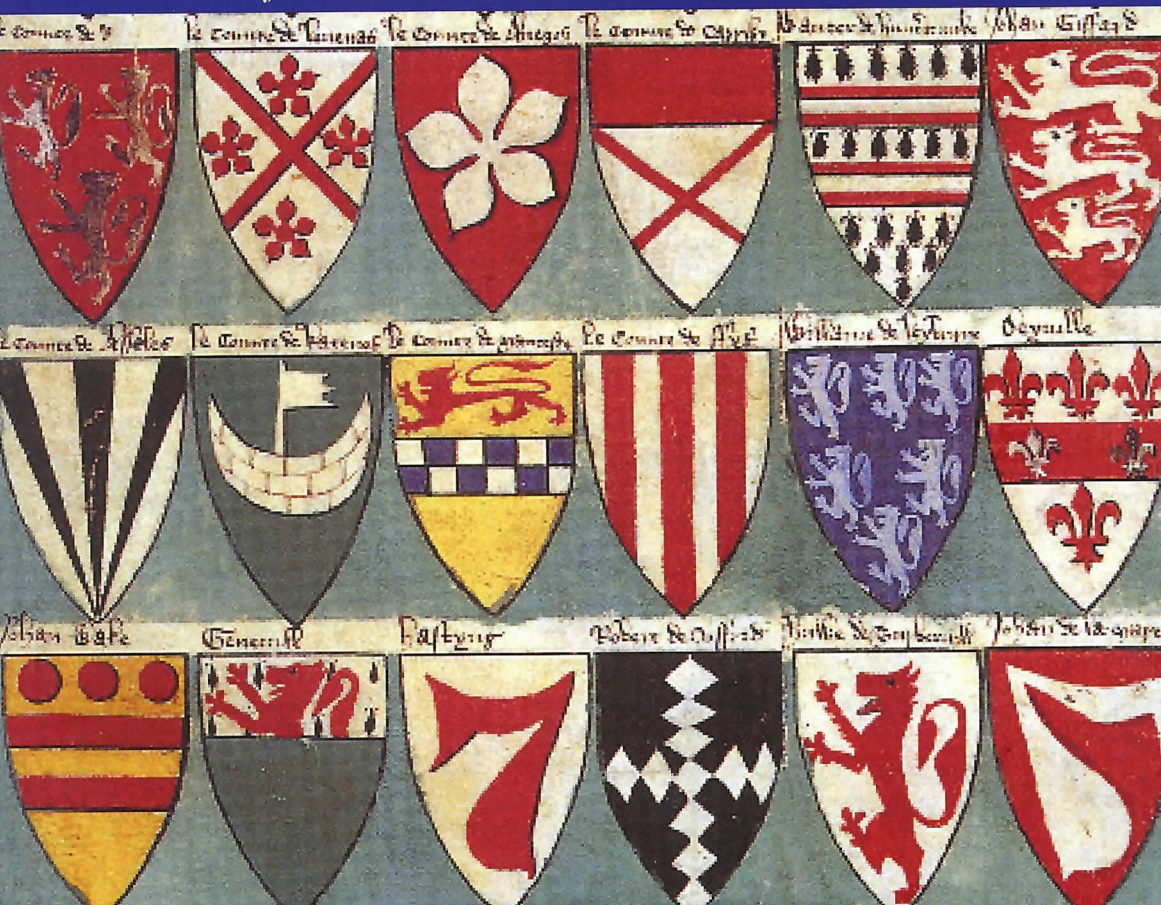# *The English Aristocracy at War*
FROM THE WELSH WARS OF EDWARD I
TO THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN

David Simpkin

Warfare in History

THE ENGLISH ARISTOCRACY AT WAR

FROM THE WELSH WARS OF EDWARD I
TO THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN

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THE ENGLISH ARISTOCRACY AT WAR

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General Editor's Preface

This volume is the most recent product of a school of research into the administrative documents of English government in the 13th and 14th centuries in search of an understanding of the composition of its armies, their recruitment, organisation leadership and activities on campaign. This is no little undertaking and might have seemed unrealisable were it not for the work of Dr Andrew Ayton of the University of Hull, who is in a way the mentor for this book, and in a more general sense the initiatives of Professor Michael Prestwich (Durham) and Professor Anne Curry (formerly Reading, now Southampton). David Simpkin is one of a generation of talented young scholars who have turned their attention the theme as a result. He is also a member of the AHRC project 'The Soldier in Late Medieval England', directed by Professor Curry.

