1453 clearly cites Westmorland as one of the three specific counties in which the Wardens might legally operate.²⁷

Certainly in the Yorkist period, the Crown was able to loosen the grip of the Cliffords on Westmorland, and the details of that episode are worth reciting here. For nearly sixty years before the accession of Edward IV, the Neville family had held the Wardenship of the West March, which, according to Reid, was limited to the county of Cumberland. In 1460, however, John, Lord Clifford, whose family held the hereditary shrivealty of Westmorland, had received the Wardenship of the West March upon the attainder of Richard Neville, earl of Warwick and Salisbury, the great Yorkist ally. When the political tide changed in 1461, allowing Warwick to resume his duties as Warden under the new king, Edward IV, it is entirely possible that the earl was able, in Clifford's disgrace, to extend the royal authority into Westmorland. The likelihood of this is strengthened by the fact that Clifford, an intractable Lancastrian, was attainted by the first Yorkist Parliament in 1461; and, shortly thereafter, his lands in Westmorland were given to Warwick, who became sheriff of that county in 1465, breaking the traditional Clifford monopoly of that office.²⁸

²⁷Great Britain, Laws, Statutes, etc., Statutes of the Realm, vol. 2, 31 Henry 6, ch. 3.

²⁸The Chronicles of the White Rose of York, ed. J. C. Giles (London: James Bohn, 1843; reprint ed., London: A. J. Sutton, 1974), p. 102, n. 2; Storey, "Wardens," pp. 613-14; CPR, 1461-67, 27 April 1462, p. 189; 11 April 1465, pp. 434-35.

It is also important to understand the difference between the shire and the March of the shire, for separate royal offices were established to administer each. That is to say, the shire was administered by a sheriff, and the March by a Warden of the March, though these offices were frequently rendered by one man who wore two hats, so to speak. Actually, the defense of the Marches had originally been the responsibility of the sheriff, but during the Scottish War of Independence, Edward I, realizing that the sheriffs had become bogged down with civil affairs, appointed military officers to defend the Marches. The term "Warden of the Marches" came into use only gradually, and it was not until the reign of Edward II that the first commission officially establishing the Wardenship was issued. This happened in 1309.²⁹

It is a commonplace of medieval history that the Wardenship of the Marches came to be dominated by the great northern families like the Cliffords, the Dacres, the Nevilles, and the Percys. The feuds of Neville and Percy became embroiled in national politics more than once, and Richard II was one of the first monarchs to see the necessity for using each to balance the other. Though Robin Storey, a specialist on fifteenth-century affairs, has stressed that the Wardenship was not the exclusive property of the great northern lords, it is difficult to refute Reid's contention that monarchs deliberately gave the Wardenship to the heads of the great northern houses in order to penetrate the liberties of which these men were lords.³⁰

²⁹Reid, "Office of Warden," pp. 481-82.

³⁰J. Anthony Tuck, "Richard II and the Border Magnates," *Northern History* 3 (1968):48; Storey, "Wardens," p. 593; Reid, "Office of Warden," p. 488.

Without a doubt, the mightiest of over-mighty subjects in the fifteenth century were invariably the great lords of the North. Richard II, Henry IV, Henry VI, Edward IV, and Richard III all faced a Percy or a Neville on the battlefield at least once. In order to understand why the retinues of the great northern houses became the epitome of bastard feudalism, one has only to recall the entrenched poverty and violence of the North. The Scottish wars have been blamed for much of northern poverty, as I have shown; and it was not at all uncommon for the displaced sons of northern farmers to find shelter in the camp of a northern warlord.³¹ In this context, one is tempted to suggest that the violence which wreaked havoc with the daily life of the North served as a kind of training ground for the men who would soldier alongside a Percy or a Neville. At any rate, the Wardens of the Marches, who frequently held a variety of other royal and seigniorial offices in the North, were certainly able to provide an avenue for advancement for men whom commerce and agriculture had neglected. One must also remember that these armies, though organized on the principles of private armies elsewhere in the kingdom, were financed by the Crown. Since the Percys and the Nevilles, who frequently served as Wardens of the Marches, were not particularly famed for unswerving loyalty, the king frequently found himself in the embarrassing position of having financed rebel armies with royal funds.

Under the prevailing condition of a decaying feudal order, however, it was almost impossible to find any alternative for the defense of the borders. Theoretically, the noblemen and gentry of the North, particularly in Northumberland, did hold their lands by knight's

³¹ Brooks, Council of the North, p. 9.

service to attend in their own person against the Scots even as late as the seventeenth century; but in practice, such service was frequently rendered by payment of castleward. In Cumberland and Westmorland, moreover, most tenants held by cornage and not by knight's service at all. Consequently, the Crown had to contract for military forces by indenture, engaging captains for specific periods with specified numbers of men.³²

The Wardenship was unquestionably a military office, and the original and chief duty of the Warden was to defend the Marches against Scottish invasion. An awesome figure in the North, the Warden is said to have had "full control over his own subordinates; over all captains, constables and keepers of castles and peels, royal and otherwise, over all sheriffs, mayors, and bailiffs, and over all the king's subjects in all matters in which he had jurisdiction."³³ The law he enforced was the law of the March, a body of customs and statutes drawn up by a commission of Scots and Englishmen in 1249; and he held court at one of two sites established by that same international commission.³⁴

Throughout the fourteenth century, the duties and powers of the Wardens proliferated so that eventually the Warden became not only a military captain, but an important international liaison as well. In his capacity as captain of a military force, the Warden was expected to take custody of the royal castles in the North and, more importantly, to punish men for evasion or desertion. As an international liaison between the kings of England and Scotland, the Warden had several powers: he

³²Pease, Lord Wardens, p. 26, citing Gray's Chorographia; Reid, "Office of Wardens," pp. 488-89.

³³Reid, "Office of Warden," p. 483.

³⁴Pease, Lord Wardens, p. 69

could make a truce for up to two months; he was to keep the truce and to punish truce-breakers; he could grant safe-conducts and receive Scots into the king's peace; and he was expected to arrange with the Scottish Wardens for a "March day," an annual occasion set aside for the redress of border grievances, a responsibility which, from 1386 onward, he could undertake without specific royal authorization.³⁵

It has been my intent in these pages to identify the factors which made the North an administrative troublespot for the Yorkists when they seized the throne in 1461. By way of summary, I might recount those particular qualities of northern character which rendered the North a difficult region to govern. First, the rough terrain, pocked by bog and fen in southern Yorkshire and aggravated by hills and mountains in the far north and northwest, hindered communication between North and South. This was particularly troublesome in the first days of Yorkist rule when pursuit of the Lancastrian forces fleeing northward must have given the new king an early introduction to northern charms. But it was also a problem in the simple day-to-day administration of royal policy, and, as I have shown, English kings, Edward IV among them, found it convenient to rely on northern lords for the execution of their government in the North.

Second, the North was a poorer area than the South, not only because of the harsh environment, but also because of frequent Scottish hostilities. Starving northerners, inured to the violence of frontier life, swelled the armies of the great military captains in the North, making them the only English lords with royally financed private armies.

Third, the North was administered differently than the South.

³⁵Reid, "Office of Warden," pp. 482-83.

The numerous liberties and franchises in the North made it necessary for the king to seek royal officers among the enfranchised northern lords. Only in this way was he able to overcome the resistance of the lords to royal interference. This tactic, in combination with the military obligations pursuant to the Wardenship, insured the survival of the military nobility in the North. When Edward IV took the throne, it was this entrenched feudalism--bastardized, though it might be--that became the chief stumbling block to Yorkist administration, and it is to that story which I must now direct attention.

II. Edward IV and the Nevilles in the North

1461-1470

The story of the Yorkists and the North properly begins in the days of Richard, duke of York, father of the Yorkist kings. York was the chief opponent to the misrule of the Lancastrian king, Henry VI, and the faction that ruled in his name. Though Duke Richard's title suggests a northern base, his lands lay primarily in and around Wales; and the duke was actually an unpopular figure in the North.¹ When the quarrels between York and Lancaster erupted into violence in the 1450s, partisan sympathies generally took a regional division, the North holding predominantly for Lancaster, the South predominantly for York. Actually, the Lancastrians could even look for comfort beyond the English border at the court of Henry's distant relative, James II.

One of the earliest examples of this regional division came after the first battle of St. Albans in May 1455 when Queen Margaret looked northward for assistance. A Scottish chronicler reports that James II responded to her plea for aid with an army of 20,000 men, and that almost the whole North of England gathered to assist the queen. A few years later when the Lancastrians contrived to secure Scottish favor by promising King James the county of Northumberland, northern real estate

¹J. R. Lander, The Wars of the Roses (New York: Secker and Warburg, 1965; Capricorn Books, 1967), p. 116, citing J. S. Davies, ed., An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI (Camden Society, o.s., vol. 64, 1856), pp. 106-107.

proved to be as important as northern men.²

In 1459, after their victory at Northampton, the Yorkists began to drive a wedge between Scotland and the Lancastrian North by taking over the border castles of Roxburgh and Warkworth. It was not long before James II lay siege to Roxburgh, though probably for his own benefit more than for Henry's. The duke of York and his great ally, the earl of Warwick, dispatched an embassy from the castle to negotiate a Yorkist alliance with James, who immediately sent the contingent back to the castle with nothing more than a tongue-lashing. Though the Yorkists eventually lost the castle, by the way, James might have been better off to bargain, for he was killed while giving curious examination to a cannon that suddenly burst.³

Meanwhile, Queen Margaret's international connections had been paying off. Her uncle, Charles VII of France, had been instrumental in the formation of an English, Scottish, and French army which stormed into Yorkshire a few days after Christmas, 1460, surrounded the duke of York outside Wakefield, and killed him.⁴ The duke's head was thrust on a pike and placed atop Micklegate Bar at York, the southernmost entry to the greatest city in the North.

Now Queen Margaret undertook a journey southward which perhaps more than any other episode in the Wars of the Roses tarnished the reputation

²John Leslie, The Historie of Scotland, vol. 2, trans. Father James Dalrymple; eds., E. G. Cody and William Murison (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1895), pp. 78-79.

³Ibid., p. 80; Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie, History and Chronicles of Scotland, 1437-1575, ed. Aeneas J. G. Mackay (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society; reprint ed., New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1966), pp. 141-43.

⁴Leslie, Historie, p. 80.

of the northerners and the queen alike. According to one report, her troops swept "like a whirlwind from the north," cutting a path through the country thirty miles wide all the way to St. Albans. They destroyed everything in their way--cattle, crops, riches, and even the sacred vestments of the Church. All their rage was not spent on plunder, however, for, in February, they destroyed the troops of Sir Edward Poynings near Dunstable, and the next day routed the Yorkists at St. Albans. Among the lords attending Margaret in this battle were the northern lords Roos, Grey, Hungerford, Fitzhugh, and Greystoke, as well as Henry Percy, third earl of Northumberland. After the battle, Queen Margaret and her army drew up outside London, but the citizens, fearing mischief, turned them away. With Henry VI, whom they had found singing under a tree at the battle of St. Albans, the Lancastrian troops pulled back into the North where they could be sure of safety.⁵

Meanwhile, the spiritual and temporal lords of the South and East flocked to London to receive the son of York, Edward, earl of March. Edward, who now possessed a "southerne byl to conteruayle a northern bassard," was elected king by this council and by popular acclaim in London.⁶ Immediately, the king issued a proclamation, granting pardon to all Lancastrian deserters who would present themselves to the earl

⁵The events summarized in this paragraph have been described separately in the following chronicles: Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland with the Continuation by Peter of Blois and Anonymous Writers, ed. and trans. Henry T. Riley (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), pp. 421-22, quoting directly from p. 422; A Short English Chronicle in Three Fifteenth-Century Chronicles, ed. James Gairdner (Camden Society, ser. 2, vol. 28, 1880), p. 76; Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, pp. lxxxiv-lxxxv; and Hearne's Fragment of an Old Chronicle, 1460-1470 in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 7.

⁶Edward Hall, The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and York (London: n.p., 1548; reprint ed., Hall's Chronicles, New York: A. M. S. Press, Inc., 1965), p. 253.

of Warwick; then, leaving the earl behind to array Yorkshire and the midlands, he set out in hot pursuit of the Lancastrians with an army of Welshmen and Kentishmen at his side.⁷

The two armies clashed outside Towton in a driving snowstorm on Palm Sunday 1461. The soldiers endured a day-long battle in stinging ice and snow before the Lancastrians finally fled into the night, stumbling toward Doncaster in their heavy armor. It was the worst battle in the Yorkist wars. Many who had survived the conflict drowned in the swollen and icy waters of the River Wharfe; and those who made it into town could not yet rest, for the Yorkists pursued them even there. George Neville, bishop of Exeter and brother to the Yorkist captain, records that 28,000 soldiers perished altogether at Towton, their bodies covering an area six miles long by three wide. Among the dead were eleven Lancastrian lords, including the northerners Lord Clifford and the earls of Westmorland and Northumberland.⁸

Dazed, the stumbling Lancastrian troops now pulled deeper into the North to lick their wounds. The earl of Wiltshire headed over the Pennines for Cumberland; but he was captured at Cockermouth in mid-April, and by May his head was decorating London Bridge. Queen Margaret, on the other hand, made a hasty excursion to Newcastle before taking refuge at

⁷Hearne's Fragment in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 7; CPR, 1461-67, 8 March 1461, p. 31; 12 March 1461, p. 7.

⁸George Neville recorded the events at Towton in a letter to the papal legate, Francesco Coppini. His estimate of the number killed is among the more conservative I have run across. The letter is printed in Lander, Wars of the Roses, pp. 127-29. See also Hearne's Fragment in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 10.

the Scottish court in Edinburgh. Edward pursued the Lancastrians northward only a bit, then returned to York where he kept Easter before moving on to Durham.⁹

Though Edward had been proclaimed king a few weeks earlier, his good fortune at Towton now cinched his continued possession of the throne. However, in the north part of his kingdom, he still ruled in name only. If many of the northern lords lay dead at Towton field, their followers were by no means extinct, and the squires of the earl of Northumberland soon pulled together an army of five to six thousand men, many of whom, no doubt, had vengeance on their minds.¹⁰ Furthermore, the city of York, which because of its size and ecclesiastical importance might be called the capital of the North, was a strong Lancastrian supporter, sending troops to Wakefield, St. Albans, and Towton where many had been killed or exiled. And, last, even if the Lancastrians had splintered, they were concentrated primarily in the northern part of the kingdom: to Yorkist eyes, the Northumbrian castles of Alnwick, Dunstanburgh, and Warkworth, in particular, must have seemed the most formidable of Lancastrian dens.

For the next two years, Cumberland and Northumberland would be the playground of both Lancastrian and Yorkist schemes, which, from an historical perspective, now appear to fall into three main stages: the efforts of both parties to put together a workable military machine;

⁹For the movements of Wiltshire and Margaret, consult James Gairdner, ed., Paston Letters, 1422-1509, 6 vols. (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., Inc., 1900), 2:7, 9; and William Gregory's Chronicle of London in The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London, ed. James Gairdner (Camden Society, ser. 2, vol. 17, 1876; reprint ed., New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1965), pp. 217-18; as well as George Neville's letter to Coppini in Lander, Wars of the Roses, p. 128. For Edward's movements, see Hearne's Fragment in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 10.

¹⁰Gairdner, ed., PL, 2:7.

the continuation of hostilities through the fall and winter of 1461-62; and the conquest of the Northumbrian castles, 1462-63.

Much of the political scaffolding for the hostilities of 1461-63 centered upon the rivalry of both parties for Scottish favor. Though Scotland had served the House of Lancaster for several years, Mary of Gueldres, who was now in control of the Crown during the minority of her son, James III, was a Burgundian, and Burgundy was a Yorkist ally. Henry VI was permitted sanctuary in Edinburgh, but he must be considered a paying guest in view of the fact that he surrendered Berwick "for his support and entertainment."¹¹ Henry must have stricken this bargain very early in his exile, for by May 1461, Berwick was already full of Scots. Margaret attempted to secure Scotland's favor even further by arranging a marriage between her son, Prince Edward, and the sister of James III, and, just in case Mary of Gueldres proved unreliable, the English queen cinched her Scottish connections with an arrangement whereby George, earl of Angus, the Scottish Warden of the Marches, would receive an English duchy between Trent and Humber in return for assistance against Edward.¹²

The Yorkists had ambitious Scottish nobles of their own with whom to bargain, however, and in 1462, Edward IV contracted the so-called "Treaty of Westminster-Ardtornish" with three notorious Scots rebels--John MacDonald, lord of the Isles, Donald Balloch, and James, earl of Douglas, the latter of whom was a frequent meddler in Yorkist affairs. According to this treaty the four signatories would join forces to

¹¹Lindsay of Pitcottie, History and Chronicles, p. 154.

¹²Gairdner, ed., PL, 2:9; George Ridpath, The Border History of England and Scotland (London: T. Caddell, 1776), p. 424; Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 12, n. 11.

overthrow James III after which Scotland would be divided into three parts held of the English Crown by the three Scotsmen. Douglas, moreover, was assured the restoration of his estates in the south of Scotland.¹³ News of this alliance, in combination with Warwick's successful assault on a Scottish castle, brought Mary of Gueldres scurrying southward for a personal conference with the earl of Warwick. Rumors were circulating to the effect that Edward would trade Douglas to Mary in exchange for Henry VI, but the essence of the Yorkist treaty with Scotland was a marriage between the English king and the Scottish queen-mother, an arrangement celebrated for its comic misalliance between a notorious bawd and the handsomest prince in Christendom.¹⁴ The treaty collapsed, however, and Scotland continued to support the claims of Henry VI, though how strongly is subject to debate.

It is important to note that Lancastrian reorganization after Towton had to rely heavily on international alliance since so many of Henry's English sympathizers had perished in the battle. In addition to her Scottish handiwork for example, Margaret sought a French alliance; but the Yorkists were able to find leadership much closer to home. The cornerstone of Yorkist strategy in the North was a Neville triumvirate--John Neville, Lord Montagu; George Neville, bishop of Exeter; and, perhaps most importantly, Richard Neville, earl of Warwick and Salisbury, the "Kingmaker." These brothers, cousins to the youthful Edward IV, were themselves northern lords possessing extensive lands in the border shires

¹³William Croft Dickinson, Gordon Donaldson, and Isabel A. Milne, eds., A Source Book of Scottish History, 3 vols. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1953; revised ed., 1958), 2:53-55.

¹⁴Gairdner, ed., PL, 2:104, 111; Paul Murray Kendall, Warwick the Kingmaker (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1957; Cardinal, 1973), pp. 104-105.

and in Yorkshire where their principal residence was Middleham castle. One or another of their ancestors had served as Wardens of the Marches for generations, and Warwick himself had been serving in the West March since 1453.¹⁵ Staunch Yorkist supporters since the days of Duke Richard, these brothers were the logical successors to authority in the Yorkist North; and, in 1461, Edward's limited experience certainly could not have prepared him to expect any trouble from the Neville camp. Before returning to London, Edward designated his cousin Warwick to be the chief governor of his northern campaign; and by July, Warwick had his official commission as Warden-general of the East and West Marches, which equalled, in view of the circumstances, a carte blanche for the conduct of Edward's wars.¹⁶

As for Montagu, his earliest northern assignment appears to have been his role as an intermediary between Edward and the city of York. York had been a faithful servant of the Lancastrian cause, sending 400 men to Wakefield and St. Albans, and a thousand to the debacle at Towton where many were slain or exiled. No doubt they feared the arrival of Yorkist troops who, entering at Micklegate Bar, would be welcomed by the grisly reminder of the city's Lancastrian associations. Montagu arrived in the city the day after the battle at Towton to request the city's grace to Edward IV; then, when Edward arrived a few days later, he also urged the king's grace toward the city. How successful Montagu was as an urban diplomat of sorts remains open to question, however, for years later the city would blame much of its poverty on the plunder

¹⁵Storey, "Wardens," p. 614, n. 6.

¹⁶Hearne's Fragment in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 10; William Illingworth, John Caley, and David Macpherson, eds., Rotuli Scotiae in turri Londinensi et in domo capitulari Westmonasteriensi asservati, 2 vols. (London: Record Commission, 1819), 2:402.

of Edward's troops who now undertook to rob, spoil, and ransom the city's inhabitants.¹⁷

It was evidently George Neville, the bishop of Exeter, who received the harvest of Edward's personal affection, for in the first two years of Edward's reign, the bishop enjoyed a constant flow of royal grants, which must have made this cleric a wealthy man, indeed. In fact, on more than one occasion in 1461-62, the bishop lent money to the Crown, presumably to help the northern campaign his brothers were conducting on horseback. The bishop also served Edward as chancellor, but his importance in the North is best represented by his elevation to the archbishopric of York in 1465.¹⁸

Though the battle at Towton had been decisive, it in no way marked the termination of Lancastrian hostilities. In June, Margaret's supporters were making simultaneous raids into the northeast and the northwest. Edward's captains were able to bring matters into hand, however, Montagu raising the siege of Carlisle, and Warwick defending Durham against an assault by Lord Roos, Sir John Fortescue, and his own disgruntled kinsman, Humphrey Neville of Brancepeth, who was captured and imprisoned.¹⁹

For the most part, the Lancastrians were holed up in three of

¹⁷Norman Davis, ed., Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, 2 vols. (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1971), 1:165; George Neville to Coppini in Lander, Wars of the Roses, p. 128; YCR, 1:136.

¹⁸Edward's numerous grants to George Neville appear in the CPR, 1461-67, pp. 7-477 passim. On three known occasions, Edward repaid the money he had borrowed from the bishop: CPR, 1461-67, 7 December 1461, p. 80; 20 July 1463, p. 300; and 6 March 1464, p. 322.

¹⁹Gairdner, ed., PL, 2:14; E. F. Jacob, The Fifteenth Century, 1399-1485 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 528; Cora L. Scofield, The Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth, 2 vols. (London: Longmans and Co., Ltd., 1923), 1:230.

the castles which lined the Northumbrian coast along the North Sea--Alnwick, Dunstanburgh, and Warkworth. Only Bamburgh castle had surrendered shortly after Towton and was now being kept for the Yorkists by Sir William Tunstall, more of whom later. Sir Robert Ogle, one of the few northerners who had been with Warwick at St. Albans, was engaged to expand the new king's own Northumbrian territory by taking over the castle of Harebottle and the lordship of Redesdale, hitherto held by the Lancastrian sympathizer, Sir William Tailboys. Evidently, the Yorkists intended also to launch a naval attack on the North Sea castles, for, in June, Edward was busy building a fleet.²⁰ By autumn, the Yorkists had managed to wrest Alnwick from the Lancastrians, and Sir Ralph Percy had surrendered Dunstanburgh on the condition that he could hold it for Edward IV.