Dr Simpkin's research has produced fascinating information on almost fifteen hundred men of knightly rank and above and some five thousand warriors of sub-knightly rank (sergeants and *valletti*) who made up the military community of Edwardian England in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. What is remarkable is that contrary to earlier views about the unwillingness of knights and others to serve in war, about eight out of ten of them and some three-quarters of the sergeants liable for service did indeed do so. This despite the evidence that the Welsh and Scottish campaigns of Edward I, and his less successful son, were far from profitable and that many soldiers of all ranks ended up seriously out of pocket as a result.

There is also plenty of evidence of long-service careers, although this can be patchy in nature. It is possible through the available materials to identify the development of a 'professional' force, hardened by regular campaigning and working together. Inevitably there is also information suggesting that warfare could be an occasional activity and that it proved difficult to keep contingents together across time. In respect of this latter point, though, it should be noted that even regiments in armies today see a change of personnel and cross-posting that make them a great deal less 'regular' in their organisation and manning than might be supposed by the bureaucratic trappings of a modern state army.

Indeed, Simpkin's work enables the reader to gain a much deeper understanding of how the Edwardian forces were recruited, organised and deployed, focussing on the Battle of Falkirk (1298) as the central point of the investigation. This requires him to deal with ideas of feudal and other forms of service in period before the indentured armies of mid-14th century. This is tricky ground but he is sure-footed amongst obstacles to understanding just how forces were put together. His view of a fusion of procedures is neatly encapsulated in this passage:

> Feudal military service, then, was perfectly compatible with the process of sub-recruitment, which was fundamental to the formation of many of the

largest campaign retinues, particularly those led by men of comital status. In fact, once the veneer of compartmentalisation presented by Crown records is removed, revealing the intricate reality of retinue recruitment and organisation at ground level, the differences between 'paid', voluntary unpaid' and 'feudal men-at-arms, and therefore between paid, gratuitous and feudal service begin to melt away.   (p.176)

Finally, Simpkin's prosoprographical analysis enables him to consider the role of leadership in the military community. Too often it is glibly assumed that 'medieval' armies were led by men appointed by reason of their noble rank and no other, and that competence in command was therefore a result of random chance rather than meritocratic allocation. While it is true that there were still some cases of aristocratic amateurism, these were largely outweighed by intelligent appointments with useful outcomes. Unfortunately, the evidence does not allow us to see exactly how command was exercised in the field. However, this book gives many valuable insights, serving to educate both medievalists and historians of later periods about the professionalism which can be found in chivalric warfare.

Matthew Bennett
Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

FOR MUM, DAD AND KAREN

Preface and Acknowledgements

The idea for this book arose six years ago during conversations with Dr Andrew Ayton of the University of Hull, where I had the good fortune to be based throughout the course of my work. Possessing little idea of the immense research task involved, but keen to find out more, I decided to undertake the job of transcribing and computerising the voluminous extant records for military service from the reigns of Edward I and Edward II. The underlying objective was to push back to the late thirteenth century the boundaries of knowledge on the medieval English soldier, and the armies in which he served, thereby adding to Dr Ayton's work (and that of others) on aristocratic warriors and their activities in the period after 1327. That the journey between then and now has for the most part been a smooth one is due in large measure to Dr Ayton's unwavering enthusiasm and belief in the virtues of the project. Moreover, his suggestions on the direction of my research, and his comments on the many drafts of chapters handed to him, have on a practical level been invaluable. This book would be very different had it not been for his input; indeed, it might never have been written at all. Nor would completion of the project have been possible without the financial assistance provided by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, whose generous grant of a three-year scholarship I gladly acknowledge.

During my time at Hull I benefited from the kindness of many people, without whose assistance and support the task of researching and writing this book would have been far more difficult. The vast majority of the published materials utilised in this study were consulted in the Brynmor Jones library on the university campus, and I am grateful to the staff of that facility for responding to my many requests with alacrity and good humour. Mark Sherit, my former study companion and housemate, never failed to show an interest in what might otherwise have been a very solitary undertaking; and our conversations on matters of a non-academic nature sometimes provided a welcome distraction from the often unfathomable complexities of large-scale prosopography. My time at Hull also afforded me a few welcome opportunities to present my research and to receive feedback from some very receptive audiences. Craig Lambert was an ideal co-organiser of a conference on medieval military history, held in Hull on 12 April 2007. I would like once again to thank the contributors who presented their research on that day, many of whom travelled very long distances to share their findings. Indeed, some of the resulting discussions encouraged me to think again about various aspects of my own project on the early Edwardian soldier.

Besides Andrew Ayton, a number of people have contributed to the realisation of this monograph in very direct and practical ways. Dr Richard Gorski of the University of Hull kindly allowed me to consult his database on administrative personnel, on which many of the findings in the final part of chapter 3 are based. It has been my good fortune to work in an environment, at Hull, where data on the activities of the fourteenth-century aristocracy have been computerised for

some time. Collaborative work undoubtedly holds the key to answering many of the big questions concerning the activities of the later medieval gentry. Since leaving Hull I have had the good fortune to find employment on an equally stimulating project, using similar research methods: 'The Soldier in Later Medieval England, 1369–1453'. I am much obliged to the project managers, Professor Anne Curry of the University of Southampton and Dr Adrian Bell of the University of Reading, for allowing me the time to prepare my manuscript for publication. I must also thank Dr Andrew Ayton, Dr Adrian Bell and Dr Andy King for their comments on the final drafts of some of the chapters, particularly the last-named who read through and commented on three chapters within a very short space of time as the deadline for delivery loomed. Adrian Ailes' advice on heraldic sources, made in relation to a different piece of work, has saved me from some errors of omission. Finally, Professor Michael Prestwich of the University of Durham and Dr Julian Haseldine of the University of Hull have offered some valuable suggestions and have commented at length on the text.

Throughout the duration of this project my partner Charlotte has been a source of great strength and support. I thank her for showing patience towards me during the more difficult times over the last few years.

This book is dedicated, with gratitude, to my parents and sister, who have encouraged me in all of my undertakings.

Abbreviations

Ann. Dunstaple	'Annales Prioratus de Dunstaplia (AD 1–1297), *Annales Monastici*, ed. H.R. Luard, 5 vols, Rolls Ser., xxxvi (London, 1864–9), iii
Ann. Lond.	'Annales Londonienses', *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols, Rolls Ser., lxxvi (London, 1882–3), i
Ann. Waverley	'Annales Monasterii de Waverleia (AD 1–1291)', *Annales Monastici*, ed. H.R. Luard, 5 vols, Rolls Ser., xxxvi (London, 1864–9), ii
Ann. Wigorn.	'Annales Prioratus de Wigornia (AD 1–1377), *Annales Monastici*, ed. H.R. Luard, 5 vols, Rolls Ser., xxxvi (London, 1864–9), iv
Ann. Winton.	'Annales Monasterii de Wintonia, 519–1277', *Annales Monastici*, ed. H.R. Luard, 5 vols, Rolls Ser., xxxvi (London, 1864–9), ii
BIHR	*Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*
BL	British Library
Bury St Edmunds	*The Chronicle of Bury St Edmunds, 1212–1301*, ed. A. Gransden (London, 1964)
Cal. Ch. Rolls	*Calendar of the Charter Rolls*, 6 vols (London, 1903–27)
CCR	*Calendar of Close Rolls*
CCW	*Calendar of Chancery Warrants, 1244–1326* (London, 1927)
CDS	*Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, ed. J. Bain, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1881–8); v, ed. G.G. Simpson and J.D. Galbraith (Edinburgh, 1986)
CFR	*Calendar of Fine Rolls*
Chronica et Annales	*Willelmi Rishanger, quondam Monachi S. Albani, et quorundam Anonymorum, Chronica et Annales, Regnantibus Henrico Tertio et Edwardo Primo*, ed. H.T. Riley, Rolls Ser., xxviii 2 (London, 1865)
Chronica Majora	*Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard, 7 vols, Rolls Ser., lvii (London, 1872–83)
CIPM	*Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem and other Analogous Documents*, 23 vols (London, 1904–2004)
Complete Peerage	*The Complete Peerage*, by G.E. Cockayne, revised and edited by V. Gibbs, H.A. Doubleday, Lord Howard de Walden and G.H. White, 13 vols (London, 1910–59)
Cotton	*Bartholomaei de Cotton, Historia Anglicana (AD 449–1298)*, ed. H.R. Luard, Rolls Ser., xvi (London, 1859)
CPR	*Calendar of Patent Rolls*