In December, Queen Margaret and Prince Edward made a second foray into Carlisle where they displayed their affection for their subjects by burning a mill. Then, in February 1462, Margaret orchestrated a more sophisticated attack, plotting a simultaneous assault on three different parts of England. One group, coming from north of the Trent, would march on London; a second would approach the midlands from Wales; and the last would sail toward the southern coast from the islands of Jersey and Guernsey in the English Channel. Together, the rebel forces amassed for this assault amounted to 120,000 men, which probably explains why Yorkist spies had no trouble detecting the plot. As a result, the triple assault never took place. Nevertheless, that month there was sufficient turmoil and seditious gossip in the northern counties--

²⁰ It is interesting to note, by the way, that Edward was finding it necessary to coax the southerners into sharing the burden of ship-building with northerners from York and Scarborough. See CPR, 1461-67, 24 June 1461, p. 33. Ogle's commission, dated 2 May 1461, may be found in the same volume, p. 29. For Tunstall, see Jacob, Fifteenth Century p. 529.

possibly in connection with this ambitious plot--to necessitate special commissions for their repression.²¹

Margaret may have begun to realize that lukewarm Scottish assistance was not enough, and in the spring of 1462, she turned a frantic eye to France. It took her nearly half a year to squeeze a few ships and soldiers from Louis XI, who also agreed to release the notorious French adventurer, Piers de Brézé, from prison. By October, the Queen was ready to sail.²² The army landed in Northumberland on 25 October, and Margaret was able to take Alnwick, which she stuffed with Frenchmen. Fearing a Yorkist advance, however, she urged her soldiers back onto the ships, intending to retreat to France or Scotland. By now, though, the North Sea was swollen with a vehement November storm. Margaret's carvel sank, taking all her treasure with it, but she and de Brézé finally made their way to Berwick in a fishing boat. Meanwhile, the ships carrying her French host were cast up so deep in the sand below Bamburgh that the soldiers had to burn them before fleeing to Lindisfarne. The Bastard Ogle and John Manners gave chase, and when the fight at Holy Island was over, more than 400 Frenchmen had been killed or captured. Having lost

²¹CPR, 1461-67, 19 December 1461, p. 82; 4 February 1462, p. 102; 28 February 1462, p. 132. See also Gairdner, ed., PL, 2:91.

²²The chroniclers and historians of the period do not agree on the precise chronology of events which transpired between Margaret's leaving France in October 1462 and the final Yorkist victories at Hexham and Bamburgh in the spring of 1463. My account is a probable reconstruction of events based on the information I have found in the following sources: Hall, Union, pp. 258-61; Hearne's Fragment in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, pp. 12-15; John Warkworth, The Chronicle-History of the Reign of Edward IV in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, pp. 103-106; Gregory's Chronicle in Historical Collections, ed. Gairdner, pp. 218-27; Lindsay of Pitcottie, History and Chronicles, pp. 154-55; Leslie, Historie, pp. 85-86; Account of the Siege of Bamburgh in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, pp. xxxvi-lxxxix; "B. M. Vitellius A XIV," cited in Lander, Wars of the Roses, pp. 138-39; Davis, ed., PL&P, 1:522-24.

all her French money and ships, and most of her French soldiers, Margaret now pinned all her hopes on Piers de Brézé, the only French resource she had left, making him constable of Alnwick castle.

From the Yorkist point of view, the events at Holy Island, though certainly significant, were only a meager beginning. The Lancastrians now held Alnwick, under de Brézé's command, as well as Dunstanburgh and Bamburgh. Though Sir William Tunstall had been holding Bamburgh for the Yorkists since Towton, his Lancastrian brother, Sir Richard Tunstall, had recovered it for Margaret at about the same time the queen had taken Alnwick in October and was now planning to strike off Sir William's Yorkist head. This left only Warkworth under Yorkist control, and it was from this castle that Warwick now directed simultaneous assaults on all three fortresses. This three-way siege began 10 December 1462.

As usual, the Nevilles took a primary role. Warwick, as Warden-general, orchestrated the assault, posting daily to each of the three castles and coordinating the supply of food and ordinance with the duke of Norfolk's headquarters at Newcastle. Montagu was directing the operations at Bamburgh, while William Neville, Lord Fauconberg and earl of Kent, lay siege to Alnwick. At Dunstanburgh, John Tiptoft, the earl of Worcester, was holding his own with the dubious assistance of the turncoat Sir Ralph Grey. Meanwhile, the king lay at Durham, recuperating from a case of measles, it would appear.

As December and the northern winter advanced, the king's soldiers despaired of the constant rain and began to steal away despite threats of severe royal punishment. The enemy fared no better. Inside Alnwick castle, the Frenchmen were so starved they ate horse flesh, and de Brézé finally had no option but to send for Scottish aid. Moved by the grim

evidence of Lancastrian weakness, Sir Ralph Percy and the duke of Somerset yielded Dunstanburgh and Bamburgh on Christmas Eve 1462. King Edward, whose generosity was matched only by his naiveté, showed incredible lenience to these two staunch Lancastrians, putting Percy in charge of both castles and even making room for Somerset in his own bed. Perhaps his motive was to encourage desertion in the enemy camp by a spectacular display of forgiveness, but it is doubtful the Frenchmen still holding out at Alnwick were impressed by Somerset's appearance in Yorkist colors outside the castle walls.²³ A more welcome sight, no doubt, was the Scottish earl of Angus who soon bustled a large army of fresh troops and extra horses to Alnwick. The English, outnumbered and exhausted, dropped back, but the Scotsmen, fearing a ruse, failed to take advantage of their strength. They slipped the Frenchmen out the postern, set them atop Scottish horses, and beat a path back to Edinburgh, leaving the English to enter this last Northumbrian castle peacefully.

If the chief impediment to English government in that age was the transience of political loyalty, the problem of the North certainly typifies the age. That is to say that, having won the castles of Alnwick, Dunstanburgh, and Bamburgh at some cost, Edward now had to find reliable personnel to take custody of them. At this stage of his reign, he had not yet conceived the notion that the North might be governed in any but the traditional manner, and so he entrusted the care of the castles to local men, placing Sir Ralph Grey at Alnwick and Sir Ralph Percy in charge of Bamburgh and Dunstanburgh. He further authorized Percy to receive those repentant rebels who had not been attainted and to pass sentence on those

²³Kendall, Warwick, p. 106.

who had been, granting their lives or sending them into exile.²⁴ For a turncoat, such responsibility was more than enough evidence of Edward's willingness to forgive; but Percy failed to appreciate this generosity and, within a short space, had handed Bamburgh over to the French troops. At the same time, Sir Ralph Grey was reinstating Margaret at Alnwick.

Aflame with the heady revival of her luck, Margaret now intended to add Norham castle to her string of northern fortresses, though in the end Montagu and Warwick sent her scurrying to Flanders with de Brézé in tow, her strength outdistanced by her ambition. Soon there was another leak in the Yorkist dike: at the end of the year, the duke of Somerset, hearing that his old patron, King Henry VI, was planning a march into England, escaped from his pleasant confinement in Wales and headed for Newcastle. Somerset, in the company of Ralph Percy and the renegade, Sir Humphrey Neville, had plotted to ambush Montagu, who was travelling toward Newcastle in preparation for a convocation with a Scottish embassy. Montagu, having gotten wind of the plot, took a different route, gathering an army as he went. Quite by chance, this army happened upon the enemy at Hedgely Moor and was able to put Sir Ralph Percy out of the Yorkist way forever. Percy's dying exclamation that he had saved the bird in his bosom goes a long way, I think, toward showing the kind of entrenched Lancastrian loyalty the Yorkists had to overcome in the North.

Encouraged by his stroke of fortune, Montagu found no reason to put off an advance to Hexham where his spies had discovered the camp of King Henry himself. The battle at Hexham was not an easy one, but when it was over, the duke of Somerset was preparing himself for execution, and King Henry reigned over nothing but broken dreams. Though

²⁴CPR, 1461-67, 17 March 1463, p. 262

Montagu had captured the greatest prize in the North, his brother Warwick was permitted the final flourish in the reconquest of Bamburgh a few weeks later. Alnwick and Dunstanburgh had surrendered peacefully in the interim.

Montagu's facility with a horse and a weapon could hardly escape the king's attention. Time and again at Carlisle, Bamburgh, Norham, Hedgely Moor, and ultimately at Hexham, John Neville had proved his military acumen and brute skill, which virtues were amply rewarded in May 1463 with his appointment as Warden of the East March.²⁵ His brother Warwick continued in his earlier capacity as Warden of the West March only. A year later, almost to the day, Montagu received a second fat prize, the earldom of Northumberland, long the province of the rival Percy family; Henry Percy, the third earl of Northumberland, had died at Towton, leaving a fifteen-year-old heir, also named Henry.²⁶ But since the boy's claim to his father's lands and titles had vanished early in Edward's reign by reason of the earl's attainder in the fall of 1461, John Neville also fell heir to important Percy properties in Northumberland, including the baronies of Alnwick, Warkworth, Langley, and Prudhoe. The ascendancy of the Neville family in Northumberland reached its pinnacle in 1466 when John Neville added the shrievalty of the county to his string of Northumbrian rewards.²⁷

Among Montagu's first duties as Warden was his service as one of Edward's commissioners at the ratification of a fifteen-year treaty with

²⁵CPR, 1461-67, 26 May 1463, p. 426.

²⁶Though this lad would reappear in 1469 to ruin the ambitious dreams of his Neville rival, his whereabouts at the time of Neville's creation as earl of Northumberland are unknown. My reconstruction of the boy's whereabouts from 1461 to 1469 may be found in appendix 3.

²⁷CPR, 1461-67, 1 August 1464, pp. 340-41; 28 July 1466, p. 525

Scotland, a role he shared with his two brothers, the bishop of Exeter and the earl of Warwick.²⁸ This treaty de-fused the threat of further Lancastrian sallies into England from Scotland and effectively cancelled any remaining hopes King Henry may have nursed. Henry was left to wander about in the North until he was finally apprehended in Lancashire in 1465 for his final humiliation. His legs bound to his stirrups, the one-time king of England was led into his capital and ensconced in the Tower of London, two squires and two yeomen controlling all access to the last Lancastrian monarch.²⁹

By 1465, then, the Yorkists had truly subordinated the North; they had conquered the all-important Northumbrian castles, enjoined a treaty with Scotland; killed or executed a number of northern leaders, including the earls of Northumberland and Westmorland and the turncoats Sir Ralph Percy and Sir Ralph Grey; chased an impoverished Queen Margaret to the continent; imprisoned Henry VI; and pushed the Neville family into a position of unprecedented authority in the North. With these accomplishments under his belt, Edward must surely have thought the North would never trouble him again, but this was not to be.

If every hero has his flaw, Edward's was excessive trust, at least throughout the 1460s. One would think his earlier experiences with

²⁸John Neville, Lord Montagu, served as earl of Northumberland until the restoration of Henry Percy to that title in 1470 at which time Neville became marquis of Montagu. For the sake of clarity, I shall refer to Neville by the name "Montagu" throughout the text despite the fact that, for awhile, the name "Northumberland" is more correct.

For Montagu's commission as an ambassador, see Bain, Joseph, ed., Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland, vol. 4 (1357-1509): 3 June 1463, no. 1337, p. 272.

²⁹Warkworth, Chronicle-History in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, pp. 107-108.

Sir Ralph Percy and the duke of Somerset would have taught him he could not expect his generosity to be a particular advantage to his rule. Yet he lavished offices and estates on his Neville cousins which made them the over-mightiest of over-mighty subjects. I have already indicated the strength which John Neville attained in the northeast, holding the Wardenship of the East March and the earldom and shrievalty of Northumberland, as well as the important Northumbrian manors formerly owned by the Percys. In the northwest, Richard Neville matched his brother's accomplishments by serving as Warden of the West March and as sheriff of Westmorland, the latter of which had hitherto been an hereditary office belonging to the Lancastrian Cliffords. Warwick had received the Clifford estates in Westmorland in 1462, a prize he fattened the following year by adding the custody and temporalities of the bishopric of Carlisle during its vacancy. Percy estates in Yorkshire soon fell the Neville way as well, John receiving Wressel and Richard, Topcliff, among others. In 1466, Warwick also became keeper of the royal forests beyond Trent, and, with his brother John and two others, was granted all mines of gold and silver north of the Trent as well.³⁰

Meanwhile, as I have shown, George Neville was amassing vast estates in several counties; and even before he became archbishop of York, the Neville bishop was given the custody and temporalities of the archbishopric. In 1466, he was given full authority to receive into the king's protection any persons indicted of treason within the lordship

³⁰Except where specified, all references in this note are to CPR, 1461-67. Wardenship and shrievalty: 11 April 1465, pp. 434-35; 27 April 1462, p. 189. Percy estates: 16 November 1465, p. 484. Bishopric temporalities and forest office: 12 December 1463, p. 292; 21 November 1466, p. 540. Mines: Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Edw. 4, Henry 6 (1467-77): 20 December 1468, p. 132.

and liberties of Hexham and the lordship of Tynedale, though this arrangement certainly benefitted the Crown as well in its effort to penetrate the northern liberties. A year later, the Crown authorized the archbishop to have prisons or jails in the towns and lordships of Beverley and Ripon in Yorkshire, in addition to the more important freedom to appoint justices of the peace, of oyer and terminer, and of jail delivery in those towns. Northern judicial authority like this was not limited to the clerical Neville, however, for Warwick and Montagu, in addition to holding Warden courts, served time and again throughout the 1460s on commissions of the peace and of oyer and terminer, and as justices of the survey and custody of rivers in Yorkshire.³¹

All things considered, it is an understatement to say that the Nevilles were powerful in the North in the first reign of Edward IV. They had, in fact, achieved a monopoly of regional power, unchecked by a Percy, a Clifford, or a Dacre. In addition to the normal prestige associated with aristocratic power anywhere in the realm, this family had carved for itself what amounted to a palatinate, in any real sense of the word, possessing among themselves not only the territorial advantages concomitant to vast landholdings, but also a broad influence in military, judicial, economic, and even religious affairs in the North. Unfortunately, this was not an influence which would rest unused.

The first sign of a chill in relations between Edward and Warwick occurred in September 1464. Warwick had returned from France where he

³¹ All references in this note are to CPR, 1461-67. Grants to the archbishop: 16 September 1464, p. 329; 5 July 1466, p. 525; 4 May 1467, pp. 15-16. Oyer and terminer: 12 February 1462, pp. 132-33; 20 February 1466, p. 530; 26 February 1467, p. 530; 18 July 1466, p. 530; 29 September 1463, p. 281. Rivers: 26 June 1462, p. 206. De wallis et fossatis: 2 July 1465, p. 451; 10 March 1467, p. 528. Peace commissions: pp. 561-67 *passim*.

had spent considerable time at the court of Louis XI, trying to arrange an Anglo-French treaty. Edward had called a Great Council at Reading at which Warwick intended to impress his sovereign with the result of his skillful international diplomacy--a proposed marriage between the English king and Louis' sister-in-law, Bona of Savoy; but this plum quickly soured at the unexpected revelation of a secret marriage between King Edward and Elizabeth Woodville Grey, the widow of a Lancastrian knight.

Edward's motives for circumventing the designs of his powerful cousin are subject to debate, but given his reputation as a womanizer, it is probably true that in 1464 the "lustful Edward" was more dazzled by a pretty face than threatened by his powerful cousin. The fifteenth-century chronicler, John Warkworth, Master of St. Peter's College, cites the Woodville marriage as the chief cause of the break between Edward and Warwick, writing that although the two did not come to an open breach immediately, "they never loved together after." However, another chronicler, who precedes his observation on this subject with a little essay in which he claims first-hand knowledge, attributes the break to Warwick's secret dealings with the French king, which, in view of his own insatiable ambition, had brought him under great suspicion. The chronicler of Croyland Abbey had a third opinion, believing these early tensions paled in comparison to the immense quarrel over the marriage of Edward's sister Margaret to Charles, duke of Burgundy, in 1468, a marriage which shattered Warwick's years of work on behalf of a French alliance.³² No doubt, all these explanations contain some

³²The three interpretations summarized here may be found, respectively, in Warkworth, Chronicle-History in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 106; Hearne's Fragment in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 23; and Croyland Chronicle, pp. 457-58.

truth, but the first recorded evidence of their break is still the announcement of the king's marriage at the Council of Reading, September 1464.

The relevance of this piece of political history to my topic becomes clear when one examines the eventual outcome of Warwick's break with Edward, the treasonous rebellion of the Nevilles in 1469-70. This rebellion, as one might expect, capitalized on the perennial restlessness of the north country which, by now, had become a province dominated by this most ambitious and dangerous family. Warwick's master plot began developing shortly after Princess Margaret's departure for Burgundy when, at the town of Warwick, he undertook to persuade his brothers to join him in his scheme to oust Edward. The archbishop was a ready ally, but Montagu apparently required the solid promise of international assistance and personal reward to woo him from the king in whose name all his honors had been won.³³ Throughout this rebellion, John Neville's loyalties are frequently unclear, and it is not altogether certain that he was a willing participant at the start.

Interestingly, in view of Warwick's close kinship to the royal house, not to mention his own vaulting ambition, the earl appears never to have desired the Crown for himself. Kingmaker rather than king, Warwick spent all his energies on the construction of puppet monarchies which he might control in fact, though not in name. Once Edward had eroded Warwick's effectiveness at home and abroad by asserting his own independence, the earl still had two more cards to play: he could restore Henry VI, or he could elevate another member of the House of York to the throne. Pride, no doubt, bound him to the second option, for an alliance with Henry would have necessitated some deference to

³³Hall, Union, p. 271.

Queen Margaret, whose own ambition certainly matched the earl of Warwick's. Fortunately for Warwick, the king's brother George, duke of Clarence, was also beginning to feel the itch of dissatisfaction, and it took little to attach the duke to Edward's cause. The king's other brother, Richard, duke of Gloucester, was unmoved by the treasonous overtures of his cousins, however, and remained loyal to Edward IV, now and throughout his brother's life.

In July 1469, the participants in this rebellion sailed for Calais where Warwick tied himself irretrievably to a course of action that would breed two more years of civil war in England. That is to say, on 11 July, George Neville, the archbishop of York, married the duke of Clarence to Warwick's eldest daughter, Isabel Neville.³⁴ Meanwhile, the Neville faction was already at work stirring up a conotion in Yorkshire. The Hospital of St. Leonard in York was an almshouse traditionally supported by the first fruits of the harvest throughout Yorkshire. In November 1468, the master and brethren of the Hospital had become embroiled in a controversy over the payment of corn, a quarrel which had come to Warwick's attention when Edward engaged him to resolve the conflict. At that time, the Crown had ordered the payment to be made to the hospital.³⁵ Now Warwick began to capitalize on this northern in-fighting, putting it out to the husbandmen that their corn never reached the needy but served only to make the master of the hospital rich. When the proctors of the hospital went out into the county to gather the corn, they were beaten by angry peasants

³⁴Hall has recorded the marriage of George of Clarence to Isabel Neville in Union, p. 272. For the specific date of the Neville marriage, I am indebted to Lander's useful chronology of events in Wars of the Roses, pp. 323-27. For the events of 1469, see specifically p. 325.

³⁵CPR, 1467-77, 14 November 1468, pp. 131-32. Except where otherwise specified, my account of the rebellion in Yorkshire derives from Hall, Union, pp. 272-75.

heated to a fever pitch by this Neville propaganda. Soon, a large peasant army, some say 15,000 strong, was marching to York under the leadership of one Robert Hilderne. John Neville, whom Hall styles "governor and president of that country for the King," confronted the rebels outside York, took Hilderne, and beheaded him. This marks the first of several occasions in which John Neville exhibited ambiguous loyalties, though it is probable he meant to disguise his participation more than to revert to Edward's cause. The likelihood of this is strengthened by Warwick's earlier removal to Calais, which strongly suggests the Nevilles wished their own hand in the peasant uprising to remain secret.

What had been a local matter now took on national overtones as the rebel army began to march toward London, complaining of King Edward's unjustness. The new leader of the rebels was a northern hero, Sir John Conyers, who operated anonymously under the name Robin of Redesdale. Though Conyers had the nominal lead, he was assisted by two of Warwick's youthful kinsmen--Henry, son and heir to Lord Fitzhugh, a nephew; and Sir Henry Neville, son and heir to Lord Latimer, a cousin.

Learning of the mysterious Robin, Edward sent for William Herbert, earl of Pembroke, a Welshman whose importance at the Yorkist court had mushroomed in the wake of Warwick's exit from favor. With his brother Richard, Pembroke marched northward with an army of 6,500 Welshmen. To bolster Herbert's army, Edward had furnished a company of 800 archers under the command of the hot-headed Humphrey, Lord Stafford of Southwick. The combined armies of Herbert and Stafford came upon the rebels near Northampton, and though a brief skirmish there sent the Welsh soldiers scattering, the northmen stopped their journey southward and headed for the town of Warwick for a meeting with the earl of Warwick and his new son-in-law, the duke of Clarence, lately arrived from

Calais to gather troops.

Herbert and Stafford, meanwhile, withdrew to Banbury where Stafford's inclination to dally at an inn housing a lovely damsel caused an argument with the more business-minded earl of Pembroke. Stafford defiantly abandoned Pembroke, taking with him the important company of archers whose absence was sorely felt the next day when Pembroke's depleted troops engaged the Yorkshiremen at Edgecote Field. In the first skirmish, Sir Henry Neville, a rebel leader, was killed; and that night, the northerners, vowing revenge, sent back to Northampton to gather up a rowdy host of town rascals who flew to Edgecote under the earl of Warwick's banner the following morning. Though the Welshmen were on the point of victory, they fled the field as soon as they saw the earl's banner aloft, mistakenly believing the Neville was upon them. Stafford, regretting his behavior at Banbury, had returned to the field of battle, but he was too late to save the Herberts who had already been captured. The Herberts were executed at Northampton a few days later.³⁶

With these two props to Edward's throne removed, the rebels now beat a path to Grafton Regis, the Woodville residence, where they seized and executed a brother and the father of the queen. Edward's only solace was the fulfillment of his vengeful order for the execution of Stafford of Southwick whose lack of discipline had cost the king a great political and personal loss.