CVCR	*Calendar of Various Chancery Rolls. Supplementary Close Rolls. Welsh Rolls. Scutage Rolls (AD 1277–1326)* (London, 1912)
EHR	*English Historical Review*
Feudal Aids	*Inquisitions and Assessments Relating to Feudal Aids, 1284–1431*, 6 vols (London, 1899–1920)
Flores Historiarum	*Flores Historiarum*, ed. H.R. Luard, 3 vols, Rolls Ser., xcv (London, 1890)
Foedera	*Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae etc.*, ed. T. Rymer, revised edition by A. Clarke, F. Holbrooke and J. Caley, 4 vols in 7 parts (Record Commission, 1816–69)
Guisborough	*The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, Camden Society 3rd ser., lxxxix (1957)
Historical Research	*Historical Research. The Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*
'Lanercost'	*Chronicon de Lanercost MCCI–MCCCXLVI*, ed. J. Stevenson (Edinburgh, 1839)
Langtoft	*Pierre de Langtoft, le règne d'Édouard Ier*, ed. J.C. Thiolier (Créteil, 1989)
Liber Quotidianus	*Liber Quotidianus Contrarotulatoris Garderobae, 1299–1300*, ed. J. Topham *et al.* (London, 1787)
List of MPs	*Return of the Name of Every Member of the Lower House of the Parliaments of England, Scotland and Ireland, 1213–1874* (London, 1878)
Melsa	*Chronica Monasterii de Melsa, a Fundatione usque ad Annum 1396, Auctore Thoma de Burton, Abbate. Accedit Continuatio ad Annum 1406 a Monacho quodam ipsius Domus*, ed. E.A. Bond, 3 vols, Rolls Ser., xliii (London, 1866–8)
Parl. Roll.	*The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England, 1275–1504*, ed. C. Given-Wilson *et al.* 16 vols (London, 2005)
Parl. Writs	*Parliamentary Writs and Writs of Military Summons*, ed. F. Palgrave, 2 vols in 4 parts (London, 1827–34)
Rôles Gascons	*Rôles Gascons 1242–1307*, ed. F. Michel, C. Bemont and Y. Renouard, 5 vols (Paris, 1885–1962)
Rotuli Scotiae	*Rotuli Scotiae in Turri Londinensi et in Domo Capitulari Westmonasteriensi asservati*, ed. D. MacPherson, J. Caley, W. Illingworth and T.H. Horne, 2 vols (Record Commission, 1814–19)
Scalacronica	Sir Thomas Gray: *Scalacronica, 1272–1363*, ed. A. King, Surtees Society, ccix (2005)
Scotland in 1298	*Scotland in 1298: Documents Relating to the Campaign of Edward I in that Year*, ed. H. Gough (London, 1888)
SHR	*Scottish Historical Review*
Stevenson	*Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland from the Death of King Alexander the Third to the Accession of Robert Bruce MCCLXXXVI–MCCCVI*, ed. J. Stevenson, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1870)

TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
Trivet	*Nicholai Triveti, de Ordine Frat. Praedicatorum, Annales (AD MCXXXVI–MCCCVII)*, ed. T. Hog, English Historical Society (London, 1845)
Trokelowe	*Johannis de Trokelowe et Henrici de Blaneforde, Monachorum S. Albani, necnon quorundam Anonymorum, Chronica et Annales*, ed. H.T. Riley, Rolls Ser., xxviii 3 (London, 1866)
WHR	*Welsh History Review*
Wykes	'Chronicon vulgo dictum Chronicon Thomae Wykes, 1066–1289', *Annales Monastici*, ed. H.R. Luard, 5 vols, Rolls Ser., xxxvi (London, 1864–9), iv

Documents cited by class number alone are taken from the National Archives, Kew.

Introduction

The military campaigns of Edward I, king of England between 1272 and 1307, were a turning-point in the history of warfare within northwestern Europe during the Middle Ages. Edward's reign did not witness any radical departures in the way that warfare was conducted and battles fought, nor were there major changes (though there *were* some significant innovations) in the methods employed to recruit mounted and foot soldiers. The era of major reform, perhaps even revolution, in the recruitment, structure and composition of English medieval armies came later, during the 1330s and 1340s, at the beginning of Edward III's French war.[1] Rather, it was the scale of Edward I's expeditions – the number of soldiers involved, the vast sums of money spent and the geographical areas affected – that contrasted sharply with the military efforts of previous reigns.[2] The heavy fighting of these decades, particularly between the outbreak of war with France in 1294 and the defeat of the army led by Edward I's son, Edward II, at the battle of Bannockburn in 1314, has left behind an extensive trail of documents recording the names of mounted armoured warriors drawn from the ranks of the English gentry and nobility. These sources far surpass, in number and detail, extant records from previous reigns relating to the performance of military service; and they enable the historian to reconstruct, if not completely than to a far greater extent than for any preceding age, the careers in arms of a large proportion of the aristocratic soldiery. The aim of this book is to incorporate such individual profiles into, and exploit them for the purposes of, a wider analysis of military recruitment, leadership, service patterns and organisation in the early Edwardian period.

The process of linking soldiers' names so as to enhance our knowledge of combatants' activities and the nature of the armies in which they served is not new. Such a methodological approach, described by Andrew Ayton as 'military service prosopography',[3] has already been employed to considerable effect in studies of English armies raised during the intermittent and drawn-out conflict with France between 1337 and 1453. Mounted armoured warriors in the years before Bannockburn, however, have been the subject of relatively little system-

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[1]   See A. Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses: Military Service and the English Aristocracy under Edward III* (Woodbridge, 1994), chapter 1; and C.J. Rogers, ' "As if a New Sun had Arisen": England's Fourteenth-Century RMA', *The Dynamics of Military Revolution 1300–2050*, ed. M. Knox and W. Murray (Cambridge, 2001), p. 23.

[2]   For comment on the increase in the scale of warfare during the 1290s, see R.W. Kaeuper, *War, Justice and Public Order: England and France in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 3, 389.

[3]   A. Ayton, 'The English Army at Crécy', A. Ayton and P. Preston, *The Battle of Crécy, 1346* (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 160. For a discussion of some of the difficulties entailed in prosopographical research, see R. Gorski, 'A Methodological Holy Grail: Nominal Record Linkage in a Medieval Context', *Medieval Prosopography*, xvii (1996), pp. 145–79.

atic study.[4] This is surprising given the extensive work that has been carried out separately by J.E. Morris,[5] Michael Powicke,[6] Michael Prestwich[7] and others on the armies of this period. Certainly, there have been influential theses or published monographs on subjects such as: the household knights of Edward I[8] and military communities[9] within the counties of Gloucestershire,[10] Cheshire[11] and Northumberland.[12] Yet, with the exception of the book by Philip Morgan on Cheshire, works on county and regional communities have tended to deal with landholding society in the round rather than with military activity in particular, soldiering constituting just one aspect of far broader investigations of local society. Moreover, the findings of such studies cannot be applied, without a good deal of caution, to the situation within the realm as a whole. There is reason to doubt, for example, whether the frequency of military service given by landholders in border counties such as Gloucestershire, Cheshire and Northumberland was matched in other parts of England. For this reason, and others besides, a wider investigation of the military activities of the English aristocracy (including a few non-English elements, such as Scots and Gascons in the Plantagenet allegiance)[13] during the reigns of Edward I and his son is long overdue.

The availability of extensive source materials naming soldiers from 1272 onwards provides an obvious and compelling reason for beginning the analysis in that year. Yet the forty-two-year period between the accession of Edward I and the battle of Bannockburn constitutes a natural phase in English medieval military history, irrespective of such considerations. The campaigns of the Plantagenets at this time can be divided, in essence, into two main categories. The conflicts that consumed most of the energies of the first two Edwards and their subjects were the wars of aggression within the British Isles. These led, in the first instance, to the conquest of the independent parts of Wales in 1282–3

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[4]   A prosopographical study of the massed ranks of peasants serving on foot during these years is not possible, except perhaps on a very small scale, as the names of very few such men have survived in the records for military service.

[5]   J.E. Morris, *The Welsh Wars of Edward I* (Oxford, 1901).

[6]   M.R. Powicke, *Military Obligation in Medieval England: A Study in Liberty and Duty* (Oxford, 1962), chapters 6–8.

[7]   M. Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance under Edward I* (London, 1972).

[8]   R.L. Ingamells, 'The Household Knights of Edward I', 2 vols, PhD thesis, University of Durham, 1992.

[9]   For an example of early use of the term 'military community', see P. Morgan, *War and Society in Medieval Cheshire, 1277–1403* (Manchester, 1987), pp. 149–50.

[10]   N. Saul, *Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1981).

[11]   Morgan, *War and Society*.

[12]   A. King, 'War, Politics and Landed Society in Northumberland, *c.* 1296–*c.* 1408, PhD thesis, University of Durham, 2001.

[13]   No attempt is made in this book to focus specifically on service given by Scots, Gascons or other non-English groups in the Plantagenet allegiance. By the same token, however, not all of the mounted armoured warriors discussed, and who served in the armies of Edward I and Edward II, were of English origin. For a recent discussion of Scots who supported the English cause, see M.H. Brown, '*Scoti Anglicati*: Scots in Plantagenet Allegiance during the Fourteenth Century', *England and Scotland in the Fourteenth Century: New Perspectives*, ed. A. King and M. Penman (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 94–115.