The executions of the Herberts and the Woodvilles had left a political vacuum which Edward had to fill in order to contravene the treasonous activities of Warwick and Clarence. For this purpose, Edward now turned his thoughts to the rightful heir of Northumberland

³⁶In Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, see Warkworth, Chronicle-History, p. 111; and Hearne's Fragment, p. 24.

and the natural rival of the Nevilles in the North, the young Henry Percy who had been lodged in the Fleet since at least 1465. It was not long before another Robin, Robin of Holderness, was clamoring for the restoration of this noble prisoner in a northern riot secretly sponsored by the king himself. John Neville, quick to defend his own interests, squelched the rebellion and beheaded its mysterious leader, but this could not stop Edward's implacable determination to abridge Neville influence in the North and to build a new party for himself.³⁷

In August, before Edward could effect this purpose, however, he was arrested by the archbishop of York and whisked away to Warwick castle; later, for the surer keeping of the royal prisoner, the Nevilles removed Edward to their northern residence at Middleham. Warwick's plans for Edward are unclear, and a Parliament which he perhaps had summoned to York was cancelled early in September due to the renewal of Lancastrian disturbances on the border. Warwick found himself in the embarrassing position of having to restore York in order to frustrate Lancaster, consequently deferring his own plans for his son-in-law, the duke of Clarence.³⁸ In the autumn of 1469, then, there were three contestants for England's throne, each using a northern strategy of one sort or another: Clarence, a Warwick-inspired rebellion in Yorkshire; Henry, a border fray led by his own Neville ally, Sir Humphrey; and Edward, a restoration of Percy authority in the North.

³⁷ A Brief Latin Chronicle in Three Fifteenth-Century Chronicles, ed. Gairdner, p. 183; Warkworth, Chronicle-History in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 107.

³⁸ Croyland Chronicle, p. 458; CCR, 1468-76, 7 September 1469, no. 115, p. 115; Warkworth, Chronicle-History in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, pp. 111-12.

By 13 October, Edward had returned to London, and though the Neville earl of Northumberland was numbered amongst the king's retinue, his high position would endure unchallenged for only two weeks more. On 27 October, Henry Percy, who had been hustled from the Fleet to the Tower of London, took an oath of fealty to Edward IV which, along with a bond of £5,000 cancelable upon good behavior, freed him from prison.³⁹ With more caution than customary, Edward refrained from lavishing immediate rewards on Percy, choosing for the time being, at least, to keep Neville and Percy both in line by dangling the claims of each before the other.

Meanwhile, the nobles of the realm, anxious to put an end to civil war, prevailed upon both Edward and Warwick to make peace, and Clarence and Warwick finally made their way sheepishly to London with a small retinue in a show, or perhaps a pretence, of good faith. At Westminster, the king held an audience with his rebel cousin and brother, and though at first all parties feigned politeness, when it was over, an infuriated earl of Warwick bolted from London more determined than ever to set the malleable Clarence on the throne, finding opportunity soon enough to harness the rancorous energies of a private quarrel for his own ends.⁴⁰ Richard, Lord Welles, had been feuding with a knight of the king's household named Sir Thomas a Burgh, the most recent episode of which dispute had been the destruction of Burgh's house and all his goods, an event so disturbing to the king's peace that Edward himself prepared to ride into Lincolnshire. Sensing their opportunity, Clarence and

³⁹CCR, 1468-76, 27 October 1469, no. 403, pp. 100-101.

⁴⁰Edward's audience with Warwick and Clarence is recorded in Hall, Union, pp. 276-77; and Croyland Chronicle, p. 459.

Warwick sent out the rumor that a vengeful Edward was coming forth to "sit and hang and draw a great number of the commons."⁴¹ On Sunday, 4 March 1470, Robert Welles, the son of the riotous Lord Welles, made a proclamation to this effect in the churches of the shire, urging every man to come to Ranby Hawe on Tuesday, 6 March, in order to resist the king.

It is hard to believe that even a gullible King Edward could fail to suspect the complicity of Clarence and Warwick in this affair, especially since Sir Robert Welles was a kinsman of Warwick's. There were certainly commoners in the realm who mistrusted Warwick's duplicitous offer of aid, and Edward knew better than anyone the earl's capacity for treachery. Edward's seeming gullibility may well have been his own form of pretence, for on 1 March, he had bound Henry Percy more firmly to his cause, granting him the estates in Northumberland and the properties in Newcastle which had once belonged to his father.⁴² This plum, which must have suggested the promise of more to come, was enough to secure a ready ally in the North.

Still, Edward had no hard evidence of Neville complicity, and he did commission John Neville--to date, the most trustworthy of his

⁴¹The details in this paragraph concerning the events in Lincolnshire derive from Warkworth, Chronicle-History in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 113; and The Chronicle of the Rebellion in Lincolnshire, ed. John Gough Nichols, in Camden Miscellany, (Camden Society, o.s., vol. 1, 1847), p. 6. The direct quotation is from the confession of Sir Robert Welles which is appended to this chronicle on p. 22.

⁴²My assertion that common men suspected Warwick's complicity is based on the remark of John Paston the elder to his brother concerning the earl's plans to ride into Lincolnshire with the king: "Som men seye that hys goyng shall do good, and som seye that it dothe harm." See Davis, ed., PL&P, 1:415. J. M. W. Bean has discussed the apparently clandestine grant to Henry Percy in The Estates of the Percy Family, 1416-1537 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 110.

cousins--to array Yorkshire. Having secured the North the best he knew how, he departed for Lincolnshire, sending word to Lord Welles and his cohort, Sir Thomas Dymmock, that they were to come to him immediately. Upon their examination at Huntingdon on 9 or 10 March, these two acknowledged their part in the conspiracy and exchanged a pardon for an agreement to urge Sir Robert's surrender.⁴³

On Sunday, 10 March, Edward was at Fotheringay where he learned that the rebels, having passed Grantham toward him had begun to move toward Leicester. Actually, Warwick and Clarence had directed this rebel maneuver, urging Sir Robert to let Edward pass northward, so that he would be trapped "betwixt theym and the power of the northe, to the likly uttur and finalle distruccion of his rialle person, . . ."⁴⁴ From Coventry, Warwick and Clarence masked their meeting with the rebels by writing Edward they were sending aid and would be in Leicester by Monday. However, before he could reach his union with Warwick, Sir Robert received his father's message and turned back toward Stamford. Edward, seeing the armed arrival of Sir Robert, executed his hostages, Welles and Dymmock, in violation of his earlier pardon, and then set out to engage the enemy host in battle.

Spying the king's approach, the rebels fled the field, shedding their coats as they ran, so that history has dubbed this encounter the battle of Lose-Coat Field. Sir Robert Welles, who had been taken in the fray, obliged the king with a full confession in which he revealed that the ultimate goal of the rebellion in Lincolnshire had been to win a

⁴³For John Neville, see CPR, 1467-77, 2 March 1470, pp. 199-200; for Welles and Dymmock, see Chron. Reb. Lincs., ed. Nichols, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁴Chron. Reb. Lincs., ed. Nichols, pp. 7-10, quoting directly from p. 18.

crown for Clarence's ambitious head. Exposed, Clarence and Warwick made one last attempt to salvage their cause, sending the Lord Scrope north into Richmondshire to stir up a commotion. Edward, gambling on the loyalty of John Neville, sent this cousin into Neville home ground, ordering him to array the men of Northumberland and Westmorland in order to resist the Lord Scrope. The records do not show a trace of the conflicting loyalties this summons must have aroused in northern hearts, but Scrope eventually surrendered to the king.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, Clarence and Warwick had weaseled their way out of a royal summons, promising Edward's messenger they would go to the king, but travelling instead from Coventry to Burton upon Trent, Derby, and then eastward to Chesterfield. From nearby Newark, Edward sent another message to his rebel kinsmen, again ordering their surrender: again they balked, Clarence whining he needed more assurance of safety. Edward, who by this time had beaten the rebels into Yorkshire, wrote from Doncaster that he could not be too generous without endangering the realm. Having executed Sir Robert at Doncaster, Edward now proposed to descend on his brother and cousin with an army which some were calling the best arrayed host ever seen in England.⁴⁶ Blocked from their strength in the North, Clarence and Warwick had to flee westward into Lancashire, hiring ships for Southampton where Warwick kept his own great vessel, the Trinity. Though some of the rebels were taken in their escape and executed grimly by John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester, the principals made

⁴⁵Hearne's Fragment in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 25; Chron. Reb. Lincs., ed. Nichols, pp. 11-12, 17, 22.

⁴⁶Chron. Reb. Lincs., ed. Nichols, pp. 11-16; Gairdner, ed., PL, 2:395.

their way safely to France.⁴⁷

Immediately, King Edward moved to recover his grip on the north country, sensing, no doubt, that the Nevilles would try to use that region in any revival of their cause. His first effort in this behalf was the restoration of Henry Percy to his father's title, earl of Northumberland, undertaken on 25 March 1470 at the expense of John Neville, who, alone among the Nevilles, had remained faithful to Edward. The next day, Percy received the remainder of his father's estates as well. Edward had next to placate John Neville, which he did by "elevating" him to the landless title marquis of Montagu, promising to marry his eldest daughter to Montagu's son George, who had been suitably ennobled as the duke of Bedford the previous January.⁴⁸ The following summer, the military leadership of the North underwent reorganization as well, the important Wardenship of the East and Middle Marches devolving on the Percy heir and the West March on the rising star of the House of York, Richard, duke of Gloucester, the king's

⁴⁷Warkworth, Chronicle-History in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 114.

⁴⁸For Henry Percy, see CPR, 1467-77, 26 March 1470, p. 206; Gairdner, ed., FL, 2:396. For Montagu and Bedford, see Warkworth: Chronicle-History in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 107; and Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of the Charter Rolls, vol. 6 (1427-1516): 25 March 1470, p. 238.

seventeen-year-old brother.⁴⁹ This division of authority would eventually prove to be the key to Yorkist government in the North.

Meanwhile, as Edward was busy reconstructing his political framework, Warwick was at work in France negotiating with his old enemy, Queen Margaret of Anjou. In July, he announced his reconciliation with the Lancastrian queen, who had agreed to a marriage between her son Edward and Warwick's second daughter, Anne. Clarence, whose cause had never roused the English heart, had now to be content with the promise of his former lands, as well as the duchy of York, though neither of these promises ever materialized.⁵⁰

As Edward might have supposed, there was soon trouble in the North where the rebels had staged a disturbance to coincide with the return of Clarence and Warwick to England. The commotion was so strong that the inexperienced Percy was not able to control the situation, and the king had to send some of his own fee'd men to the earl's aid. Meanwhile, Clarence and Warwick had landed in the west. Hearing of Warwick's landing, Edward commissioned the earl's brother, now marquis of Montagu, to raise an army to resist the invasion; and though Montagu at first complied with a company of 6,000 men, his jealousy of Henry Percy finally proved stronger than his love for King Edward. At the last minute, in a speech full of emotion, he declared openly for Henry VI. A minstrel

⁴⁹Rot. Sc., 2, 17 July 1470, p. 422: 26 August 1470, p. 423.

⁵⁰Once the plot succeeded, Margaret reneged on her promise to restore Clarence's lands, most of which had once been hers. He was compensated, however, by a large grant of estates in eight midland counties. See CPR, 1467-77, 23 March 1471, pp. 241-43. For Warwick's alliance with Margaret, see Henry Ellis, ed., Original Letters Illustrative of English History, 1418-1726, ser. 2, 11 vols. (London: Harding and Lepard, 1824; reprint ed., Henry Ellis, ed., London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969), 1:134.

in the company, loyal to Edward IV, sneaked quickly away to warn the king of this treason, and Edward lit out immediately for the east coast where, at Bishop's Lynn in Norfolk, he set sail for the court of his brother-in-law, the duke of Burgundy. Thus, in October 1470, King Henry was plucked from the Tower of London to begin a second reign.⁵¹

In the so-called Readeption of Henry VI, the government of the North was restored, as one might expect, to Neville hands, Montagu receiving the Wardenship of the East March, and Warwick, presumably, the West March. Henry Percy could not be ignored altogether, however, especially in view of the popular uprising his name had inspired the previous year. Therefore, Percy was permitted to retain the earldom of Northumberland and all his father's properties, except for the comfortable manor of Wressel in Yorkshire which seesawed once again to John Neville.⁵²

One wonders to what degree the earl of Northumberland realized his importance to both Henry and Edward in the spring of 1471. The Lancastrians surely knew that Edward would try to recover the kingdom, and Percy would be an important ally for either side when that time came. But Percy has left no trace of a passion for either cause. Certainly his father had been a chief Lancastrian supporter in the early days, but it was hard for Percy to flock to King Henry's banner, knowing that, no matter which way the wind blew, the Nevilles were no friends of his. Now, as often in the future, therefore, he sat quietly by and waited for events to take care of themselves.

⁵¹For Percy in the North, see Davis, ed., PL&P, 1:431. Otherwise, the information in this paragraph is based on Warkworth's account in his Chronicle-History in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, pp. 116-18.

⁵²Rot. Sc., 2, 22 October 1470, p. 425; Thomas Rymer, Foedera, 20 vols. (London: Per J. Tonson, 1727), 11:699.

III. Edward IV and Richard, Duke of Gloucester, in the North

1471-1483

Throughout the winter of 1470-71, King Edward struggled to keep his hopes alive. In December, there was so much commotion on Edward's behalf that Henry had to issue a commission of array for the resistance of the Yorkist sympathizers beyond the Trent. Random violence was not enough to secure the Yorkist claim, however; and Edward was soon sending messengers into England to arrange alliances with the earl of Northumberland and the discontented duke of Clarence. The sixteenth-century historian Edward Hall also suggests Edward successfully wooed Montagu to his side before returning to England, and this is certainly possible in view of Montagu's ambiguous behavior in April 1471.¹

When Edward sailed for England with a small army in March 1471, however, he could not have been sure of either Montagu or Clarence, two changeable lords whose momentary whims might decide the issue; but he did have letters of support from the earl of Northumberland. The Yorkists landed first in Norfolk, but as soon as they learned that that neighborhood would hold for Warwick and King Henry, they sailed northward along the coast until Edward, separated from his company by storms, eventually landed at Ravenspur. On 15 March, the king was reunited

¹For Edward's alliances, see Robert Somerville, History of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1265-1503, 2 vols. (London: Chancellor and Council of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1953), 1:256, n. 2; and History of the Arrival of Edward IV in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 50. The commission of array may be found in the CPR, 1467-77, 21 December 1470, p. 251.

with his two captains, Earl Rivers and the duke of Gloucester, but virtually no one else came to Edward's aid. In fact, a priest and a knight in Holderness openly resisted the landing, forcing Edward to fall back on the old Lancastrian trick of assuring the people he came only to claim his patrimony. Showing his antagonists the letters of the earl of Northumberland, Edward and his company were allowed to pass meekly to Hull, which also turned a cold shoulder. Since he could find no solace from the Yorkshiremen, Edward continued with the pretence that he came only to claim his father's lands, and at York he even donned an ostrich feather, the livery of Prince Edward, and sent up the cry, "A King Harry! A King and Prince Edward!" Next day, Edward scuttled southward to Tadcaster, a town belonging to the earl of Northumberland, thence to Wakefield and Sandal castle.²

Meanwhile, the marquis of Montagu and the earl of Northumberland sat still, Montagu even permitting the Yorkists to pass within four miles of his camp at Pontefract. The chroniclers have had a heyday trying to account for the inaction of these two important lords, and the one writer who tried the hardest to absolve Northumberland of hesitancy equivocates on the subject of northern affection for Edward, saying, on the one hand, it was so strong Montagu could raise no following, and, on the other, it was so weak Northumberland could raise none. The chronicler then goes on to portray Northumberland as a politic Yorkist standing in cautious reserve to permit Edward's march through Yorkshire.³ My own guess is that the earl was more interested in pro-

²In Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, see Arrival of Edward IV, pp. 38-42; and Warkworth, Chronicle-History, pp. 121-22.

³Arrival of Edward IV in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, pp. 43-45.

tecting himself than King Edward and that his inaction was calculated to tell him which way affairs might wend before committing himself to any course of action. Indeed, it is not at all unlikely that the earl knew of the spies the duke of Clarence had sent out to watch his every move.⁴ This is the first of several occasions, by the way, in which Henry Percy shows himself to be nothing more than a fair-weather friend to the House of York. Montagu, as well, seems cautiously silent at this time, but whether the marquis had indeed made a secret alliance with Edward or whether he merely waited, like Northumberland, to see how Edward's cause might fare, one cannot tell with any certainty.

Despite the reticence of these two lords, Edward was picking up support as he plunged southward from Wakefield through Doncaster and Nottingham to Leicester. Having frightened off a group of Warwick's supporters near Newark, Edward now headed straight for Coventry where the earl had retreated in haste. For three days, Warwick refused to fight, waiting perhaps for the troops of one Henry Vernon whom he had summoned to join him. At this crucial moment, the duke of Clarence yielded to the supplication of his sister, the duchess of Burgundy, and defected to his brother, King Edward, who now bolted to London with a much increased army. George Neville, the archbishop of York, who had been tending affairs in London as chancellor to Henry VI, paraded the Lancastrian king through the city in a vain attempt to rouse urban support for the Lancastrian-Neville cause; but when he came face to

⁴My reference to the spies watching the earl of Northumberland is based on a letter from George of Clarence to Henry Vernon, the contents of which are summarized in appendix 15 of Charles Kingsford's English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913; reprint ed., New York: Burt Franklin, n.d.), p. 392.

face with the apathy of the people toward King Henry, the archbishop submitted to Edward, surrendering the Lancastrian. For this piece of treachery, the archbishop received a full pardon from Edward IV.⁵

Edward's arrival in the city was enough to draw the earl of Warwick Londonward from his haven at Coventry. King Edward hastened northward to intercept him; and at five o'clock on the morning of 15 April 1471 in a mist so thick the two armies could hardly see one another, the king engaged his great enemy in what turned out to be a fight to the death. After three hours of fighting, the earl of Warwick and his changeable brother, the marquis of Montagu, lay dead. The earl of Oxford, in a flight reminiscent of that after Towton, fled into Scotland "in company with certain northern men," and King Edward IV turned his horse toward London once again, a much less troubled man.⁶

Queen Margaret's followers were soon interpreting Warwick's death as a blessing in disguise for their own cause, and they tried once more to put together an assault on Edward IV. The irascible northerners were up in arms again on her behalf as well. These flounderings came to nothing in the end, however, for on 4 May, outside the village of Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire, King Edward defeated Margaret's army and killed her son. The news of this Yorkist victory was enough to quiet the North, and within ten days, the city of York and other towns beyond the

⁵My chronology is based on the Arrival of Edward IV in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, pp. 45-60. The story of the archbishop appears on pp. 58-59, while his reward is recorded in the CPR, 1467-77, 19 April 1471, p. 258. My conjecture about Warwick's reticence is based on a surviving letter to Vernon in Kingsford, English Historical Literature, p. 392.

⁶Arrival of Edward IV in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, pp. 62-68, quoting directly from p. 66.

Trent submitted to the earl of Northumberland who, believing these events to harbinger peace, advanced unarmed for a reunion with Edward at Coventry.⁷

There was, however, one last twitch of Lancastrian hope to trouble King Edward. Thomas Neville, the so-called Bastard of Fauconberg, was threatening London with a band of rowdy Kentishmen. By the time Edward arrived in London on 21 May with virtually "all the noblemen of the land," the citizens had managed to repel Fauconberg, but Edward gave chase, pursuing him to Sandwich where he received the rebel's submission in exchange for a pardon. Meanwhile, Henry VI had died, a little too conveniently some thought, on the evening of 23 May in the Tower of London. In view of the utter desolation which this death dealt the Lancastrian faction, it is difficult to understand Edward's execution of Fauconberg contrary to his initial pardon, but by September 1471, Thomas Neville, too, was dead.⁸ At last, Edward was the undisputed king of England.

The second reign of Edward IV differed noticeably from the first in several ways, the chief of which, for my purposes, was the changing administration of the North. In the first reign, as I have shown, Edward had made the mistake of concentrating too much unbalanced authority in the hands of a northern family famed for its ambition. Only when events had revealed the duplicity of the king's northern allies had Edward restored Henry Percy, whose family had long served as a balance to the House of Neville in the North. In June 1471, Edward

⁷Ibid., pp. 79-82, 85.

⁸Ibid., pp. 93-96; Warkworth, Chronicle-History in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 130; Davis, ed., PL&P, 1:440.

reaffirmed his intentions toward Percy by re-establishing him as Warden of the East and Middle Marches and making him justice of the forests beyond Trent as well, an office left vacant by Warwick's death. Edward also entrusted his castles of Bamburgh and Dunstanburgh to Percy who already held Alnwick as part of his patrimony.⁹

In combination with his earldom and his extensive estates in Northumberland, Cumberland, and Yorkshire, these royal offices went a long way toward making Percy a potential threat to civil order. Edward's awareness of this possibility may have been sharpened early in July when the earl failed to swear fealty to the king's infant son, Prince Edward.¹⁰ If Edward were to prevent a repetition of the Neville revolt, he would have to provide some kind of territorial balance to the Percys.

The House of Neville, though severely damaged at Barnet, still offered some candidates for this role, but none were suitable for Edward's purposes. Montagu's son, the duke of Bedford, for example, was still a child in 1471, and the Bastard of Fauconberg seems to have been particularly unsuitable, not only because of his illegitimacy, but also because of his hot-headedness. George Neville, the archbishop of York, was still alive, but Edward was in no mood to restore to power one of the chief engineers of his earlier defeat, preferring to whisk him away to prison at Calais instead. There was a rival branch of the Neville family holding the earldom of Westmorland, but this family

⁹Rot. Sc., 2, 12 June 1471, p. 428; Somerville, Duchy, pp. 524, 528; CPR, 1467-77, 5 June 1471, p. 258.

¹⁰Percy's name is absent from a list of lords spiritual and temporal who swore fealty to the Prince on 3 July 1471. See CCR, 1468-76, no. 858, pp. 229-30.

remained consistently aloof from Yorkist rule. As far as other northern families were concerned, there were Greystokes and Dacres enough; Richard Fiennes, Lord Dacre, was even numbered amongst Edward's closest friends.¹¹ Still, Edward's purpose required a local agent less than it required a dependable one. Sir Ralph Grey and Sir Ralph Percy, two northerners in whom Edward had once placed his trust, had proved to him that local men were not always the best instruments of royal policy, and his tempestuous relationship with his Neville cousins had certainly driven that point home more than once. What Edward required in the North was a person of unquestionable loyalty, someone who could wield great power for the king's own ends. The man Edward selected for this responsibility was his eighteen-year-old brother, Richard, duke of Gloucester. This was the one individual in whom Edward had implicit trust. He had avoided Warwick's charm, and, despite his tender age, he had proved indispensable to Edward's government and to his military campaign.¹²

Actually, Gloucester had achieved a degree of authority in the North even before Edward's temporary fall in 1470. He had served, for example, as chief steward of the duchy of Lancaster in the north parts, and Edward had made him Warden of the West March in the wake of Warwick's defection in 1470. Hitherto, however, most of Gloucester's authority had lain in Wales where, during the minority of William Herbert, he was serving, among other things, as chief justice and chamberlain of South Wales. In the summer of 1471, the Crown permitted young William Herbert

¹¹For the imprisonment of the archbishop, see Warkworth, Chronicle-History in Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 137. For Lord Dacre, see Davis, ed., PL&P, 1:524. Fiennes was pardoned by Edward as early as 1 July 1461. See CPR, 1461-67, p. 40.

¹²For an assessment of Richard's career up to 1471, see Paul Murray Kendall, Richard the Third (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1955), pp. 73-104.

to assume Gloucester's offices in Wales, without proof of age, clearing the way for the duke to shift his weight to the North.¹³

In mid-July, Edward began to augment Richard's northern interests by handing over to him the earl of Warwick's chief northern estates, Middleham and Sheriff Hutton in Yorkshire, and Penrith in Cumberland, making him an important territorial competitor of the earl of Northumberland. In addition to Neville offices and estates, Richard was able to appropriate a large share of Neville prestige in the North through his marriage to Anne Neville, the second daughter of the earl of Warwick and now the widow of the Lancastrian Prince Edward.¹⁴ This marriage took place in the spring of 1472. On 30 April, John Paston wrote to his brother that the earl of Northumberland was home in the North, "and my lorde off Glowcester schall afftre as to-morow, men seye."¹⁵ On the surface, this statement is innocent enough, but, in essence, it contains the kernel of the new Yorkist policy in the North--a prince of the blood, newly invested with northern wealth and

¹³Somerville, Duchy, p. 257, n. 3. All other references are to CPR, 1467-77: 7 February 1470, p. 185; 7 November 1469, p. 179; 30 November 1469, p. 180; 16 December 1469, pp. 180-81; 29 August 1471, p. 275.

¹⁴Anne was apparently a popular figure in the North and, thus, a politic choice for Edward's brother. Her popularity is suggested from an incident which occurred after her death early in 1485. Richard was considering a second marriage to his niece Elizabeth, the future bride of Henry VII, but his advisers warned him that, if he completed the marriage, "all the people of the north, in whom he placed the greatest reliance, would rise in rebellion against him, and impute to him the death of the queen, the daughter and one of the heirs of the earl of Warwick, through whom he had first gained his present high position; . . ." To inspire such widespread revolt among a people who had come to love King Richard would require the highest esteem. See Croyland Chronicle, p. 499.

Edward's grants to Richard appear in CPR, 1467-77, 14 July 1471, p. 266.

¹⁵Davis, ed., PL&P, 1:488.

the prestige a Neville wife might bring, loping into the earl of Northumberland's home ground. The remainder of the Yorkist story in the North flows from this event.

The repercussion of Gloucester's presence in the North came within the first month of his residence there. That is to say, on 18 May, less than three weeks after his departure, Gloucester was made keeper of the forests beyond the Trent, an office formerly granted for life to the earl of Northumberland. Gloucester's biographer has suggested that this comparatively modest office was intended to compensate the duke for the Great Chamberlainship, an office he relinquished to George of Clarence in their compromise over the Warwick inheritance.¹⁶ This may be so, but in the context of Edward's northern strategy, it is more than coincidence that Gloucester received this office at Northumberland's expense.

There is also evidence that some of the earl's retainers were soon taking service with the duke, or at least preferring the duke's lordship. Though no specific examples have survived, the pact between Gloucester and Northumberland drawn up in 1472 indicates the duke was making rapid headway against Percy's influence. In this pact, Gloucester agreed to refrain from seeking any of Percy's offices, fees, or retainers.¹⁷ This agreement did little to forestall Gloucester's progress in the North, however, and its renewal in 1474 is mere form in view of the fact that, at the same time, the earl of Northumberland submitted to Gloucester, promising to become his faithful servant. Even this pact did not decrease the rivalry between the two; and, in 1475, Sir William Plumpton, whose family held land of Percy, was seeking out the duke of

¹⁶ CPR, 1467-77, 18 May 1472, p. 338; Kendall, Richard the Third, p. 109.

¹⁷ Alnwick Castle Muniment Room. Y. 2. 28.

Gloucester's lordship. Since the reign of Henry VI, Plumpton had been keeping the castle of Knaresborough. Now King Edward had made Henry Percy constable and steward of the castle, and Percy, in turn, had given the custody of the castle to his own brother-in-law, William Gascoigne. Plumpton had contrived to seek Gloucester's assistance against his removal, though his servant, Godfrey Greene, was sure that the earl would wish to install someone at Knaresborough who "kan him thank for the gift thereof, and no man els, . . ." (*Italics mine.*) In his recent biography of Edward IV, Charles Ross has regarded this incident as an indication of Northumberland's continuing influence in the North; but, viewed in the context of Gloucester's otherwise ubiquitous encroachment it is more likely the earl simply intended to resist the duke's intrusion wherever he might.¹⁸

One can only speculate why Gloucester's lordship was becoming so popular in the North. No doubt, the system of livery and maintenance, which spurred men to find the strongest protection possible, would have contributed to the popularity of a prince of the blood, and the records do reveal at least one incident where three brothers, who had attacked and dismembered a traveller in Yorkshire, sought service with Gloucester in order to gain protection from the law. In view of the fact that, on another occasion, the duke voluntarily surrendered a trouble-making servant for imprisonment, it is doubtful he would have accepted these murderers; but what matters here is that the murderers knew where to

¹⁸Thomas Stapleton, ed., Plumpton Correspondence (Camden Society, o. s., vol. 4, 1839), pp. 31-33; Edward IV (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 200-201.

start looking for the strongest possible patron.¹⁹

A more likely explanation of Gloucester's popularity, however, is Reid's suggestion that the duke's household council provided a more equitable justice than a common man might find in the established baronial councils of the North.²⁰ According to this theory, the Yorkists, who based their rule on legitimacy rather than Parliamentary title, "had to seek the support of the unenfranchised classes; so that their own needs made them the champions of the common people." This was easy in the South where a commercial middle class remained relatively independent of the great lords, but in the North, the Yorkists had to work actively to win the hearts of the people. Therefore, Reid argues, Gloucester's council "upheld the rights of the tenants who paid their services, and restrained landlords from exacting unreasonable fines." In short, the council became an important Court of Requests for Yorkshire.

Whatever the source of Gloucester's popularity, he certainly outshone the earl of Northumberland in the eyes of the city of York. The civic records are full of warm and affectionate praise for the duke, all of which contrasts noticeably with the perfunctory manner in which the city made reference to his rival, the earl of Northumberland. One example will suffice to illustrate my point. In 1482, the city was arranging to make a certificate to the king for the mayoral election. It decided also to send to "the Duke of Gloucester, desiring his grace to be and stand good and gracious lord as he have done in time past:

¹⁹See Chron. White Rose, ed. Giles, p. 182; and YCR, 1:53-54. The man surrendered was Thomas Redeheid, a servant of Gloucester's treasurer.

²⁰This paragraph summarizes Reid's argument in Council, pp. 54-58. I quote directly first from p. 56, then from p. 58.

as to other lords, that is to say, the lord Chancellor, Earl of Northumberland, lord Chamberlain, and to Maister Controller."²¹ Frequently, the citizens of York expressed their thanks to Gloucester with gifts of fish, rabbits, pheasants, partridges, and wine as well. The skeptical mind might put all this civic good will down to a desire to keep the friendship of the king's brother and, through him, the king, certainly an important enough goal in an age when the liberties of the city depended upon the continuation of royal favor.

Still, there is evidence to suggest that Gloucester actually deserved the good will of the city. In its campaign to rid the neighboring waterways of obstructive fishgarths, for example, the city had found Gloucester a ready respondent. The duke offered his "gracious aide and assistance" in the matter and wrote a letter to his bailiffs and tenants, instructing them to comply with the city's request. The councilmen were so impressed with this response that they copied the duke's letter into their correspondence with Lawrence Booth, bishop of Durham, in hopes the bishop would follow suit with his garths in Howdenshire. The following year, Gloucester again served the city in its continuing attack on such obstructions, this time appealing on their behalf to the king himself.²²

In the summer of 1476, an incident at York put Richard in direct competition with the earl of Northumberland. The council had dismissed its common clerk, Thomas Yotten, on charges of embezzlement. Yotten

²¹ Robert Davis, ed., Extracts from the Municipal Records of the City of York (London: J. B. Nichols and Son, 1843), p. 121.

²² YCR, 1:3-4, 23-24.

had been duly tried and found guilty, and the city now wished to appoint a new clerk; but before it could do so, it had to receive authorization from the king. While the city was writing the duke of Gloucester for assistance in this matter, Yotten was appealing to the other great lord of the North, the earl of Northumberland, who undertook to intervene on his behalf. Fortunately for the city, Gloucester took time to write the lords Stanley and Hastings, asking them, in his absence, to move the king in this matter on behalf of the York civic council. The whole affair must have aroused a certain amount of nervousness in York, for when Edward finally honored the city's request the following December, the councilmen made Richard a gift of seven swans and seven pikes to thank him for his services in defense of the city's liberties.²³

Still, it is not exactly true that the men of York excluded Henry Percy from their affairs altogether in this period. In March 1476, for example, Percy accompanied the king's brother to York to make inquiry into a disturbance there which followed Edward's unpopular settlement with France. Together, the two commanded obedience to the king's peace upon pain of imprisonment, confiscation of weapons, and a fine.²⁴ The important point here is that when Percy operated in York, he operated either in concert with Richard, as this example testifies, or at the king's behest; when Richard took action in York, on the other hand, more often than not, it was at the request of the city.

Historians have generally held that, down to 1482, the duke of Gloucester and the earl of Northumberland were more or less equal

²³Ibid., 1:8-11, 15-17. Besides the corporation of York, the priory of Holy Trinity in York and the city of Hull both sought Gloucester's assistance. See YCR, 1:26-27; and VCH: Hull, p. 26.

²⁴YCR, 1:50-52.

ministers of the royal will in the North.²⁵ According to this interpretation, though Gloucester ruled almost exclusively in Cumberland, Westmorland, and the North and West Ridings of Yorkshire, the earl was pre-eminent in Northumberland and in Yorkshire's East Riding. Rachel Reid, who originated the notion, claimed that her examination of commissions granted to both men would bear out her point, but the sources do not bear out the assertion. The point is important enough, I believe, to permit some detail. As far as commissions of the peace are concerned, down to the issuance of commissions on 14 May 1483, after which Gloucester himself became king, both the duke and the earl were jointly commissioned to serve as justices of the peace in Cumberland, Northumberland, Westmorland, and in all three ridings of Yorkshire. This is true throughout the second reign of Edward IV, the earliest northern example being for the county of Northumberland on 8 December 1471.²⁶ Similarly, both received commissions of oyer and terminer in 1478 and 1482 for the county of Yorkshire, at which times no distinction was made between the various Ridings. Only two commissions of array have been recorded for the period. The first example comes from the year 1472 when the king issued thirty-eight commissions, all nominally headed by the dukes of Clarence and Gloucester; in the northern shires, including all of Yorkshire, the earl of Northumberland's name also appeared, though there is nothing to

²⁵See, for example, Reid, Council, pp. 43-44; Brooks, Council in the North, p. 10; and Ross, Edward IV, p. 199.

²⁶Commissions of the peace are itemized by county in convenient tables in the patent rolls. For commissions relevant to my discussion, see these volumes, in particular: Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Edw. 4, Edw. 5, Rich. 3 (1476-85), pp. 556-80; and CPR, 1467-77, pp. 610-38.

indicate he operated independently of Gloucester. The second commission of array was issued in 1480 in order to prepare the men of the four northern counties for war with Scotland. As usual, Gloucester and Northumberland were both designated to undertake this responsibility jointly in all three Ridings in Yorkshire, as well as in Westmorland, Cumberland, and Northumberland.²⁷

There is only one isolated example which might suggest a division of jurisdiction between the two. On 18 June 1477, Edward appointed both the duke and the earl to inquire into a report that some Scots men and women were wandering about Yorkshire burning dwellings. On this one occasion, Gloucester headed the commission for the West Riding; Northumberland, the East Riding.²⁸ Except for this minor example, however, I can find no evidence to verify Reid's statement that the government of the North was divided between Henry Percy in the northeast and Richard of Gloucester in the northwest. It is true that the Wardenships were so divided, as were the shrievalties of Northumberland and Cumberland which were held by Percy and Richard, respectively; it is also true that Richard's chief residences at Middleham and Sheriff Hutton were in the North Riding, while Percy's primary residence at his manor of Wressel was in the East. But one cannot take this to mean that

²⁷For commissions of oyer and terminer, see CPR, 1476-85, 5 September 1478, p. 144; and 5 March 1482, p. 343. For commissions of array, see CPR, 1467-77, 7 March 1472, pp. 348-52; and 20 June 1480, pp. 213-14.

²⁸CPR, 1476-85, 18 June 1477, p. 50.

either Percy or Richard had to limit his activities to these areas.²⁹

A more likely interpretation of these various grants and commissions is that the earl of Northumberland was autonomous virtually nowhere in the North, even in the county of Northumberland where he had to share commissions of the peace and of array with a member of the royal family. Moreover, though it may be true that Gloucester also lacked autonomy in the North, the fact that his name consistently appears first on the commissions implies a sort of overlordship which gave him pre-eminence over the scion of a traditionally powerful northern house.³⁰ Indeed, Gloucester's influence surpassed Northumberland's to such a degree that in 1474 he was able to serve as the earl's associate in a quarrel involving one of the earl's own servants. I refer to the case of one John Pennington, one of Percy's bailiffs in Cumberland. Pennington had given a 500-mark bond to insure that he would first submit his quarrel with John Hodelstone to four named arbitrators, then, in the event of their failure, to the duke of Gloucester and the earl of Northumberland.³¹ There is no clear reason why Gloucester should have become embroiled in

²⁹ Gloucester's other Yorkshire properties--the manor of Marton in Craven and the castles of Richmond and Skipton in Craven--were also outside the East Riding. For these grants, see CPR, 1467-77, 12 June 1475, p. 549; and CPR, 1476-85, 5 March 1478, p. 90. For shrivealties, see CPR, 1467-77, 14 August 1474, p. 467; and 18 February 1475, p. 485.

³⁰ Bertha Putnam has explained that the term "chief justice" usually applied to the member named first on commissions of the peace; it was this person who presided at sessions and safeguarded the records. I assume the practice of naming the commission's leader first was general. See Putnam's Proceedings Before the Justices of the Peace in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, Edward III to Richard III (London: Spottiswoode, Ballantyne, and Co., Ltd., 1938), p. lxxv.

³¹ CCR, 1468-76, 13 August 1474, no. 1317, p. 365.

this affair at all, except for the fact that his personal reputation had allowed him to place an ex officio finger in every northern pie.

If Gloucester's chief tactic in the control of Percy was the creation of a personality cult, his trump card was the equal control of the sole Neville heir, George, duke of Bedford, son of the marquis Montagu. In 1475, Gloucester endeavored to prevent Montagu's attainder, a move which insured Bedford's potential restoration. The message to Henry Percy was, of course, that his misbehavior might result in the establishment of a Yorkist-controlled Neville rival in the North. Even when the indigent Bedford was stripped of his title in 1478, Gloucester continued his patronage of the boy by securing the rights to his wardship and marriage.³²

In 1480, Gloucester himself was able to erode the last vestige of Northumberland's autonomy, his military command of the northeast. In that year, King Louis XI of France, who was at war with Burgundy, had prevailed upon his Scottish ally, James III, to invade England, presumably to distract Edward IV, who was an ally of Burgundy. These hostilities were in direct violation of the Anglo-Scottish peace treaty of 1474 in which Edward IV had offered the hand of his daughter Cicely to James' heir, the duke of Rothesay. In order to prepare the northern counties for pending war with Scotland, Edward elevated his brother Richard to a position of supreme command in the North, appointing him

³²For prevention of attainder, see CPR, 1467-77, 26 February 1475, p. 438. For wardship and marriage, see CPR, 1476-85, 9 March 1480, p. 192. For loss of title, see David C. Douglas, gen. ed., English Historical Documents, 12 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), vol. 4: 1327-1485, ed. A. R. Myers, pp. 477-78.

Lieutenant-general of his forces and authorizing him to summon troops from the Marches and the adjacent counties.³³ This appointment is important for two reasons. First, it marked the first time since John of Gaunt's adventures in the North that such a position even existed; and, second, it permitted Richard of Gloucester to compromise the last vestige of Percy's independence by establishing a position superior to the Wardenship.

It is also worth noting that there was an obvious difference between the attitude of the Yorkshiremen toward these two commanders. On 7 September 1480, the earl wrote both to his fee'd man, Robert Plumpton, esquire, and to the York civic council, telling each to meet him with their contingents within the week. Evidently, neither complied, and on 9 and 13 October, respectively, the earl was sending less than polite follow-up letters, demanding they come "without delay or tarying, as you wyll answer at your perill."³⁴ Plumpton, no doubt, was still nursing a grudge over the loss of his office at Knaresborough, but the city seems clearly to have favored Gloucester's simultaneous appeal for aid. Gloucester's letter arrived the day after Northumberland's, bearing intelligence, which he seems not to have shared with Northumberland, that the Scots would invade the East March in three hosts within the week. To counteract this threat, Gloucester requested the city to send soldiers

³³Ridpath, Border History, p. 441; Rot. Sc., 2, October 1474, pp. 445-49; CPR, 1476-85, 12 May 1480, p. 205.

³⁴Stapleton, ed., Plumpton Corr., pp. 40, 42; YCR, 1:36, quoting directly from the latter. The letter to Plumpton of 9 October is not dated as to year. However, since its contents are similar to those of the dated correspondence with the council at York, it is likely the letter dates from 1480.

to meet him at Durham on Thursday, four days before they were to meet Percy at Northallerton. Evidently, they responded to the duke's request, for on 19 October, the king was writing to thank them for their readiness to serve in his brother's company.³⁵

The siege of Berwick which these troops undertook in 1480 finally had to be abandoned in mid-winter since the newly rebuilt walls would not give way; but England was to receive a second chance in 1482 when the Scottish king's brother Alexander, duke of Albany, began to whisper in King Edward's ear. In February 1482, the king selected Henry Percy to head an embassy to treat with Albany's emissaries at Fotheringay.³⁶ In May, Albany himself travelled to Fotheringay from a fruitless sanctuary in France; and on 10 June 1482, styling himself Alexander, king of Scotland, Albany signed a pact with Edward whereby, in exchange for Edward's aid, Albany would break Scotland's alliance with France, hand over Berwick to the English, and, most importantly, hold Scotland of the English king.³⁷

With an English army commanded by the duke of Gloucester, Albany had soon set out for Scotland, permitting Henry Percy the lead of the forward company, though, because of "troubulous cariage," the troops did not even reach Alnwick until July. Eventually, they did arrive at the town of Berwick, which, unlike the castle there, made no resist-

³⁵YCR, 1:34-36.

³⁶Albany was captain of Berwick and lieutenant of the Scottish borders and a frequent menace to James III. For Percy, see Rot. Sc., 2, 9 February 1482, p. 458. Ridpath has described the siege of Berwick in Border History, p. 441.

³⁷Rymer, ed., Foedera, 11:156.

ance and was seized. Leaving a company of men behind to besiege the castle, Gloucester and Northumberland then moved on to Edinburgh, taking separate paths in order to burn a wider swath through Scotland.³⁸

Upon reaching Edinburgh, Albany and Gloucester learned that the Scottish lords had arrested James III and banished his favorites a few days before. It is outside the scope of this study to recite all of the complicated negotiations between the various Scottish and English parties which converged on Edinburgh in August 1482. What matters here is that the duke of Gloucester was clearly England's voice on this occasion. He dealt with the Scottish lords over the territorial concerns, outnervving their threats to raise the siege of Berwick which they finally surrendered on 24 August, and holding firm on the issue of the debateable ground as well. He also dealt with the Scottish burgesses over the issue of the English marriage, refusing to act until he had Edward IV's explicit instructions on this delicate issue. Meanwhile, he kept pace with the duplicitous duke of Albany, who had accepted the offer of the Scottish lords to become Great Lieutenant of Scotland in exchange for an oath of fealty to James III. Albany had secretly promised Gloucester he would uphold the agreement of Fotheringay, but when he began to gather an army to raise the siege of Berwick, Gloucester sent him a stinging rebuke, swearing to keep Berwick for England or die in the quarrel.

In all of these negotiations, the duke of Gloucester evinces a resolve and a straightforwardness that explain why Edward chose to rely upon his brother's handiwork instead of the earl of Northumberland's.

³⁸For the events of August 1482, one may consult Hall's Union, pp. 331-37.

Earlier, by way of contrast, Edward had relied upon Northumberland to negotiate the truce of 1471 and the treaty of 1473; he had even designated the earl as the personal escort of the duke of Rothesay upon his eventual journey to England to marry Princess Cicely.³⁹ However, the earl's ambassadorial effectiveness had received a serious blow in the late 1470s when the Scots had taken him prisoner at a day of truce. Probably as a consequence of this blunder, his service during the events of 1480-82 was limited strictly to the preliminaries which led to the Fotheringhay pact. It was Gloucester who led not only the military campaign, but also the consequent diplomacy.⁴⁰

When Parliament met in January 1483, it granted Gloucester the definitive northern prize for his service against the Scots: a palatinate in the northwest.⁴¹ Specifically, he received Carlisle, Bewcastle, Nicol Forest, and all the lands, rents, services, courts, and patronage of their related bodies in Cumberland; he took ward of all lordships, manors, lands, tenements, and hereditaments in Cumberland; and he earned the right to appoint sheriffs and escheators in that county. What is more, he was permitted to hold in fee simple "the parts of Scotland now belonging to Scotland," namely, Liddesdale, Eskdale, Ewesdale, Annandirdale,

³⁹Cal. Doc. Scot., 4, 26 August 1471, no. 1397, p. 283; also Before February 1475-76, no. 28, p. 413; Rymer, ed., Foedera, 11:733, 758.

⁴⁰For Percy as a prisoner, see Cal. Doc. Scot., 4, Before February 1475-76, no. 28, pp. 413-14. Though the date of this document cannot be known precisely, an incident occurring in July 1475 may help delimit the possibilities. In that month, James III had complained that Percy was harboring a Scottish rebel at Alnwick, which, if true, may have inspired a later quarrel resulting in Percy's arrest "before February" 1476. See Cal. Doc. Scot., 4, 13 July 1475, no. 1430, p. 291; and James' letter, no. 24, pp. 408-409.

⁴¹Great Britain, Public Record Office, Rotuli Parliamentorum, Edw. 4, Rich. 3, Henry 7, vol. 6 (1472-1503), pp. 204-205.

Waltopdale, Clydesdale, and the West March of Scotland; he was to be as free in these dales as the bishop of Durham was in his bishopric. In addition, those who held of the king in the duchy of Lancaster were now to hold of Gloucester. And, last, the duke and his heirs were to possess the Wardenship of the West March of England as long as they held these estates.