and, later, the near-subjugation of Scotland by 1304–5. The English defeat near Stirling in 1314 in effect brought this stage of conflict to an end; and after this reversal the initiative moved to the Scots under Robert Bruce and his brother, Edward. There was some warfare in Ireland throughout the period under investigation, but not any in which Edward I or his son took part in person.[14] Elsewhere, from 1294 through to 1298, the English fought rearguard actions on the continent to defend Edward I's ducal inheritance in Gascony.[15] Most of the time this involved sending forces to man the garrisons in southwestern France; but in 1297–8 the king led an expedition to Flanders in person, a decision that proved, ultimately, to be ineffective.[16] In total, and despite Edward I's best efforts to move continental objectives to the top of the agenda, there was only one royal-led campaign outside the British Isles between 1272 and 1314. This compares with ten such expeditions closer to home: to Wales in 1277, 1282–3 and 1294–5; and to Scotland in 1296, 1298, 1300, 1301, 1303–4, 1310–11 and 1314. By contrast, the main focus of Edward III and his successors (with the possible exceptions of Richard II and Henry IV) was the war in France. After 1337 the so-called Celtic fringe was usually a secondary concern, except in years of rebellion in Wales or border aggression in the north.

If the campaigns of Edward I and Edward II differed in key respects from those of later medieval kings of England, then so too did the structure and composition of their armies. From the 1330s onwards nearly all soldiers, from the leading duke to the lowliest archer, received Crown pay.[17] Men-at-arms fought alongside mounted archers (in roughly equal number) in 'mixed' retinues, raised by military contracts and subcontracts known as indentures of war.[18] This move towards the universal use of Crown pay is reflected in the nature of the extant documentary materials. Pay-rolls, also known as *vadia guerre* accounts, are widely available (although far from exhaustively so) for the reign of Edward III, whereas very few have survived from the reigns of Edward I and Edward II. The largest surviving pay-roll, for mounted soldiers, from the pre-Bannockburn era dates from the Welsh war of 1282–3;[19] but most of the men named in this source, as in other pay-related documents available for expeditions taking place before 1314 (such as horse inventories and wardrobe books), were household retainers and their followers. Few men from outside

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[14] See R. Frame, 'Military Service in the Lordship of Ireland 1290–1360: Institutions and Society on the Anglo-Gaelic Frontier', *Medieval Frontier Societies*, ed. R. Bartlett and A. MacKay (Oxford, 1989), p. 102.

[15] For a discussion of Edward I's forces in Gascony, see M. Vale, *The Angevin Legacy and the Hundred Years War, 1250–1340* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 200–15.

[16] See N.B. Lewis, 'The English Forces in Flanders, August–November 1297', *Studies in Medieval History Presented to F.M. Powicke*, ed. R.W. Hunt, W.A. Pantin and R.W. Southern (Oxford, 1948), pp. 310–18.

[17] A. Ayton, 'English Armies in the Fourteenth Centuries', *Arms, Armies and Fortifications in the Hundred Years War*, ed. A. Curry and M. Hughes (Woodbridge, 1994), p. 22.

[18] For an overview of these developments, see Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, chapter 1. N.B. Lewis has analysed one of the earliest contract armies in 'The Recruitment and Organization of a Contract Army, May to November 1337', *BIHR*, xxxvii (1964), pp. 1–19.

[19] E 101/4/1.

the royal *familia* were at this time brought into Crown pay. The widespread
use of paid service by Edward III and his successors also means that from the
1360s (and to some extent a little earlier) cash sums given to campaign captains
can be traced on the issue rolls, which are accounts of payments made by the
exchequer. More significantly, muster rolls, recording the names not only of
men-at-arms serving in English armies but also of archers, crossbowmen and
other, auxiliary personnel, are widely available for campaigns taking place later
in the fourteenth century, especially from 1369. Historians have made effective
use of this corpus of documents in order to reconstruct the activities of a large
proportion of men-at-arms, and some archers, who fought for the English Crown
during the Hundred Years War. These efforts have recently culminated in publi-
cations by Andrew Ayton and Anne Curry, the two main pioneers in this field
of research, on the English armies at the battles of Crécy (1346) and Agincourt
(1415) respectively.[20] Adrian Bell's study of the men who served on two naval
expeditions during the reign of Richard II has helped to bridge the gap between
these two phases in the war.[21]