Certainly, Edward's intentions are clear from this one stroke of favor, if from nothing else. Gloucester's loyalty throughout the turbulent 1460s, his popularity in the North in the 1470s, and the emergence of his military and diplomatic skills in the early 1480s had all contributed to the growth of Edward's trust in him. Richard had already taken on numerous responsibilities in the North, some complementing the earl of Northumberland's duties, some transcending them. His household council had become an important judicial body in Yorkshire, and he had proved his sincere good will to the citizens of York on several occasions. Now, early in 1483, Edward and his Parliament had seen fit to carve out an appanage for the royal brother in the northwest part of the kingdom, setting Richard up as the undisputed governor of the North and ending a century of reliance on the northern lords. These plans collapsed, however, with the death of the king on 9 April 1483. By June, the duke of Gloucester was wearing the crown himself as King Richard III, and it should come as no surprise that the administration of the North would receive primary consideration in the reign of the one English king whose chief military and political experience lay beyond the Trent.

IV. Richard III and the Government of the North

1483-1485

The death of Edward IV in the spring of 1483 returned to English politics its customary bustle. The problem which gave rise ultimately to faction and to regicide in the summer of that year was that the boy-king, Edward V, had two powerful uncles struggling for control of the Crown. On the paternal side was Richard, duke of Gloucester, whom Edward had requested to take the reins of government during the minority of his heir; and on the maternal side was the powerful Woodville faction led by Anthony, Earl Rivers, brother to the queen. Upon Edward's death, the Woodvilles took advantage of Richard's absence from court to hold a council appropriating a share of the government to themselves, and perhaps even before Richard had learned of his brother's death, they had set out for Ludlow to secure the person of the boy-king. When Richard, who was in the North, received news of these events, he began a journey to London, stopping at York long enough to require all the nobility of the North to take an oath of fealty to Edward V. Richard himself was the first to take the oath.¹

It took the duke nearly five days to intercept his rival faction

¹ Dominic Mancini, The Usurpation of Richard III, trans. C. A. J. Armstrong (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 61, 71, 73; St. Thomas More, The History of King Richard III and Selections from the English and Latin Poems, ed. Richard S. Sylvester (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 14-15; Croyland Chronicle, p. 486.

at Northampton where, in the company of his ally, Henry Stafford, duke of Buckingham, he masqueraded as an unsuspecting friend of the Earl Rivers. The king, meanwhile, had been sent ahead to Stony Stratford in the company of his half-brother, Lord Richard Grey, and a councillor by the name Sir Thomas Vaughan. Casting their charade aside the following morning, Gloucester and Buckingham made Rivers a prisoner inside his inn and hastened to Stony Stratford where they were able to wrench the royal nephew from the Woodville grip completely, sending Vaughan and Grey, with Rivers, to be lodged in separate prisons in the North. Gloucester, of course, found his way to the capital with the king.²

Early in May, Parliament formally empowered Richard to assume the title and duties of Lord Protector; and plans were underway for the coronation of Edward V when, for reasons lost to history, Richard suddenly organized a coup which led to the hasty execution of Edward IV's chamberlain, William, Lord Hastings, and the imprisonment of Thomas Rotherham, archbishop of York, and John, bishop of Ely. This happened on Friday, 13 June 1483. The following Monday, Edward IV's second son, Richard, duke of York, was removed from his sanctuary at Westminster and placed in the Tower of London with his brother, the king.³

Even before these events, however, Richard had been busy securing the military backing which such measures required, and, not surprisingly, his assistance at this hour came largely from the North. To spearhead the organization of the northern troops, Richard selected a northerner from his retinue by the name Sir Richard Ratcliff, a man of obscure origins who was destined for a certain respectability as a stalwart in

²More, Richard III, pp. 18-21; Croyland Chronicle, p. 486.

³Croyland Chronicle, pp. 487-89.

the North under Richard III. On 10 June, Ratcliff had spurred his way northward with anxious messages from the Protector to the citizens of York; Ralph, Lord Neville, the heir-presumptive to the earldom of Westmorland; and probably Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland. All were to gather troops and meet at Pontefract on 18 June for a quick excursion Londonward. Though the message to York arrived on a Sunday, the council quickly assembled and assented to send an army of 200 soldiers to London.⁴

Three days after their specified date of rendezvous with the earl of Northumberland at Pontefract, however, the men of York were still quibbling over the handling of wages, which argument, in combination with their further reluctance to wear the king's cognizance to Pontefract, may suggest some weakening of the city's support for Richard. Still, the sizeable army they gathered was larger than either host they had mustered for the Scottish campaigns and provides some testimony to York's sympathies for the duke of Gloucester throughout these nervous days. Eventually their wrangling was resolved, and the soldiers from York fell behind Ratcliff for the march to Pontefract where, on 25 June, they witnessed the executions of Rivers, Vaughan, and Grey. Joining the earl of Northumberland, the Lord Neville, and a small group of soldiers from the city of Hull for the march southward, the city's 200 soldiers then rounded out the 5,000 marching to London on Richard's behalf.⁵

⁴The Protector's letters to the Lord Neville and the city of York are recorded, respectively, in Gairdner, ed., PL, 3:306; and Municipal Records, pp. 148-50. No letter to Percy has survived, but his position and presence on the expedition suggest a personal summons. For other details recorded herein, see Municipal Records, pp. 151, 153.

⁵Municipal Records, pp. 154-56; Croyland Chronicle, p. 489; VCH: Hull, p. 26. The estimate of a band 5,000 strong is Hall's; see the Union, p. 375.

If Richard had expected this army to frighten his opposition, he was disappointed, for the Londoners soon began flocking to Finsbury Field to poke fun at his shabby troops in rusty harness. Few considered such poorly appareled soldiers even to be defensible, never mind fearsome; but the northerners apparently milled about until after Richard's coronation on 6 July, supported by the earl of Northumberland, who provided them with wild game. After the coronation, Richard rewarded the northerners for their attendance and sent them home; but once they were safely beyond the gaze of the snobbish Londoners, the unbridled emotion to which they gave vent erupted into sporadic violence which, they boasted, no lord, regardless of his power, could subdue until the arrival of the king himself.⁶

While these unpleasantries were taking place in the countryside, the city of York was ablaze with preparations for a more suitable welcome to the one-time lord of the North, now King Richard III. In a gesture of magnanimity which would later mock their niggardliness toward Henry VII, the city council collected the fair sum of £437, a gift for the king and queen to complement a similar gesture to their young son at Middleham castle. The city bustled with activity as the councilmen set about organizing speeches, splendid plays, and pageants in honor of the king who would honor the North with what amounted to a second coronation. At the behest of Richard's secretary, the citizens of York decorated their streets with rich tapestry and cloth of arras in order to impress the southerners travelling in the king's train, an effort,

⁶Richard seems not to have taken these disorders so lightly, and, once in York, he held a council to arrange for the punishment of the offenders. Hall, Union, pp. 375-76, 380. See Municipal Records, pp. 165-66, for Percy's support of the York contingent.

one supposes, to compensate for the bad impression the northerners had made in London at the time of the first coronation. Hall records that when the king arrived late in August, the citizens received him with "great pompe and triumphe," each according to his education and wealth, a point which goes some way to substantiate Richard's widespread popularity in the North.⁷

When the coronation day arrived, Richard's northern subjects beheld what to them must have been a rare spectacle of pomp and ceremony. The richly appareled clergy led the coronation procession, followed by the royal family, brilliant in the robes of state and the splendid coronation regalia. Completing the procession was a large host of the English nobility who had travelled into the North especially for this event. All passed through the streets of the city to York Minster where the citizens watched the duke of Gloucester and his wife, Anne Neville, receive the crowns of the king and queen of England. The frail child from Middleham castle then received from his father's hand the insignia of the golden wand and a wreath upon the head, the brief expression of his elevation to the weighty title prince of Wales. These solemn events complete, the city afterward revelled with feasts and banquets which both reflected and reaffirmed the bond of affection between King Richard and his subjects in the North.⁸

One cannot write of these events without reflecting upon the change in the attitude of the North toward the House of York since the coronation of Edward IV in 1461. At that time, the city of York had anticipated the king's arrival with dread. In place of festive tapestry, the city's

⁷YCR, 1:76; Municipal Records, pp. 167-69; Hall, Union, p. 380.

⁸Hall, Union, p. 380; Croyland Chronicle, p. 490.

walls had been decorated with the heads of the Yorkist dead, the duke of York's chief amongst them. Ten years later, when Edward had returned to England to win back his kingdom, the city had only welcomed him reluctantly, accepting him solely on the condition that he claimed nothing more than his patrimony. Yet, by the time Richard ascended the throne in 1483, the attitude of the city had reached near adulation, and Hall, who had little else good to say of King Richard, could report that the common people of the North praised the king "far above the starres."⁹

No monarch is universally loved, of course, and there were those in York who cared little for Richard. Only the year before, a saddler named Roger Brere had been called to account for grumbling that the duke of Gloucester did nothing for the city "bot gryn of us."¹⁰ The surprise is not that a citizen might harbor such feelings of resentment against the duke, but that, in a former Lancastrian stronghold, there were so few who shared the sentiment. The men of York and, indeed, the whole of the North seem truly to have loved King Richard, and it was clearly "the people of the southern and western parts of the kingdom who began to murmur greatly" for the restoration of Edward V.¹¹

By October, this discontent was giving fire to the ambitions of the duke of Buckingham, who now assumed Warwick's role of kingmaker to pull down the king he had first set up. In this adventure, he engaged the hopes of Henry Tudor, earl of Richmond, who, at this point in

⁹Hall, Union, p. 380.

¹⁰YCR, 1:56

¹¹Croyland Chronicle, pp. 490-91. It is impossible to say with any certainty whether the sons of Edward IV were dead in the summer of 1483, or even who killed them. For a full discussion of the fate of the princes in the Tower, see Kendall's Richard the Third, appendix 1, pp. 393-418.

history, was nothing more than an impoverished Lancastrian exile. In this first crisis of his reign, Richard looked northward for succor, just as he had at the time of the usurpation, advising the city of York of Buckingham's rebellion and requesting an army to meet him at Leicester on the twenty-first of the month. Since King Richard desired to contain the illustrious rebel in Wales, he could not risk provoking a sally into Yorkshire, so he followed his first communique to York with a second urging the mayor to issue a proclamation forbidding any association with the traitor's cause and urging the citizenry not to attack any of Buckingham's officers or tenants.¹² This plan worked, and Buckingham, captured late in the month, was executed 2 November at Salisbury as the troops from York looked on. Henry Tudor's little fleet sailed quickly back to Brittany, though this was, by no means, his last adventure in English politics.¹³

Once Richard had quelled this troublesome rebellion, he could turn his attention to more peaceful affairs of government, and, in view of the fact that his years of service in the North had familiarized him with the special needs of the region, it is hard to believe he would have delayed the organization of a northern policy. My discussion of that policy will touch on three issues--Richard's attitude toward the earl

¹²Municipal Records, pp. 177-80. Buckingham held the lordship of Holderness in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

¹³The Croyland Chronicle records the story of Buckingham's rebellion, pp. 490-93. The presence of the York troops at Salisbury is revealed by the fact that in December the city council had to examine the case of one John Key who had stolen a horse belonging to one of Buckingham's adherents on that trip. See Municipal Records, pp. 183-84.

of Northumberland, his original plan for the government of the North, and his establishment of the Council of the North in 1484.

Professor S. B. Chrimes, a specialist on fifteenth-century affairs, has written that once Gloucester became king, the earl of Northumberland succeeded "to much of Richard's own position in the North,"¹⁴ but my own research tends to suggest that Northumberland profited little from the removal of his rival to Westminster. On the contrary, most of Richard's northern offices and acquisitions remained vacant--the lieutenancy of the North, the custody of the northern forests, the shrievalty of Cumberland, and the great palatinate. As a matter of fact, authority in the North fell not to Percy, but to three others, whom I shall name anon.

Some of the confusion over Percy's authority in the North is due to the terminology of the letters patent reappointing Percy to the Wardenship. Specifically, Percy is designated to be Warden-general of the marches of England towards Scotland, a title which certainly exaggerated the extent of the earl's actual authority on the borders. Historians have frequently misinterpreted the title to mean that Percy had gained control of the whole border area. Kendall, for example, wrote that the title gave the earl "the Wardenship of the entire Scots border: East March, Middle March, and Richard's palatinate in the west."¹⁵ However, a careful reading of the commission reveals that there was, in fact, a noticeable difference between the broad powers suggested by the title and the actual powers specified in the commission. To be specific, the

¹⁴Lancastrians, Yorkists, and Henry VII (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), p. 139.

¹⁵Richard the Third, p. 251.

commission set down in the patent rolls reads, thus:

Appointment, from the feast of St. Peter ad Vincula for one year, of the king's kinsman Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland, as warden general of the marches of England towards Scotland viz. in the parts of 'la estmarch' and 'middilmarch' and in the king's lordship of Scotland, with full powers specified and power to conclude truces with James, king of the Scots.¹⁶

There are two points one might note in order to illustrate the restraint Richard exercised in this appointment: first, the fact the commission was to endure for only a year suggests the king regarded it as a temporary measure only; and, second, the careful clarification that the Warden-general's authority was to run only in the East and Middle Marches added nothing to the earl's powers which he had not possessed since 1470 anyway. No mention is made of the West March or, more specifically, of Cumberland, which had been under Richard's control both as Warden and as a palatine lord, a fact which clearly distinguishes the earl's authority from that wielded by Warwick as Warden-general in 1461.¹⁷

Northumberland did receive some favor at Richard's hand, though. In November 1483, for example, he received Buckingham's office of Great Chamberlain, though this office, necessitating his removal to Westminster, hardly magnified his northern powers. Later, the Parliament of 1484 restored all the offices and lands which Henry IV had taken from the Percys in 1403, those held in fee simple, as well as those held in fee tail, completing the restoration of the entire Percy inheritance, begun in 1472 when Edward's Parliament had restored those lands attainted in 1461.¹⁸

¹⁶CPR, 1476-85, 24 July 1483, p. 462.

¹⁷For Warwick as Warden-general, see p. 37 above.

¹⁸CPR, 1476-85, 30 November 1483, p. 367; Rot. Parl., 6:252-54, 16-17.

This reversal of attainder restored to the Percys the custody of the town and castle of Berwick, which, in view of the events of 1482, must have been relatively important to Richard. Still, one must evaluate Richard's generosity with some caution, for J. M. W. Bean, who has made an exhaustive study of the Percy inheritance, has shown that Northumberland had already managed to take de facto possession of these estates before the Act of Parliament in 1484 gave him possession de jure.¹⁹

All things considered, one must conclude that Richard did not regard Northumberland as his chief agent in the North, preferring instead to continue his brother's efforts toward controlling baronial authority beyond the Trent. In this regard, it is at least worth noting those options which Richard refrained from taking in 1483. For one thing, as I have shown, he did not give Henry Percy the complete control of the Marches, probably because he remembered the disastrous results of the Neville monopoly in 1469. Nor did he revert to the Lancastrian practice of balancing Percy with Neville by elevating the Lord Neville to the Wardenship of the West March, though Neville's assistance in June 1483 had certainly rendered him eligible for such a reward. And, finally, he did not elevate any other member of the northern aristocracy to pre-eminence, though there were Dacres and Greystokes who would have been happy enough to oblige.

If Richard did not intend to rely on local lords for his government in the North, whom, then, did he intend to invest with authority? The answer is that, like Edward before him, he planned to set up a member of the royal family in the supreme position of importance beyond

¹⁹Bean, Estates, pp. 111-12.

the Trent. Reid has speculated that Richard originally intended to make his own son Lieutenant of the North with a council to govern in his name, a conjecture based on the survival of a commission of array dated 1 May 1484 in which the young prince heads the list of appointees in Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland, and Yorkshire.²⁰ The fact that this commission was drawn up three weeks after the boy's death on 9 April makes it possible that his preeminence therein was strictly honorary. Nevertheless, a member of the royal family did eventually rise to power in the North, namely Richard's nephew, John de la Pole, earl of Lincoln, whom Richard apparently designated as his heir only days after the death of the prince.²¹ In this regard, it is worth noting that it was Lincoln's name which immediately followed Prince Edward's on the commission of 1 May.

By July, Lincoln had formally received the presidency of Richard's new Council of the North and further plans for northern government quickly followed. On 10 August, to be specific, Richard appointed his close friend, Sir Richard Ratcliff, to be sheriff of Westmorland for life; and four weeks after that, Humphrey, Lord Dacre of Gillisland, received the lieutenancy of the West March, though the king was careful to retain the Wardenship for himself, an innovation in northern govern-

²⁰ Reid, Council, pp. 59-60. The 1 May commission is in CPR, 1476-85, pp. 397-401.

²¹ Hall, Union, p. 401. Lincoln was the son of John de la Pole, duke of Suffolk, and Richard's sister Elizabeth. The date of his designation as heir-apparent is unknown, but a large annuity granted the earl on 13 April 1484 suggests Richard made his choice immediately. See CPR, 1476-85, p. 488.

ment which endured for generations.²² By the autumn of 1484, then, these three men--Lincoln, Ratcliff, and Dacre--were the true heirs to Richard's authority in the North, not the earl of Northumberland, as Professor Chrimes suggested.

Of these three, Lincoln was the most important, presiding as he did over the new Council of the North, the most significant administrative innovation of Richard's monarchy. The regulations for this Council, which, unlike the Council's records, have survived, reveal that its purpose was primarily judicial, its civil authority arising from a commission of the peace and its criminal authority from a special commission probably one of oyer and terminer, which was still to be issued when the regulations were drawn up.²³ It was to hold quarter sessions, at least one of which was to be in York, and though it could not determine matters of land, its writ did extend into the great lordships. Insofar as it was authorized to resist and to withstand riotous assemblies, as well as to punish them, it also appears to have been an important force for order in the lawless borders. Though the regulations of the Council do not specifically grant its members any ambassadorial authority, the president of the Council was the only conservator of the Anglo-Scottish treaty of 1484 who was not a native

²²CPR, 1476-85, 10 August 1484, p. 512; 15 September 1484, pp. 485-86. Paul Murray Kendall has pinpointed the date of the council's establishment as July 1484. See Richard the Third, p. 312. For a brief summary of Ratcliff's career under the Yorkists, see appendix 4 below.

²³See Brooks, Council of the North, p. 12. The regulations for the Council of the North have been printed in EHD, 4:59.

northerner. However, he does not appear to have taken part in the negotiations themselves.²⁴

In her important work on the Council of the North, Reid asserted that King Richard's intention in establishing the Council was to alter the jurisdictional boundaries of northern government. According to her theory, the government of the North had traditionally been divided between two justices of the peace called High Commissioners, one ruling in the East and Middle Marches, the East Riding of Yorkshire, and all the North Riding except Richmond; the other, in the West March, Cumberland, Westmorland, Richmond, and the West Riding of Yorkshire. Richard, thus, broke with tradition, says Reid, by giving the rule of the Marches to a Warden-general, namely Henry Percy, and the rule of Yorkshire to Lincoln's Council.²⁵

There are two things wrong with this theory, however. First, Percy's appointment as "Warden-general" antedates the establishment of the Council of the North by more than a year, and it is unlikely that in the busy days of July 1483 when Richard gave Percy the title, he would have had time to think through the complexities of such an important administrative reform. Besides, as I have shown above, the term "Warden-general" is a misnomer, insofar as Percy never had authority in the West March. Second, there is nothing to suggest that the Council operated exclusively in Yorkshire since the regulations for the Council of the North specifically charged "all and each of our

²⁴For these Scottish affairs, see Hall's Union, p. 400, and James Gairdner, ed., Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861), 1:66.

²⁵Reid, Council, pp. 60-61.

officers, true liegemen, and subjects in these north parts to be at all times obedient to the commandments of our said council in our name, . . ."²⁶ In view of this regulation, one can say without qualification that the Council had jurisdiction in all the northern counties and that the Warden himself was subordinate to its authority.

My guess, therefore, is that Richard had quite a different purpose in mind when he established the Council of the North. Specifically, he wished to continue the subordination of the northern aristocracy by organizing a system of fair and plenary justice in the North, hitherto absent in a region where one or two lords wore all the judicial hats, so to speak. Henry Percy, for example, was a justice of the forests beyond Trent, a justice of the peace, a Warden of the March responsible for his Warden courts, and a commissioner of oyer and terminer, in addition to which royal offices he was a seigneurial lord holding numerous judicial privileges in his own right. The concentration of judicial offices in the North was further aggravated by the fact that since the fourteenth century, the Court of King's Bench had ceased its migration to Cumberland, Westmorland, Northumberland, and the palatinate of Durham.²⁷ As a consequence, the justices of the peace, who fell heir to the powers of this body, achieved a preeminence in the North which antedated their more general importance elsewhere in the fifteenth century. No doubt, the chief justices, invariably a Neville or a Percy, had begun to swagger with the importance of this office which gave them as much civil authority as the Wardenship had given them military author-

²⁶EHD, 4:559. See page 22 above for a definition of the term "north parts."

²⁷Putnam, Proceedings, p. lix.

ity.

During his own years in the North, Richard must have recognized the fact that there was no real chain of command in the northern judicial system. Westminster was far away, and appeals must have been shelved more than once. What is more, the infamous problems of livery, maintenance, and embracery aggravated the situation by making it virtually impossible for a man to get justice in a region where power was invested in so few.

The rise of the duke of Gloucester's household council at Middleham alleviated some of this problem, it is true, but any success that body achieved flowed more from the strength of the duke's personality than from any official status this council held in the judicial hierarchy. According to Donald W. Sutherland, a specialist in medieval legal history, Gloucester's precedence as a prince of the blood "would not entail any right to override the jurisdiction of any other court, or even to receive appeals for review of judgments of any other court." Any pressure he exerted would have had to be indirect.²⁸

The battle of wits which must have accompanied the rivalry between Gloucester's council and the established baronial courts in the North must have given the future king a first-hand lesson in the need for an authoritative judicial body wielding a superior brand of justice. It is my contention, therefore, that in the reign of Richard III, the king resolved to establish a royal court superior to the ordinary justices of the peace, a move which compromised, though it did not entirely efface, the judicial authority of the local lords.

Such a program would have had two immediate results. It would

²⁸See appendix 5 below.

have helped to delineate a chain of judicial command in the North, which seems to have been sorely lacking. And, more importantly for purposes of this study, it would have thwarted the common fifteenth-century practices of livery, maintenance, and embracery which King Richard had expressed a prior interest in curbing.²⁹

For evidence of Richard's determination to make his Council of the North an impartial body, one has only to look at the first three regulations concerning its governance. First, the king forbade his councillors from passing judgment "for favour, affection, hate, malice, or bribery," urging each member of the Council to be "indifferent and in no way partial, as far as his wit and reason will allow him." Second, in the event of a conflict of interest, councillors were to withdraw themselves from participation on the Council. And, third, no matter of great weight was to be determined unless a quorum were present.³⁰ Therefore, in view of the facts that the king specifically instructed all his officers to submit to the Council, and all his councillors to avoid embracery, I think it is safe to conclude that the purpose of the king's Council of the North was to curb baronial authority and its abuse in the North. This innovation was so compatible with Edward IV's policy in the North that one might even call it the culmination of thirteen years of Yorkist progress in this direction.