   The aristocratic warriors who served in English contract armies of the later
Middle Ages have not, therefore, wanted for scholarly attention. By contrast, as
we have seen, their ancestors, who lived during the late thirteenth and early four-
teenth centuries, have been left, by and large, in the shadows. The consequences
of this relative neglect may be considerable, particularly when we consider that
men-at-arms of the reigns of Edward I and Edward II were recruited (at least
superficially) by different means, and apparently fought in dissimilar ways, from
their sons and grandsons: the elite soldiers in the armies of Edward III. In the
late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, as has been established for some
time, mounted aristocratic warriors were gathered by retinue leaders and served
in companies of men-at-arms of varying size. On the other hand, the massed
ranks of peasants, who fought on foot, were conscripted by commissioners of
array and served separately from the mounted soldiers, in large blocks of twenty,
a hundred or a thousand. Even when some attempt to combine men-at-arms with
foot archers was made, as by the earl of Warwick at the battle of Maes Moydog
in Wales early in 1295, the chronicle accounts make it clear, by using the word
equites, that the men-at-arms fought on horseback.[22] Later, during the Hundred
Years War, English men-at-arms customarily dismounted to fight on foot. More-
over, although all men-at-arms (as well as others) who served in English armies
from the mid-fourteenth century received Crown wages, mounted soldiers in the
armies of Edward I and Edward II sometimes served gratuitously or in fulfil-
ment of feudal obligations.[23] Given, then, that the hosts of the first two Edwards

[20] Ayton, 'The English Army at Crécy', pp. 159–251; A. Curry, *Agincourt: A New History*
(Stroud, 2005), pp. 52–72.
[21] A. Bell, *War and the Soldier in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2004).
[22] *Trivet*, p. 335; discussed in Morris, *Welsh Wars*, p. 256. See also Thomas Gray's account
of the debacle in 1314, when the leaders of the English army 'mounted on horseback in great
consternation, for they were not at all used to dismounting to fight on foot': *Scalacronica*,
p. 75.
[23] Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, pp. 69, 91.

differed in some fundamental ways from those of their successors, and that a great deal has been learned about later, contract armies through the study of military personnel, it is to be regretted that similar research methods have not hitherto been applied to what may be termed the pre-contract armies of an earlier epoch.

This is all the more unfortunate when we consider that the transition from the reign of Edward II to that of Edward III has been seen as a key turning-point in English medieval military history. At an overarching, structural level the differences (noted above) between the armies of Edward I and those of his grandson are clear. But no one has yet carried out the kind of in-depth research into the military service of the English aristocracy in the years before the Edwardian military reforms of the 1330s that might enable us to identify, with greater precision, aspects of change and continuity across this dividing line. If, for example, we do not understand how soldiers serving in fulfilment of feudal obligations discharged their service, then how are we to assess whether, and in what ways, the wholly paid armies of Edward III and his successors were superior to the partly 'feudal' armies of Edward I and Edward II? How, too, can we compare levels of retinue stability in the 1300s with those in the 1350s when the full range of source materials from the reigns of Edward I and Edward II that may cast light on this issue have not previously been consulted?[24] Turning our attention to issues of recruitment and frequency of service, the reign of Edward I has been seen, by some historians, as a time when the number of warriors of gentle blood increased markedly.[25] This does seem likely when one compares the relative tranquillity of the reign of Henry III with the hectic military schedule of the mid-1290s. But little attempt has hitherto been made to quantify this process, or to assess the success of Edward I's recruitment initiatives, by comparing the names of the men summoned to attend the musters with those of the men-at-arms who actually served. Furthermore, beyond the leading earls and bannerets studied by Michael Prestwich and others, very little is currently known about the relative contribution to the wars of the first two Edwards made by men from different parts of the realm.

This book seeks to address these issues by drawing on all of the extant source materials recording the names of aristocratic warriors who served in English armies between 1272 and 1314. The most useful of these documents are: horse inventories, which state the names of men-at-arms in receipt of Crown pay and the valuations of their mounts; enrolled letters of protection, of attorney and of respite of debts, which reveal the identities of individual (usually landed) warriors as they made preparations to serve in the king's armies; and proffer rolls, on which are recorded the designations of men-at-arms, both knights and *servientes*, who registered their service at feudal musters. In addition to this main body of documentary materials, this study makes use of a wide range of other,

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[24] For the suggestion that retinue stability *may* have increased by Edward III's reign, see Ayton, 'The English Army at Crécy', p. 204.

[25] See, for example, Kaeuper, *War, Justice and Public Order*, p. 389; A. Ayton, 'Sir Thomas Ughtred and the Edwardian Military Revolution', *The Age of Edward III*, ed. J.S. Bothwell (York, 2001), pp. 111–12.

hardly subsidiary, records relating to the performance of military service. These include: wardrobe accounts, particularly the books that record payments made to (predominantly household) soldiers during the wars in Flanders and Scotland; the few extant pay-rolls recording service given by men-at-arms; garrison lists; protection warrants, which reveal the names of men who applied for letters of protection; and occasional rolls of arms, which commemorate warriors who were present on specific martial occasions. Furthermore, the analysis incorporates the full range of records drawn up in advance of the performance of military service, such as military summons lists and sheriffs' returns to orders for distraint of knighthood.