The most important northern lord, the earl of Northumberland, was made a member of the Council, it is true, but he was clearly subordinate

²⁹Professor Kendall outlined the reforms of Richard's Parliament, which include an attack on baronial abuse of authority, in Richard the Third, pp. 283-84.

³⁰EHD, 4:558-59.

to the rule of the outlander Lincoln. Otherwise, the membership appears to have been top-heavy with royal kin, including Lord Moreley, a brother-in-law to the earl of Lincoln; and another nephew of the king, the thirteen-year-old Edward, earl of Warwick. Other possible members are less obvious. A search of the peace commissions for the years 1484-85 renders the names Ralph Greystoke and Francis, Viscount Lovell, the latter of whom was a boyhood friend of Richard's. It is also likely that Richard's jack-of-all-northern-trades, Sir Richard Ratcliff, served on the Council; and there was, no doubt, at least one cleric, as well, probably the scholarly John Shirwood, bishop of Durham. The only known commoner to have served on the Council was Thomas Aspar, a citizen of York, who may well have been a lawyer.³¹

Little has survived to reveal the actual work of the Council of the North. The records of the corporation of York, however, do show that the body was in operation by October 1484, for early in that month, the city was knee-deep in trouble arising from a royal action the previous March. At that time, the king had requested the enclosure of a pasture belonging to the Hospital of St. Nicholas, which, when done, provoked a riotous assembly the following October. On 8 October, the civic council

³¹Reid identifies the royal kinsmen in Council, pp. 66-67. The Municipal Records specifically name Warwick and Aspar, pp. 200, 202, 210. For peace commissions, see CPR, 1476-85, 18 September 1484, p. 579, and the entries on p. 580 for 27 January 1484; 5 February 1485; and 17 February 1485. My conjecture concerning Shirwood is based on the facts that Richard admired this bishop, had recommended him for a cardinalate, and is known to have sought his counsel on other occasions. Furthermore, Shirwood's reputation as a Renaissance luminary makes it likely he was one of the "learned men" Richard specifically sought for the council. See EHD, 4:559; Dictionary of National Biography, 1959-60 ed., s. v. "Shirwood, John"; and J. R. Lander, "Council, Administration and Councillors, 1461-1485," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research 32 (1959):178.

sent word both to the king and to the earl of Lincoln, informing them of the city's distress. A week later, Robert Percy, the controller of the king's household, had arrived in York with two messages from King Richard, one to the mayor, scolding him for letting matters get out of hand; and one to the commons, granting them their rights of common pasture. In the future, the king wrote, the commons should seek to redress their grievances not by taking matters into their own hands, but by funneling their anger through established channels--the mayor, the earl of Lincoln, and, ultimately, the king.³²

This incident is also significant insofar as it sheds light on the relative positions of the earls of Lincoln and Northumberland in the city's esteem. The same day that the city had written to Lincoln and the king, it had received correspondence on the matter from the earl of Northumberland, who had heard of the trouble while visiting his manor at Leconfield. Northumberland chastised the city for failing to inform either Lincoln or himself and then proceeded to offer his own assistance. The city did not even acknowledge this bristling correspondence, but once affairs had settled back to normal, it did acknowledge Lincoln's assistance with a gift of thanks, delivered personally to his residence at Sandal castle.³³

There were other occasions in which the city had to call upon the Council, as, for example, in December 1484, when a case of counterfeiting came before the corporation.³⁴ Counterfeiting was a treasonous

³²Municipal Records, pp. 186, 190-92, 197.

³³Ibid., pp. 193-94, 197.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 200-205.

act in fifteenth-century England, and the occasion of the city's acquiescence to the Council substantiates my earlier contention that the Council of the North was superior to the regular justices of the peace who had no authority therein.

The following month, as civic elections got underway, the president of the royal Council began to dabble in the internal affairs of the city, as well. That is to say, the earl of Lincoln--and the king himself, one might note--wrote letters to the corporation requesting that Thomas Wharfe and Richard Latimer be excused from city office, a request to which the city agreed upon the condition the two pay five pounds and five marks, respectively, for their excuse.³⁵

This incident raises the whole issue of the relationship between the city of York and the Crown in the Yorkist period, an important issue here since I have argued that the civic authorities sympathized with Ricardian government. The chief observation one can make is that Edward IV and Richard III, after him, were both in the habit of preferring their own councillors to membership on the York civic council. Edward IV, for example, is known to have introduced two officers from the duchy of Lancaster onto the council at York, namely Guy Fairfax and Miles Metcalf, both of whom served in the position of York's recorder. Similarly, Richard, during his years as the duke of Gloucester, had given his livery to Metcalf and another councilman, John Vavasour, despite an ordinance forbidding this practice.³⁶ When he became king,

³⁵YCR, 1:111-12.

³⁶For Fairfax and Metcalf, see YCR, 1:19. For Metcalf and Vavasour, consult P. M. Tillott, ed., A History of Yorkshire: The City of York, in Victoria History of the Counties of England, gen. ed. R. B. Pugh et al (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 64-65.

Richard managed, in one way or another, to ensure that a third of the members of the York civic council were also his own servants. Mayor Thomas Wrangwish, for example, held an annuity of twenty marks from the king; Thomas Aspar served on Lincoln's council and on the York civic council, while the lawyer Nicholas Lancaster served in York and in London; and John Harrington, Richard's clerk of the council, was initially nominated for civic office by the king himself.³⁷ The city was tolerant of this practice up to a point, and in December 1484, it urged the king only to nominate candidates if he intended them to reside in York. Harrington, it appears, was in London more than the civic council would have liked.³⁸

Despite this rather heavy influence, the facts still do not bear out any suggestion that the city favored Richard's government simply because he packed their council with his own retainers. On the contrary, Richard had proved himself capable of restraint in these affairs in 1482 when, as the duke of Gloucester, he had been called in to resolve an election dispute. Thomas Wrangwish, a friend of Duke Richard's, had lost the mayoralty that year to Richard York, but the supporters of Wrangwish would hear nothing of this loss. A heated protest ensued, and the city sent to Gloucester and others for some assistance. King Edward's first response to all this electoral confusion was to cancel the election altogether, urging the continued service of the previous mayor. This would have happened if Gloucester had not shoved his personal preferences aside and prevailed upon the king to recognize Richard York as the duly

³⁷ See, respectively, CPR, 1476-35, 4 March 1484, p. 450; Municipal Records, pp. 200, 202; pp. 163, 199, and the note, p. 205.

³⁸ Municipal Records, pp. 189, 206.

elected mayor, an exercise in fairness which sheds an important light on his later dabblings in city politics.³⁹

Actually, the city yielded to royal wishes only when its own desires were compatible with those of the Crown. Early in 1483, some of the citizens of York had expressed a jealous concern over the city's privileges just before the February elections. Richard was again favoring the candidacy of Thomas Wrangwish for the mayoralty. William Welles and Robert Rede threw accusations back and forth, each charging the other with opposing Gloucester's interference; and though it is difficult to tell who actually made the charge, at least one of them had muttered into a mug of ale that the citizens, not a lord, must choose the mayor. Wrangwish again lost the election, this time to John Newton.⁴⁰

By the time of its next election, Richard was wearing the crown, and the citizens were realizing that Wrangwish's election might now insure, more than jeopardize, the city's prerogatives. To this end, therefore, Richard's favorite candidate finally took his place in the seat of the mayor on 20 February 1484.⁴¹ I have discussed the Wrangwish episodes at some length as I believe they reveal the citizens of York to have been canny watchdogs of their own interests. To reject or to elect Wrangwish, that is, depended less on Richard's wishes than on the implications of Wrangwish's victory for the liberties of the city.

Richard had bound the citizens of York to him in other ways as

³⁹Ibid., pp. 121, 124.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 140-41.

⁴¹YCR, 1:87.

well. For example, at the time of the war with Scotland, when he was still a duke, he had seen to it that the campaign's unexpended funds be given to the captains from York. Despite the city's poverty, the councilmen had mustered 120 soldiers for Gloucester's company simply because they respected his consistent good lordship; the duke's small favor at the end of the campaign was his way of thanking them for their support. As king, in 1483, however, he was able to give them the reward such loyalty actually deserved. Citing their assistance in Scotland, as well as their more recent support against the Woodvilles, Richard released the merchants from the obligation of paying tolls on their goods. More importantly, he released the city from the annual fee farm owed the Crown, granted them a £21 annuity which was to endure forever, and made the mayor his chief sergeant-at-arms.⁴² One must view these favors as expressions of affection and gratitude more than as royal bribes; for the city had served Richard in his hour of need on more than one occasion.

A cynic might argue that Richard sought only to oil the hinges of urban affection in order to ensure the smooth operation of his government, but I think this not to be the case. The election of 1482 had proved his fairness; the Scottish campaign had proved his sincerity; and the rewards of 1483 simply confirm his gratitude and good will toward the citizens. Their tolerance of his influence on the council, furthermore, stands in stark contrast to their later obstinacy toward Henry VII. Regarding the Yorkist sympathizer Miles Metcalf as a traitor, King Henry wished to intrude his own nominee, one

⁴²Municipal Records, pp. 127-28, 138, 174-75.

Richard Green, into Metcalf's position as recorder on the York civic council.⁴³ He made this desire known as early as 2 October 1485, but, in open defiance of the king's wishes, the city kept Metcalf on until his death the following February, growing more and more adept in the art of excuse-making as time passed. In December, for example, they deferred the matter until the return of their Parliamentary representatives. In February, they accepted Green into membership on the council, though not the recordership, and smugly promised that if he could prove his worthiness, they would give him the first available office. Metcalf's sudden death two weeks later left them with no more excuses, so they once again bought some time by citing the absence of their Parliamentary representatives as sufficient cause for delay. By March, they had invented a new excuse: the city was too poor to afford a recorder. At this point, King Henry abandoned Green altogether and nominated Thomas Middleton, instead. The councilmen, however, put John Vavasour, a former retainer of Richard III's, into Metcalf's office despite the fact they sorely needed King Henry's favor in order to secure another release from the fee farm. Such civic mulishness stands in sharp contrast to their response to similar royal requests from the Yorkist kings and goes a long way toward illustrating the sincere good will between the city and King Henry's two predecessors.

York's loyalty met its ultimate test, however, in the late summer of 1485 when Henry, then the earl of Richmond, invaded King Richard's realm. Ever since Buckingham had whetted Richmond's ambitious appetite in the autumn of 1483, the earl had been gathering a host of discontented Englishmen for a second assault on King Richard. By April 1485,

⁴³YCR, 1:125-52, *passim*.

England was buzzing with rumors of a threatened invasion and, in the North, the king's enemies had launched a war of propaganda.⁴⁴

The city of York clearly intended to remain loyal to King Richard whatever the cost, and on 8 July, more than a month before the actual invasion, the council was urging the crafts to array themselves to attend upon the king. By mid-August, the Tudor had landed in Wales. Immediately, upon the receipt of this information, the men of York sent a representative to Richard at Nottingham castle to see if he desired an army from the city; by 19 August, they had pulled together an army of eighty men despite the plague that was raging in York. Meanwhile, the city was busy preparing for its own defense, as well it might in view of the fact that it was the chief Ricardian stronghold in the realm. Each man was to be ready on an hour's warning to come to the city's defense, the mandate ran, and this upon pain of imprisonment.⁴⁵

From his position at Nottingham on the north banks of the River Trent, King Richard began to organize his resistance to the invasion, sending messages to some of the closest members of his private circle-- John Howard, duke of Norfolk, and Thomas Howard, earl of Surrey, Norfolk's son. He also sent word to Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland, though it is more likely he classed the earl with the mistrusted Stanleys more than with the reliable Howards whose noble trappings the latter owed to this king alone.⁴⁶ Though there is no evidence to prove that Percy was actually conspiring with Henry Tudor, there is cause enough to

⁴⁴Ibid., 1:115-16; Croyland Chronicle, p. 500.

⁴⁵YCR, 1:117-18; Municipal Records, pp. 214-16.

⁴⁶Hall, Union, pp. 408, 412. Thomas, Lord Stanley, was married to Margaret Beaufort, the mother of Henry Tudor.

speculate that he at least welcomed King Richard's fall. I have shown at some length the adjustments in Percy authority which Richard and his brother Edward had made in northern government, placing members of the royal house into positions of authority at Percy's expense. It would be simple to say that this abridgement of Percy hegemony in the North aroused a jealousy in the earl which caused him to rise up in rebellion against the agent of his disgrace, but such an interpretation runs counter to a pattern of behavior which characterized Henry Percy, the man.

The earl's ambiguous position during the Readeption of Henry VI, his cryptic silence upon Edward's arrival in 1471, his absence from the important battles at Barnet and Tewkesbury, and his failure to show his hand in Buckingham's rebellion all suggest that the earl was a man who did not wish to spit until he knew which way the wind was blowing. The city of York's preference for Gloucester and Lincoln, in turn, also tends to show that Percy simply lacked the charisma which had characterized his House since the days of his great-grandfather, Henry "Hotspur." Hardly the picture of chivalric virtue in action, the fourth Percy earl was awkward in military affairs, bungling virtually every assignment Edward had ever given him, and it is hardly likely that a man of this type would take an active part in a rebellion against King Richard, no matter what anguish he might have experienced at Richard's hand. However, he would not have taken horse on the king's behalf either, and Richard, who knew Percy well, would certainly have known that the earl of Northumberland, even as an ally, would have made a flimsy prop to his throne.

What is more, Northumberland's marriage to Maud Herbert had made

him the object of Henry Tudor's own schemes for a sound political marriage. This Maud was the daughter of William Herbert, the late earl of Pembroke, who more than twenty years before had acquired the custody and marriage of the boy Henry Tudor. At one time, Pembroke had intended to marry his ward to his daughter Maud, but the events of 1470 had taken the life of Pembroke and sent the boy Tudor scurrying into exile, so the marriage had never taken place. In 1485, therefore, Henry Tudor was looking in several quarters for a bride who might bring him some political fortune. The most famous of his choices was Elizabeth of York, the niece of Richard III, whom he had sworn to marry in December 1483. Upon the death of Richard's queen in 1485, however, when it appeared the king himself might marry Elizabeth, Henry Tudor had begun a search for an alternative English bride. Once again, a Herbert alliance seemed possible, and highly valuable in view of Henry's emphasis on his Welsh descent. Maud, of course, was married, but her sister was not; so in the spring of 1485, Richmond sent messengers into England with letters for Maud's husband, the earl of Northumberland, whose assistance in arranging such a marriage he now urged. Beset by spies, the messengers seem never to have made their way to Henry Percy, but it is still possible that Percy got wind of this Tudor scheme through some other agent, Walter Herbert, Maud's brother, for example, whom Richmond seemed particularly anxious to attach.⁴⁷

It is impossible to know for sure whether or not Henry Percy had

⁴⁷For the Herberts and Henry Tudor, see CPR, 1461-67, 12 February 1462, p. 114; and Scofield, Edward the Fourth, 1:203. For Elizabeth of York, see Hall, Union, p. 382; and Croyland Chronicle, p. 499. One may find Richmond's overtures to the earl of Northumberland recorded in Polydore Vergil, Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History, Comprising the Reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV, and Richard III, ed. Henry Ellis (Camden Society, o. s., vol. 29, 1844), p. 215.

actively joined the Tudor's party of malcontents, but, in view of his previous record of political detachment, my guess is that he was willing enough to sit back and let Tudor take Percy's revenge. Joining the king and the two Howards at Leicester, Northumberland did march toward Bosworth in the royal army; that he commanded the reserve from a distance of two miles at Sutton Cheney, however, suggests, in part, the limit of Richard's trust in the earl. The surest evidence of Richard's wariness, though, is the fact that he assigned Lord Dacre, Lieutenant of the West March, to raise the North in Percy's stead. Besides Dacre, the northerners in Richard's army at Bosworth included his friend, Sir Richard Ratcliff; John Kendall, his secretary; Robert Percy, the controller of his household; Sir Robert Brackenbury, Keeper of the Tower; Lord Scrope of Bolton; Lord Scrope of Upsale; and Ralph Greystoke. Altogether, his host numbered 10,000 men to Tudor's 5,000.⁴⁸

Tudor and York finally clashed outside the little village of Market Bosworth under the brilliant morning sun of 22 August 1485.⁴⁹ Dispatching John Vere, earl of Oxford, to engage Norfolk, Richmond himself advanced toward the king; but Oxford, fearing the danger of Richard's superior strength, ordered his troops to huddle about their standard for protection, a tactic which momentarily startled Richard's army. When Oxford advanced a second time, however, the royal troops had no trouble regrouping and overwhelming his contingent. King Richard, meanwhile, had

⁴⁸Kendall, Richard the Third, pp. 355-56; Croyland Chronicle, p. 504. The estimates of troop size are Vergil's; see Three Books, p. 223.

⁴⁹The following description of the battle at Bosworth Field is based on Vergil's account, Three Books, pp. 223-26. Hall's account in the Union, pp. 418-21, follows Vergil closely.

managed to identify his great enemy, the earl of Richmond, in the sea of armed men which swelled about him, and in a frenzy of anger, he spurred his horse around the struggling armies to engage his rival in individual combat. A famous and experienced soldier, the king had no trouble getting past Richmond's standard bearer, William Brandon, who fell dead as the king drove on toward John Cheney, a man reputed for his strength. Cheney, too, was thrown to the ground, and now King Richard drove straight for Henry Tudor. Richard must surely have reveled at the thought he might slay this great nuisance with his own hand. Norfolk's troops clearly had the best of Oxford's men, and if the king's reserve had raced into this easy fight at just the right moment, Tudor's dreams would have spilled into the dust on Bosworth Field. Percy remained quiet, however; and William Stanley, whose brother was Henry Tudor's step-father, chose this moment to show the bent of his ambition and fell against King Richard with a vengeance. The royal troops scattered, and Richard was left to die alone, fighting in the midst of the Tudor hive.

The battle had lasted two hours. When it was over, the soldiers slipped a harness over the dead king's neck, threw his naked body over a horse, and led him toward an ignominious burial at the Franciscan abbey in Leicester. Meanwhile, Thomas, Lord Stanley, pushed King Richard's crown securely onto his step-son's brow, and the new King Henry VII began to receive the submission of the Yorkist captains. Among these were Thomas Howard, earl of Surrey, who spent the next three and a half years as a prisoner in the Tower of London. It is not exactly clear whether Northumberland was arrested or not. The chronicler at Croyland Abbey was sure he had been, but if he was, it must have been a momentary durance indeed, perhaps only until he was actually seen by

the new king, who, according to Hall, immediately received him into favor and made him a councillor.⁵⁰ The day after the battle, it is certain Northumberland was safely at home at his manor at Wressel; and on the twenty-fourth, as I shall show, he was in York. He seems never to have seen the inside of a Tudor prison, and he was certainly not in the Tower until January 1486, as Reid has stated.⁵¹

At any rate, it was these two men, the earls of Northumberland and Surrey, the one wending his way safely to Yorkshire, the other to London's most famous prison, who would have the responsibility of holding the North for King Henry VII in the next decade and a half, no easy task in view of King Richard's enduring memory there.

⁵⁰Croyland Chronicle, p. 504; Hall, Union, p. 419.

⁵¹YCR, 1:119-20; Reid, Council, p. 73.

V. THE TUDOR SEQUEL

In the days immediately following King Richard's death, a kind of organized alarm descended on the civic council at York. Immediately, the councilmen wrote to the earl of Northumberland, whom they understood to be at his manor of Wressel in the East Riding, seeking his advice "at this wofull season" on their disposition toward the new king. The next day, the city arranged an apparently clandestine meeting between the earl and the mayor and brethren of York, all to meet at the mill in the street outside Walmgate Bar two days hence on Friday, 26 August. Meanwhile, Henry VII had sent his own emissary to York, who lurked outside the city's gates so fearful to enter the Ricardian stronghold that the mayor had to ride to him instead in order to receive his assurance that Henry VII bore the city no ill will. Similar tidings came to the council's ears from their own John Nicholson, recently returned from Wressel, who reported that at Leicester, where the king was resting, Northumberland had spoken up "for the well of himself and this Citie."¹

On Thursday, in advance of its meeting with Percy, the skittish council organized a committee of five whom it scurried toward Leicester for a personal meeting with the king, hoping to receive a confirmation of the city's liberties. This premature decision arose, no doubt, from the city's growing fear that it had lost the protection of the Yorkist nobility, most of whom a cunning Henry VII had falsely pro-

¹YCR, 1:218-20, quoting directly from pp. 219 and 220, respectively.

claimed dead that very day.²

At about the same time, the council sent another letter to the earl of Northumberland, expressing the wish that his good grace would continue, especially at the present when it was "most necessarye."³ This is the only occasion on record in which the city was openly solicitous to the earl, whom more often than not, it ignored in favor of Gloucester, Lincoln, and now the archbishop of York. This sudden change in the council's typical posture toward the earl goes some way to illustrate the apparent favor in which the king was holding the earl and reinforces my earlier contention that the earl of Northumberland was never an object of Tudor vengeance, unlike the other members of the Yorkist nobility who were imprisoned and/or attainted.⁴

The sudden arrival of King Henry's sergeant, Robert Rawdon, on 27 August probably dampened whatever hopes the city was nourishing for a favorable response from the king. Rawdon had come with a warrant for the arrest of Robert Stillington, bishop of Bath and Wells, a famous Ricardian sympathizer whom Henry's servants had earlier brought to York

²Ibid., 1:120-21. Henry's proclamation, received in York on Thursday, 25 August, stated that the earls of Lincoln and Surrey, Viscount Lovell, and Sir Richard Ratcliff had all been killed at Bosworth when, in fact, only Ratcliff was dead.

³Ibid., 1:122.

⁴Among those attainted by Henry's first Parliament in November 1485 were "the late Duke of Gloucester, calling himself Richard III," the duke of Norfolk, the earl of Surrey, Viscount Lovell, Sir Richard Ratcliff, and William Catesby. A year later, the king assured Henry Percy that the Act of Resumption passed by that Parliament exempted those grants which Edward IV had made to him (Percy). See, respectively, Sir Francis Bacon, The History of the Reign of Henry VII, ed. F. J. Levy (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1972), p. 77; and Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Henry 7, vol. 1 (1485-94), 10 November 1486, p. 138.

"sore crased, by reason of his trouble and carying."⁵ The corporation now balked at Henry's request, refusing to hand over the bishop, at least until he had had some time to collect himself. This confrontation revived the city's earlier fears, and the following Monday the councilmen decided that the gates of York should be closed each night at 9:00 and that four men from each of the city's wards were to stand watch at all of the gates every night. At the end of the week, however, the committee which had been meeting with the king finally returned with the good news the council had so nervously awaited: Henry VII had promised to confirm the city's liberties and to provide better lordship than the people of York had ever known.⁶

Tudor charity toward the North had its limits, however. On 8 October, the city of York received a proclamation from the king rehearsing the merits and demerits of northern political sympathies for the last two decades. In general, the theme ran, the North's earlier support for Henry VI and its frequent service against the Scots were enough to bring the whole region into the Tudor circle of forgiveness, despite what now was deemed northern treachery on Richard's behalf at Bosworth Field, a posture which one may interpret as a chary concession to the king's growing awareness of trouble in Scotland and the North's potential impact thereon. To this end, he granted a pardon to all those in the counties of Nottingham, Yorkshire, Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland, the bishopric of Durham, the city of York, and the town of Hull. Excepted from this pardon were several citizens of York, among whom were the Ricardian councillors, Sir James

⁵YCR, 1:122.

⁶Ibid.

Harrington and Miles Metcalf, as well as Metcalf's brother Thomas, a priest, who was nevertheless harbored in York until his subsequent arrest in the spring of 1486.⁷

On 26 October 1485, the councilmen finally took an oath of allegiance to the king whose wishes they had already undertaken to frustrate, as the details of the Richard Green affair, which I have summarized above, certainly demonstrate. Actually, the events of the week immediately preceding the city's decision to take the oath suggest the decision was made under a certain amount of pressure. There was a man in York by the name of John Eggesfield whose peevish quarrels with the mayor and council had resulted four years before in his dismissal from the office of swordbearer. Eggesfield's querulous complaints to King Edward had won him royal support in October 1481, though once the king had heard the mayor's recitation of Eggesfield's misbehavior, he had accepted the city's judgment in the affair. Now, in October of 1485, Eggesfield, sensing his opportunity for revenge, was threatening to run to King Henry with the false accusation of the council's treason. Fearing that their consistent standoffishness might now appear the outward symbol of an inward subterfuge, the councilmen scrambled to manifest their innocence of this charge. First, they wrote the archbishop of York, laying out the charges against Eggesfield, and asking for his cooperation in the affair. Next, they agreed to accept Henry's nominee, Richard Green, to Metcalf's office of recorder; and three days later, they took the oath of allegiance to Henry VII.⁸ Under the circum-

⁷Ibid., 1:126, 163.

⁸Ibid., 1:48-49, 126-27.

stances, however, one cannot help wondering if the sincerity of the oath was any greater than the sincerity of the promise to accept Green.

In December, the city was again taxing the patience of the king, seeking a release from the fee-farm and several other pecuniary obligations, somewhat overstating a case of severe poverty brought on by years of civil war. Once Henry granted a diminution of the fee-farm the following year, however, the city finally settled into what might be called a cautious acceptance of Tudor rule.⁹

The occasion of Henry's favor toward the citizens of York was the northern progress which he made as soon as the snow melted in the spring of 1486. The primary motive behind this progress was Henry's determination to "reclaim and rectify" northern sympathies which he painfully recognized still lay in the scattered Yorkist camp. On his way to York, Henry experienced the first of several Yorkist rebellions which would plague him for most of his reign. Specifically, Francis Lovell and the two Staffords, Humphrey and Thomas, had fled sanctuary and were in arms. The Staffords were assailing the city of Worcester, but Lovell was close at hand in his northern homeland. The country surrounding the king was still rife with Yorkist sympathies, and Henry had, therefore, to undercut Lovell's support by offering a general pardon to his followers. His ill-armed menie managed, thus, to chase Lovell into Lancashire, though a last-minute rebel plot nearly resulted in the king's murder while he was at devotions in York.¹⁰ For the first time in his less than illustrious military career, the earl of Northum-

⁹Ibid., 1:136-37, 167.

¹⁰Bacon, Henry VII, pp. 80-81; Croyland Chronicle, pp. 513-14.

berland had been the ready captain of the royal forces, quelling the insurrection and executing its prompters in a feat of Percy decisiveness seldom witnessed in the Yorkist period.

This rather aimless rebellion was followed one year later by a far more organized assault on the Tudor claim, the appearance of Lambert Simnel, a pretender to the throne claiming to be Edward, earl of Warwick, the son of the duke of Clarence. Simnel's plot was an obvious ruse, for this Edward, a boy of twelve, was safely ensconced in the Tower of London, and it was easy enough for Henry to display the real Edward to his subjects. The problem was not so much Simnel himself, therefore, as the mesh of alliances he had managed to weave together; Ireland and Burgundy both lent their support; and, in England, the heir to King Richard's throne, John de la Pole, earl of Lincoln, had joined the pretender's army, wishing perhaps to revive his own hopes by way of Simnel's accessible machine.¹¹

The rebels sailed from Flanders in early May, landing in Furness in Lancashire on the northwest coast of England a month later. The appearance of the rebels in the North brought an immediate response from the earl of Northumberland, who quickly requested a contingent of soldiers from the city of York. Evidently, the royal forces now anticipated an assault on York, for the earl advised the councilmen to victual the city and promised to come there himself.¹²

On 8 June, the city received correspondence from Simnel's forces, desiring entry into the city and promising to pay for whatever food and

¹¹Bacon, Henry VII, pp. 91-93.

¹²YCR, 2:13-14, 20.

supplies their troops might require.¹³ The city immediately forwarded this correspondence to the earl of Northumberland, writing Lincoln and Lovell it intended to hold for King Henry. The news the following day that the rebels were travelling southward toward York from Boroughbridge was so alarming that 600 citizens now lined Micklegate Street to welcome the assistance of Lord Clifford and his army of 400. The next day, 10 June, the earl of Northumberland finally arrived in York as well.

On the afternoon of the twelfth, the Lord Clifford led an army out of York in the direction of the enemy camp at Branham Moor, leaving Northumberland behind to defend the city. The rebel spies were quick to report his movements, however, and in a brief skirmish that night at Tadcaster, several Yorkmen were killed or injured. The remainder returned immediately to York with the Lord Clifford. Shaken, Clifford and Percy hastily decided to leave York to its own devices and abandoned the city for a reunion with King Henry. Seeing this, the rebels sent the Lords Scrope of Bolton and Upsale to attack York, but the citizens managed to fend off their apparently half-hearted assault against Bootham Bar.

Northumberland, who had only been six miles distant from the city at the time of the rebel assault, quickly returned and appears to have remained in York, missing the eventual contest between the pretender and King Henry on 16 June. On that day, outside the village of Stoke on the south bank of the River Trent, Henry outnumbered and overran the Yorkist soldiers, chiefly an army of Dutch and Irish mer-

¹³Simnel's activities in Yorkshire described herein are recorded in YCR, 2:21-24.

cenaries. The earl of Lincoln died in the fight, and Simnel fell into royal hands. Lovell, who fled, apparently starved to death later in a small, closed hiding place.¹⁴ When the news of Stoke reached York, the mayor, aldermen, and the whole council repaired to York Minster where a Te Deum was offered, at King Henry's request, in thanksgiving for this second victory against the Yorkists.

Determined now to show the North the severity of his rule, the king himself travelled to Lincoln and the north parts on an itinerary circuit of justice, punishing rebel accomplices with fines, imprisonment, and execution. Among those condemned for execution was the intransigent Yorkist, Thomas Metcalf, who was, however, later pardoned. After settling these affairs at York, the king travelled on to Durham and Newcastle where his two-week stay was spent in preliminary truce negotiations with James III.¹⁵

Though the Yorkist cause was virtually extinct after the battle of Stoke, Henry's northern progress must have taught him the bent of northern affection, for as soon as he returned to London, he arranged for the coronation of his queen, Elizabeth of York, an event delayed two years beyond the marriage date.¹⁶ Even this felicitous event could not secure northern favor for the Tudor, however; and when Parliament granted the king a tenth for the Breton war, the inhabitants of Yorkshire and the bishopric of Durham refused to pay. Already financially strapped from two decades of civil and Scottish wars, the city of York,

¹⁴Bacon, Henry VII, pp. 92-94.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 95-96, 98; YCR, 2:28.

¹⁶Bacon, Henry VII, p. 96.

too, now tested its new-found Tudor grace with a request for an excuse from this tax. However, the king responded that no allowance might be made until after the whole tax had been paid; the city would have to trust the king to make its allowance later.¹⁷

In April 1489, northern obstinacy on this point erupted into violence. The tax collectors in rural Yorkshire, who were the first to taste the bitter cup of northern recalcitrance, appealed to Henry Percy for assistance.¹⁸ Percy wrote the king, couching the North's refusal to pay the tax in the hard context of recent northern history. Unmoved, Henry responded that the earl was to compel payment, especially from those who complained the most, so that his subjects might see that Acts of Parliament might not be altered by simple rustics. Northumberland had opportunity soon enough to carry out these instructions, for a host of rebels, led by one John a Chambre, had gathered outside his own manor of Topcliff near Thirsk in the North Riding of Yorkshire. On Saturday, 24 April, the earl commanded Sir Robert Plumpton to bring as many men as he could muster, armed with bows and arrows, to attend upon his brother-in-law, Sir William Gascoigne, at Thirsk the following Monday. On the twenty-eighth, however, the earl thought better of this armed confrontation and waded out into the gathering, alone and unarmed, to persuade the rioters to come to their senses. Far from laying down their weapons as he suggested, however, the rioters fell on the earl and murdered him, as much for his treason at Bosworth four years previous,

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 117-18; YCR, 2:36-38.

¹⁸I have constructed the following account of the rebellion in Yorkshire from these sources: Hall, Union, pp. 442-44; YCR, 2:45-49; and Stapleton, ed., Plumpton Corr., p. 61. The latter also includes a copy of the important biographical inscription on the earl of Surrey's monument at Thetford, pp. 265-66.

Hall records, as for his current unpopular efforts on King Henry's behalf.

The shock of this event now rippled in several directions. In York, the council ordered that none of its members were to leave the city, on peril of imprisonment, until it had received word from the king, a precaution which hints of some urban collusion in the insurrection. In addition, the mayor selected "thre sharp men" to ride into the countryside to ascertain the feelings of the commons so that a report might be sent to the king, this to be done while the mayor arrayed the city's clerics for York's defense. At Westminster, King Henry was making his own response, organizing the third campaign against his subjects in four years, to be led on this occasion by Thomas Howard, earl of Surrey, who, for reasons unknown, had been recently released from the Tower. The rebels, meanwhile, were taking for their leader Sir John Egremont and declaring their intent to engage King Henry himself in the defense of their liberties.

Around the first of May, the commons stormed York's Fishergate Bar and entered the city. For the next two weeks, Egremont was in virtual control of York, overriding the council's decision to permit the entries of Yorkshire's sheriff and Henry, Lord Clifford, and placing the life of the archbishop in jeopardy. On 17 May, Egremont requested from the city a contingent of twenty skillful riders to attend him into Richmondshire, with which request the mayor quickly complied, fearing the consequences of a refusal. Once Egremont was gone, the council organized two deputations, one to the archbishop and one to the king, donning the Tudor livery of green and white satin for the first time.

For his part, Egremont was never able to complete his business in Richmondshire, for Surrey's troops gave chase, and he was forced to make

his way to Margaret of Burgundy's now famous haven for Yorkist dissidents. John a Chambre had been captured, meanwhile, and was executed as soon as King Henry arrived in York. Refusing to budge on the issue of the tax, the king now assigned Sir Richard Tunstall to collect the unpopular tenth; but before returning to London, he appointed Surrey, a former Ricardian favorite, to be his Lieutenant-general from Trent northward, an assignment which suggests at least a partial concession to northern will.

Before commenting on the implications of this appointment, it will be necessary to define the precise nature of Henry Percy's role in the North after the accession of Henry VII. Even from the first, the earl of Northumberland had identified himself as a Tudor stalwart in the North, which fact is attested by the city of York's unusual demeanor toward the earl in the first nervous days of Tudor rule, as well as its quickness to thank him for his labors on the city's behalf in London during the autumn of 1485.¹⁹ The earl's captaincy of the royal forces against Lovell in 1486 and against the pretender in 1487 further reveal a readiness for action which had been conspicuous by its absence in the Yorkist period. Taken together, these events go some way toward showing that Henry Percy was a ready instrument of Tudor will; it is less easy, however, to determine the Tudor commitment toward the earl.

For one thing, the king showed some initial reluctance to retain the earl of Northumberland in the Wardenship, styling his own step-brother George Stanley, Lord Strange, as Warden of the Marches toward

¹⁹YCR, 1:119-22, 139.

Scotland in September 1485.²⁰ Reid alleges that he further appointed Richard Fitzhugh as Lieutenant of the North, restoring Percy to the Wardenship of the East and Middle Marches only upon the death of the former in January, 1486. It is true that Percy resumed his former office at that time, but it is not at all clear that Fitzhugh's office was as powerful as Reid contends. An examination of her sources shows only that Fitzhugh assumed several offices once held by Richard III in his days as the duke of Gloucester, specifically assuming custody of the lordships and castles of Richmond, Barnard, and Middleham.²¹ Though these were, no doubt, important northern properties, once belonging to the omnipotent Nevilles, they hardly justify the assumption that they bestowed upon their possessor a political and military pre-eminence beyond the Trent. My search has turned up nothing which would prove that Fitzhugh held anything approaching a lieutenancy like Gloucester's of 1482. Whatever Fitzhugh's capacity was, however, his death occasioned a clear return to the Ricardian pattern, Percy resuming his former office, as I have shown, and Thomas, Lord Dacre, continuing the Dacre lieutenancy of the West March. Like Richard, King Henry retained

²⁰ CPR, 1485-94, p. 40

²¹ Reid, Council, pp. 71-72. The source of her information, and mine, on Fitzhugh's northern offices was Reverend William Campbell, ed., Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII, 2 vols. (Lessing-Druckerei Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprint, Ltd., 1965), 1:49. For Percy's resumption of the Wardenship, see Rot. Sc., 2, 3 January 1486, p. 470.

the actual Wardenship of the latter for himself.²²

Northumberland continued in his usual capacity as an English ambassador to Scotland, but with a greatly diminished influence. Preeminent in these affairs were Henry Tudor's emerging diplomats, Richard Fox, newly appointed bishop of Exeter, and Sir Richard Edgecombe, comptroller of the royal household.²³ Similarly, the courtier, Sir William Tyler, received the captaincy of Berwick, a traditional Percy office restored to the fourth earl by Richard III. Though the earl did earn reappointment as sheriff of Northumberland "during pleasure" in 1488, he had to content himself otherwise with the acquisition of two undignifying offices, porter of Bamburgh castle and bailiff of Tynedale.²⁴

Except for his efforts on the city's behalf in the early months of Henry VII's reign, Percy seems hardly luckier in his relations with the city of York, which much preferred the patronage of the archbishop. Percy, it appears, had been working so hard to ingratiate himself with the king that he had forfeited the city's trust. The first occasion of Percy's

²²Rot. Sc., 2, 3 May 1486, p. 472.

²³Hall, Union, p. 436; Leslie, Historie, p. 103. Richard Fox eventually became bishop of Durham and had a continuing role in Anglo-Scottish affairs. See Hall, Union, p. 480. Edgecome served as a Tudor diplomat on an embassy to Scotland in 1486 and, with Christopher Urswick, on an embassy to Brittany in 1488, events Hall records in the Union, pp. 436, 439. For other Scottish assignments in the reign of Henry VII, see CPR, 1485-94, 25 September 1485, pp. 39-40; Rymer, ed., Foedera, 11:291; Rot. Sc., 2, 30 January 1486, p. 471; Cal. Doc. Scot., 23 October 1488, no. 1545, p. 315. The "George Percy" of this last document is surely a mistake for Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland.

²⁴For Percy's offices, see CPR, 1485-94, 3 May 1486, p. 92; 7 January 1486, p. 120; and 12 February 1488, p. 201. Tyler did not actually receive Berwick until after Percy's death; see 16 November 1489, p. 295. The contention that Percy lost Berwick under Henry VII is James' "Continuity and Change," p. 5.

interference in civic affairs was the king's attempt to thrust Richard Green onto the civic council. Green was a Percy retainer, and his candidacy for York's office of recorder inspired nearly as much pressure from the earl as from the king himself.²⁵ The second occasion of Percy interloping came in 1487 when the earl became embroiled in a dispute over the possession of the Hospital of Well in York. On this occasion, one of Percy's servants, whom the earl had sent to execute the king's pleasure, was actually attacked on the city's streets by a citizen called Roger Brokholles whose consequent imprisonment, at the earl's command, the citizens vehemently protested. All of this happened in the queasy days before the invasion of the pretender, and it appears the city released Brokholles in order to pacify civic ire, evidently preferring internal stability to the injured feelings of the king's officious lackey.²⁶

Actually, York's history of disaffection for Henry Percy and its consequent impact on the king's relations with the city may well have been a factor in Henry VII's eventual selection of Thomas Howard, earl of Surrey, as his new Lieutenant of the North in 1489. Surrey, it will be remembered, was the son of John Howard, duke of Norfolk, a virtual creature of Richard III who died fighting on the Yorkist side at Bosworth Field. Surrey was not only a favorite of King Richard's, but a kinsman as well by right of his marriage to the latter's niece Anne, daughter of Edward IV, associations which must have made Surrey a welcome replacement for the earl of Northumberland whom as late as 1491 some Yorkmen were still calling a traitor.²⁷

²⁵YCR, 1:131-32, 145, 147.

²⁶Ibid., 2:8-10.

²⁷Hall, Union, p. 345; Municipal Records, pp. 220-24.

Though Prince Arthur was the technical heir to Percy's Wardenship of the East and Middle Marches, it was Surrey who actually exercised the office as under-Warden until 1500 when the king's second son, Henry, duke of York, the future King Henry VIII, became Warden-general of the Marches with a new council to operate in his name. During his term as under-Warden, Surrey maintained a council at Sheriff Hutton in Yorkshire similar to that established by Richard III, though it possessed neither the wide jurisdiction nor the broad judicial powers of its predecessor. Percy's heir, meanwhile, had become a satellite of the court, and though he had a brief fling as Warden under Henry VIII, he eventually asked to be removed from the office. Surrey, one might note, had also assumed another former Percy office, justice of the forests beyond Trent.²⁸

In sum, one can conclude that Henry VII's policy in the North owed much to Yorkist precedent. Like Edward IV and Richard III, the first Tudor monarch elected to prefer members of his own family to northern office, placing, by turns, his step-brother and his sons Arthur and Henry in the Wardenship of the East and Middle Marches; and, as I have shown, he followed Richard's precedent by retaining the Wardenship of the West March for himself. Furthermore, though his relative lack of enthusiasm severely curtailed its effectiveness, he did continue the Council of the North, which body he entrusted to the earl of Surrey, whose own reputation as an ardent Yorkist was surely meant to appropriate northern affection for the House of Tudor. If Henry Percy had hoped his inaction at

²⁸For Surrey, see Stapleton, ed., Plumpton Corr., p. 265; and CPR, 1485-94, 20 May 1490, p. 314. The duke of York's grant, dated 3 March 1500, appears in the latter, p. 200. For Percy's heir, consult Hall's Union, pp. 651-52. Robin Storey discusses Henry VII's Council of the North in The Reign of Henry VII (London: Blanford Press, 1968), pp. 148-49.

Bosworth Field might recover the brilliant authority of his ancestors, he was surely mistaken; and his ignominious death at Thirsk was, perhaps, a fitting end for the earl few men could trust.

CONCLUSION

The central argument of this thesis has been that the Yorkist kings were the first to subordinate the northern aristocracy to royal authority. I have shown that this policy was forged at the end of the first decade of Yorkist rule in the billowing flame of Neville discontent; and I have traced the vicissitudes of the plan through three decades of northern history. By way of conclusion, I would like here to highlight three of the themes which best illustrate the substantial success of the Yorkist policy in the North.

First, I think it is clear that, after 1471, the Yorkists managed to defuse the effectiveness of Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland, the sole surviving scion of a powerful northern house. It will be remembered that Percy's initial restoration in 1469 was intended to provide the traditional check to Neville authority which Edward's inexperience had earlier caused him to overlook. However, the introduction of Richard, duke of Gloucester, into the North at the outset of Edward's second monarchy signifies a fundamental change in Yorkist thinking: henceforward, the king would entrust regional authority to a member of the royal family, clearly at the expense of the local magnates. Percy's initial response was to extract a promise from the upstart duke never to usurp his authority, but, by 1474, the earl had succumbed to the inevitable, indenting to become the duke's faithful servant.

Among other things, the establishment of Gloucester's household council at Middleham, which is thought to have become an important Court of Requests for Yorkshire, and his supreme command of the English forces against Scotland in 1481-82 both demonstrate the preeminence which this prince of the blood was able to carve out for himself in the North. The establishment of a northwestern palatinate for Richard in 1482 further demonstrates the direction Edward's northern policy was taking just before his untimely death the following spring. Without question, however, the most severe example of Percy's diminished influence was the establishment in 1484 of the Council of the North. The regulations of this Council support my contention that among Richard's chief goals in the creation of this body was the subordination of the northern aristocracy to the leadership of his nephew and heir.

The second point I might make in order to prove the success of the Yorkist policy in the North is that between 1461 and 1485 the affections of the city of York underwent a complete transformation. In 1461, when Edward IV took the throne, York was a Lancastrian stronghold. In fact, Edward's first action upon his arrival in York after the battle at Towton was to remove the head of his father from atop Micklegate Bar. Though Edward's reliance on the Nevilles in his first monarchy had done little to win the hearts of the citizens, their growing approval of Gloucester in the second monarchy did eventually secure their loyalty. I have gone to some length above to prove that the city's respect for Edward IV and Richard III was genuine; I have shown, for example, that whereas the citizens tolerated royal intervention in the Yorkist period, they resisted it after the accession of Henry VII. Even when the royal proclamation of October 1485 had made clear the dangers of Yorkist partisanship,

the city could call Richard "the most famous prince of blessed memory."¹ The protection it offered Stillington and the Metcalfs further confirms its enduring sympathy for the Yorkist cause. Urban pragmatism eventually led the city to accept Tudor rule, but even when it fought for Henry against the pretender in 1487, the city maintained a zealous defense of its liberties, requiring all royal captains to send formal request for entry upon every arrival at the city gates. Under the circumstances, one can only interpret such excessive protocol as the outward symbol of an inward mistrust which would have been unthinkable in Ricardian times.

Still, the surest testimony to Yorkist success in the North is Henry VII's reliance upon Yorkist precedent. For one thing, King Henry continued to hold the earl of Northumberland at arm's length, balancing his authority in the Marches with the lieutenancy of Thomas, Lord Dacre, while retaining the Wardenship of the West March himself. After the earl's murder in 1489, Henry's reliance on Yorkist precedent becomes even more apparent. At that time, for example, he introduced the outlander earl of Surrey into the North and, by turns, assigned his sons Arthur and Henry to the Wardenship of the East and Middle Marches. These personnel considerations bear a marked resemblance to those of the Yorkist kings who consistently relied on members of the royal family for the administration of their government in the North.

Of course the ultimate expression of Tudor dependence on Yorkist precedent was the continuation of the Council of the North, stunted in the reign of Henry VII but reaching its fruition in the reign of Henry VIII. More than anything else, the survival of this Council proves the appropriateness and foresight of Yorkist administrative reforms.

¹YCR, 1:126.

The capstone of Richard's northern career, it owed much to the personality of its creator, and, in this sense, its origins were truly medieval. Yet its establishment provides a clear break with the past since it diminished the Crown's reliance on the local aristocracy and opened the way for the Tudor administrative reforms which would move England into a new epoch of centralized government. In this sense, one can call the Council of the North the highest accomplishment of Yorkist rule.

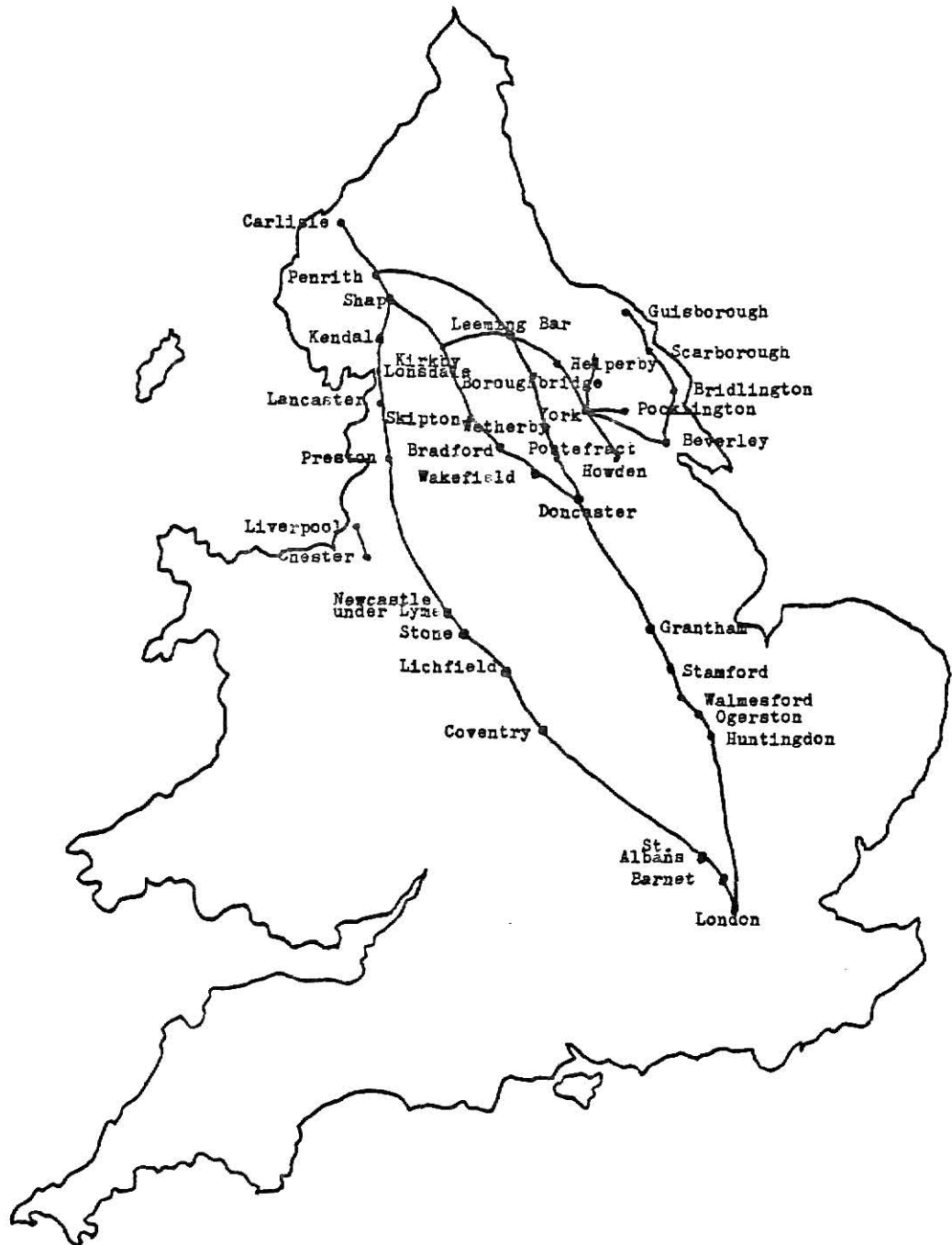
APPENDIX 1

MAPS

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS PAGES
WITH DIAGRAMS
THAT ARE CROOKED
COMPARED TO THE
REST OF THE
INFORMATION ON
THE PAGE.**

**THIS IS AS
RECEIVED FROM
CUSTOMER.**

NORTHERN ROADS ACCORDING TO THE GOUGH MAP



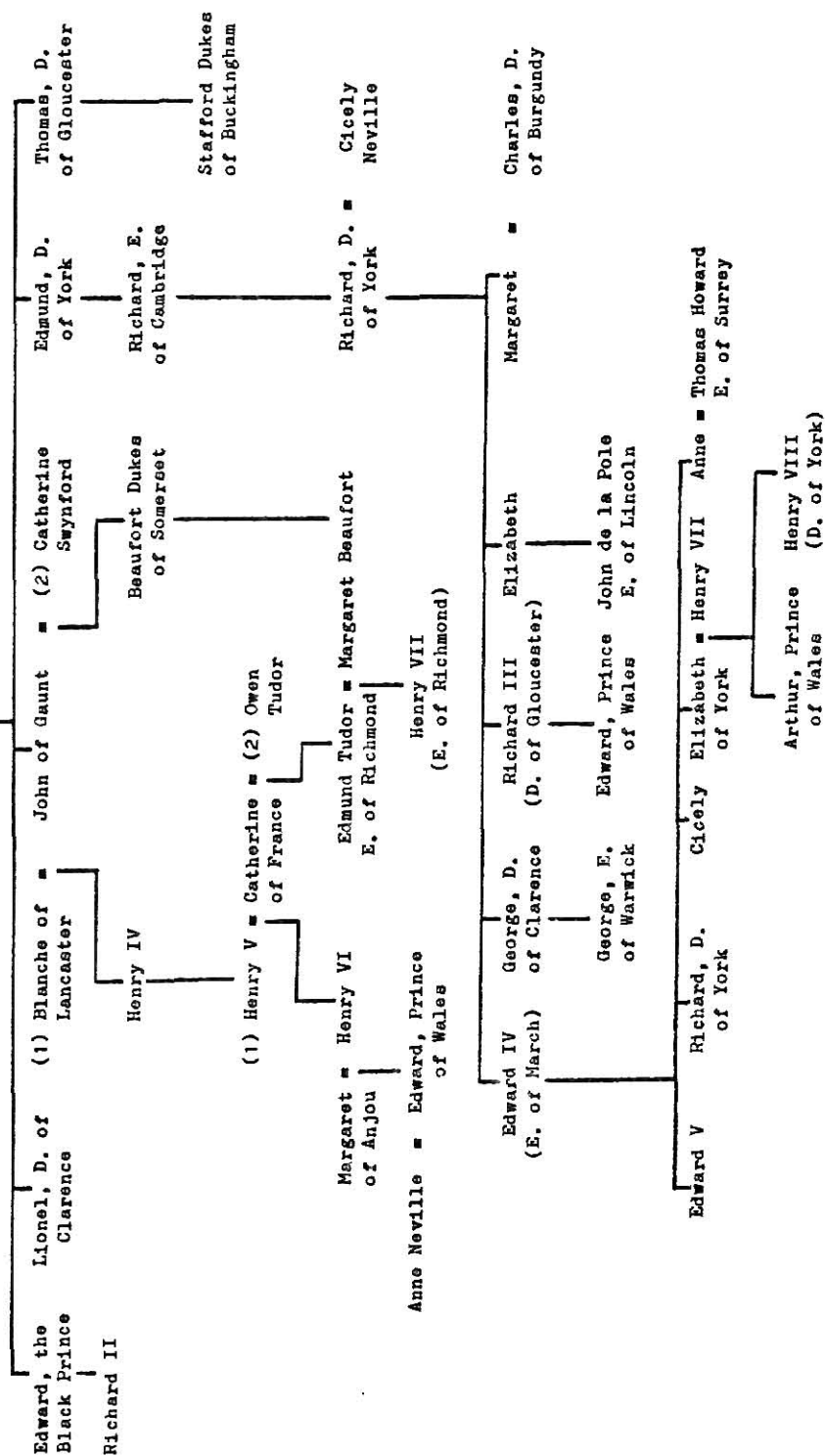
NORTHERN WATERWAYS





APPENDIX 2
GENEOLOGIES

Edward III



Edward III

(1) Blanche of Lancaster = John of Gaunt = (2) Catherine Swynford

(2) Joan Beaufort = Ralph Neville, 1st E. of Westmorland = (1) Margaret

Lancastrian Line

(2) Thomas = Margaret = (1) Edmund Tudor

Lord Stanley Beaufort

George Lord Strange

Tudor Line

Ralph Neville, 3rd E. of Westmorland

Ralph Neville, 1st E. of Westmorland

Ralph Neville, 2nd E. of Westmorland

John

Ralph Neville, 3rd E. of Westmorland

Ralph Lord Neville

Henry Percy = Eleanor Cicely = Richard, D. of York

2nd E. of Northumberland

Sir Ralph Percy

Henry Percy 3rd E. of Northumberland

Yorkist Line

Henry Percy 4th E. of Northumberland

Maud Margaret = Sir Wm. Gascoigne

Herbert

Richard Neville E. of Warwick & Salisbury

John, Lord Montagu

George Archbishop of York

Cicely = John Tiptoft E. of Worcester

George, D. of Bedford

Isabel = George, D. of Clarence (1) Edward, Prince of Wales (2) Richard III (D. of Gloucester)

APPENDIX 3

HENRY PERCY, 1461-1469

It is generally held that Henry Percy was in prison from 1461 to 1469, but the Tudor historian Edward Hall, writing nearly a century after the incident, states with some confidence that young Percy was in Scotland when Montagu received the earldom of Northumberland.¹ This is certainly possible since the vanquished Lancastrians had fled in that direction after their defeat at Towton three years earlier. However, he was unquestionably in England in 1465, easing his imprisonment in the Fleet with an occasional chat with Margaret Paston who came there to visit her husband John.²

Assuming that Percy was in Scotland in May 1464 and knowing that he was in prison in England by September 1465, one is left to conjecture the events leading to his arrest. One possibility is that he had become the companion of Alexander, duke of Albany, the troublesome brother of the Scottish king. Albany had left Scotland for France early in the summer of 1464, but his carvel was captured in English waters. Edward commissioned the earl of Worcester to examine the matter since Albany and his company had engaged in some altercation with the captain of the barge which had intercepted him.³ This captain was Robert Spofford, a

¹DNB, s.v. "Percy, Henry, fourth Earl of Northumberland"; Hall, Union, p. 261.

²Gairdner, ed., PL, 2:237.

³CPR, 1461-67, 8 July 1464, pp. 348-49.

name of some particular interest here since "Spofforth" was also the name of a Percy manor in Yorkshire. If this Robert was indeed a Yorkshireman, it is possible that he may have recognized young Percy among the members of Albany's band and that Worcester's assignment was to remove this important northern card from the Lancastrian sleeve. Though all of this is guesswork, it is reinforced by an event much later in Edward's reign. In 1482, when King Edward was organizing a campaign into Scotland, he entered into an alliance with the duke of Albany, now an unabashed traitor, dispatching none other than Henry Percy to help draw up the arrangements.⁴ It is just possible, though not verifiable, that the king hoped to oil his Scottish alliance with the good feelings of two old friends who had enjoyed a youthful escapade in the Channel.

⁴Cal. Doc. Scot., 11 February 1482-83, no. 1489, pp. 305-306.

APPENDIX 4

SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF

Sir Richard Ratcliff made his political debut in 1471. In May of that year he was knighted on the field at Tewkesbury where he may well have served under the command of the duke of Gloucester.¹ His origins are obscure, but he appears to have been a Yorkshireman and may have served on Richard's ducal council during the second reign of Edward IV.² Like Sir Francis Lovell, whose influence also rose in Richard's monarchy, he may even have been a boyhood friend of the king's, who had been raised in Yorkshire in the earl of Warwick's household. That Ratcliff was a trusted friend of Richard's is evidenced by his importance in the events of June 1483. It was Sir Richard, for example, who had personally carried the king's appeals for assistance to the Lord Neville, the citizens of York, and, probably, the earl of Northumberland, and who had conducted the York contingent to Pontefract for its rendezvous with the latter. It may also have been Ratcliff who led Rivers, Vaughan, and Grey into their respective Yorkshire prisons, and it was certainly he who carried out their executions on 25 June.³

In August 1484, King Richard rewarded Ratcliff by making him

¹Gairdner, ed., PL, 3:9.

²Kendall, Richard the Third, p. 129.

³See above, pp. 84-85.

sheriff of Westmorland for life, a fairly important office in view of the fact that Richard was tightening his control on local government by strengthening the hand of his sheriffs.⁴ Ratcliff must already have been a man of some importance in Richard's government before receiving the Westmorland office, however, for the unfortunate William Colyngbourne had earlier alluded to Ratcliff in his famous couplet:

The Cat, the Rat, and Lovell our dog
Rule all England under an Hog.⁵

Four weeks after receiving the shrivealty, Sir Richard also received estates in six counties, including Cumberland, for his service against Buckingham, and the following March, he was commissioned with Lord Dacre and others to arrest and imprison "certain evildoers" who had been terrorizing one of the king's subjects in that county. His importance in the northwest is further demonstrated by his appointment to the group of commissioners who met with the Scots for redress of grievances in the West March in November 1484.⁶

Ratcliff's activities were not limited to the northwest, however, for on two separate occasions he served on commissions of array in Cumberland and Yorkshire alike. His first Yorkshire commission had

⁴See above, p. 89; Kendall, Richard the Third, p. 312.

⁵Though it is known that Colyngbourne's rhyme was posted to the door of St. Paul's on 18 July, the year of the event is unknown. Gairdner contends it was done in 1483; Kendall, in 1484. See, respectively, James Gairdner, History of the Life and Reign of Richard III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898), pp. 187-88; and Kendall, Richard the Third, pp. 485-86, n. 20. The "Cat," by the way, was William Catesby, Richard's Chancellor of the Exchequer; and "Lovell our dog" was the Sir Francis, later Viscount Lovell, named above.

⁶CPR, 1476-85, 6 September 1484, p. 472; 11 March 1485, pp. 545-46; Hall, Union, p. 401.

come in December 1483 in the wake of Buckingham's rebellion when he had assisted Ralph Greystoke in the inquiries preceding the issuance of bills of attainder. In the spring of 1485, a Sir Richard "Redcliff" was among those to whom James III issued safe conducts for the purpose of treating for peace.⁷ No doubt, this Redcliff was, in fact, Sir Richard Ratcliff, the king's stalwart in the North. Except for being sheriff of Westmorland, he held no offices in the North; but his name crops up enough to suggest that Richard may well have appointed him to serve on his important Council of the North in 1484. Ratcliff died fighting for Richard III at Bosworth Field in August 1485.⁸

⁷CPR, 1476-85, 8 December 1484, p. 492; 1 May 1484, pp. 397-401; 10 December 1483, p. 393; Cal. Doc. Scot., 18 April 1485, no. 1513, p. 310.

⁸Hall, Union, p. 419.

Department of History
205 Schaeffer Hall

APPENDIX 5

(319) 353-4419



1847

Thursday, March 24th, 1977

Ms. Eileen Roesler
Rt. 1
Buhler, Kansas 67522

Dear Ms. Roesler:

I have read your letter of March 15th with great pleasure. It is always good to hear of a project as interesting and enterprising as yours. As for the matters that you inquired about, I'll be of what help I can, but won't be able to answer all your questions.

Gloucester's position as a duke and prince of the blood would certainly have given him precedence over any lesser dignitary such as an earl, and I suppose that on that account his court would have been regarded as having precedence over any baronial court. But the precedence would amount, in the eyes of the law at any rate, to nothing more than courteous forms; it would not entail any right to override the jurisdiction of any other court, or even to receive appeals for review of judgments of any other court. A baronial court strictly so called would handle suits by writ of right patent for free lands and tenements held of the lord, would enforce the fulfillment of feudal obligations to the lord on the part of his free tenements, and would administer the lord's feudal authority over his free tenants, claiming his escheats, deciding on the admission of pretending heirs, acting against alienation into mortmain, etc. In respect of its jurisdiction over suits by writ of right patent, appeals would lie to the King's Bench; in respect of the rest of its jurisdiction, the court would execute its decisions at its peril and could be attacked by ordinary common-law process if it offended against the law: replevin could be brought, probably in the Common Pleas, if the baronial court tried to exact more than was due by way of feudal obligations, mort d'ancestor could be brought before the justices of assize if it refused to admit a true heir to his heritage, and so forth. If Gloucester's council impinged at all on these activities it would have had to impinge in the way that Chancery or Star Chamber impinged on the processes of the common law back in Westminster, by issuing injunctions and laying penalties in consequence against those who availed themselves of the processes of the courts baron, always attacking the person of the litigant, never making any direct challenge to the authority or law or process of the court itself.

In a looser sense, a baronial court could be a franchise court, with more or less authority depending on its particular franchises. The bishop

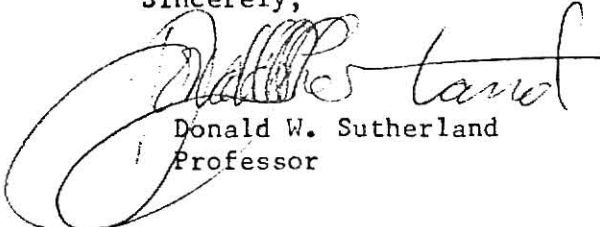
of Durham's franchise, his "palatinate," was of course the supreme franchise of England. Appeal would be to the King's Bench, or parliament, and any interference by Gloucester's council would presumably have had to be in the same indirect way mentioned above. And finally, still in a loose sense, a baronial court court be a manor court with jurisdiction over unfree tenures. From this there should have been no appeal at all. But the Chancery was apparently interfering in its indirect way in the doings of such courts, beginning thus to give the king's protection to "copyhold," and I suppose it's possible that Gloucester's council might have done the same.

There is nothing inherent in the character of the future Council of the North as a royal council under the presidency of the earl of Lincoln, and nothing inherent in the character of counties or of county boundaries, that would have prevented the council from handling cases from various counties, or from counties other than that in which it had its headquarters. All would have depended upon the statutes, orders, and practices governing this particular council. The only very notable legal significance of county boundaries in the law of this period was that when juries were used they had to be drawn from the county in which the cause of the action arose. But I'm sure that this council didn't use juries, any more than Chancery or Star Chamber did, so really the county boundaries needn't have been legal barriers of any significance at all for the council.

About the Wardens of the Marches, I'm afraid I'm blankly ignorant. And I don't know the sources of history for this time and this part of the country and this sort of problem with enough precision that my suggestions for what to look at would be likely to be of any use. There is no terribly good secondary work on English jurisdictional custom in the Middle Ages. The first volume of Holdsworth's History of English Law is the only place I'd know to send you for anything like a comprehensive treatment. The introductions to the several volumes of G. O. Sayles' Select Pleas in the Court of King's Bench, published by the Selden Society, contain a lot of rather miscellaneous information.

Please give my greetings to Robert Linder, and accept for yourself my very best wishes for good speed in your project.

Sincerely,



Donald W. Sutherland
Professor

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NEVILLE, PERCY, AND YORK, 1461-1485
A STUDY IN THE SUBORDINATION
OF THE NORTH

by

EILEEN ROESLER

B. S., Kansas State University, 1968

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1977

Yorkist experiments in regional government provided an important stage in the attempts of the English monarchy to subordinate the restless North. That is to say, Edward IV and Richard III, after him, broke with tradition by relying upon members of the royal house for the exercise of their will beyond the Trent. Born in the rebellion of the Neville family (1469-70), this policy was intended to scotch the unbridled autonomy of the northern magnates which Edward had permitted to flourish in his first reign. Specifically, throughout the 1460s, Edward had rewarded his Neville cousins--Richard, earl of Warwick and Salisbury; John, Lord Montagu; and George, bishop of Exeter, later archbishop of York--with an unprecedented and unchecked autonomy in matters military, economic, and religious. Edward's youth and inexperience may be blamed for his failure to maintain the traditional royal practice of balancing Neville with Percy in the North, a practice he belatedly acknowledged in 1470 with the restoration of Henry Percy to the earldom of Northumberland; but his return to power in 1470 occasioned a new Yorkist policy in the North: the subordination of the northern aristocracy to the Crown.

The implementation of this policy depended heavily upon Edward's brother, Richard, duke of Gloucester, who was able to compromise the authority of Henry Percy, fourth earl of Northumberland, even in the areas traditionally thought to be Percy strongholds. The city of York

was particularly amenable to Gloucester's rule and would remain a Ricardian stronghold throughout Yorkist times and beyond. Another factor in the winning of the North for the House of York was the duke's household council at Middleham, which became an important Court of Requests for Yorkshire.

Later, when Gloucester took the throne as King Richard III in 1483, he continued and expanded Edward's policy of subordination by creating his Council of the North, a body whose presidency devolved upon Richard's nephew and heir, John de la Pole, earl of Lincoln. The regulations of the Council, which have survived, suggest that the chief aims of the king's Council in the North were to break the monopoly of northern judicial powers and to curb the abuses of livery, maintenance, and embracery. Though the earl of Northumberland served on the Council, he was clearly subordinate to the outlander earl of Lincoln, even as a Warden of the March, hitherto the single most powerful officer in the North. Though earlier scholarship has tended to regard the earl of Northumberland as an important prop to the Ricardian throne, close attention to existing documents and to the precise chronology of events in his reign indicates that, in fact, one of Richard's chief aims was to contravene the authority of the northern aristocracy, Northumberland chief among them. Thus, Northumberland's inaction at Bosworth Field, which cost King Richard his life, may be blamed almost entirely upon his jealousy at the loss of Percy hegemony in the North.

The success of Yorkist policy in the North is proved in several ways. First, the civic council at York evinced a dogged loyalty to King Richard even after the Tudor proclamation made such loyalty

dangerous. Second, the earl of Northumberland was murdered at northern hands in 1489, partly out of vengeance for his treachery at Bosworth Field. And, last, the Tudors continued to follow the Ricardian plan for the government of the North, the king retaining the Wardenship of the West March and members of the royal family holding positions of preeminence beyond the Trent. More than anything else, however, it is the survival of the Council of the North which proves the appropriateness and foresight of Yorkist policy beyond the Trent.