The military activities of individual men-at-arms provide a connecting thread throughout the analysis. However, with the exception, in part, of chapter 3 (where an attempt is made to reconstruct the length of mounted warriors' careers in arms, the frequency with which they joined the king's armies, and their commitment to soldiering compared with other forms of public activity), the aim is not merely to trace the contours of aristocratic military service. Prosopography can open a window into a number of broader themes. Two subjects that may benefit from such a methodological approach are military recruitment and retaining. Even the issue of leadership can be re-examined with the assistance of the records for military service. If it is not known how many times men-at-arms had served in the Crown's armies before being appointed to high office, then how can the importance attached to the quality of experience when selecting army commanders be assessed? Indeed, one of the aims of this study is to follow the aristocratic warrior through from the time when he was summoned, either directly by the king or indirectly by a sheriff or retinue leader in the counties, to the point at which he mustered and discharged his service in the armies. In chapter 5 an attempt will be made to look at how mounted aristocratic warriors serving in fulfilment of feudal obligations were integrated into the mounted part of the armies.[26] This is an appropriate theme with which to conclude as it reminds us that the armies of Edward I and his son were, in some ways, the last of their kind. Feudal military service was abandoned, in effect, following the Weardale campaign of 1327, paving the way for a new epoch in English medieval military history.

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[26] For some preliminary work on this subject, see D. Simpkin, 'The English Army and the Scottish Campaign of 1310–1311', *England and Scotland in the Fourteenth Century: New Perspectives*, ed. A. King and M. Penman (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 28–39.

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Mobilisation

In medieval England the beginning of a new reign often furnished the occasion for a shift in the direction and fortunes of the realm, and the events following upon the death of King Henry III in 1272 were certainly a case in point. The accession of Henry's son, the ambitious Edward I, paved the way for an era of conflict, both within the British Isles and in France, on a scale that had never previously been witnessed during the Middle Ages. For the administrative historian T.F. Tout, writing shortly after the defeat of Kaiser Wilhelm II's armies in the First World War, the parallel with the increased military demands of his own day seemed striking. 'The magnitude of the military efforts of Edward I', he observed, 'as far transcended those of his predecessors as the war which has laid low German imperialism transcended the Napoleonic wars, or the Napoleonic wars the war of the Spanish Succession.'[1] The comparison seems particularly appropriate when we consider that both the First World War and the Napoleonic wars necessitated the extension of the obligation to military service to new social groups and classes. By stretching his manpower reserves to their limit through his wars in Wales, France and Scotland, Edward ensured that the land-holding elites of late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century England became accustomed to the martial calling to an extent that could not have been foreseen during the reign of his father.

The demands placed on the gentry and nobility were particularly exacting from the mid-1290s when the confiscation of Gascony by Philip IV of France, together with the deterioration of relations with the Scots, posed new threats to the Edwardian polity. Contemporaries were well aware of the new departure that the campaigns of these years marked in the military affairs of the realm. Above all, however, it was the steadfastness of Edward I in the face of such adversity that aroused their admiration.[2] No prince, one chronicler later reflected, had encountered so much trouble and strife as had 'sire Edward' during his time on the throne.[3] For many writers, indeed, the king personified the war effort and was the moving figure behind its most pivotal events.

The tendency of medieval commentators to focus, when discussing these wars, on the role of the Crown is understandable given the hierarchical bent of

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[1] T.F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England*, *The Wardrobe, the Chamber and the Small Seals*, 6 vols (Manchester, 1920–33), ii, p. 143.
[2] See, for example, the reaction of one chronicler to the king's successes in 1296: *Bury St Edmunds*, p. 133.
[3] *Langtoft*, p. 229.

that society. Nevertheless, Edward could not have succeeded in the conquest of Wales, or in the near-conquest of Scotland, had he not been supported by a willing and bellicose aristocracy. His achievement lay, therefore, not only in his castle-building projects at Caernarfon or Conway, or his victory in battle at Falkirk, but also in his ability to engage the energy and enthusiasm of the social elite for his ambitious campaigns. Acknowledging this, historians have customarily contrasted Edward I's campaigns with the far more modest military objectives that had characterised the fifty-six-year rule of his father, Henry III. During that long period there had been relatively little military activity.[4] In fact, had it not been for the civil war of 1264–5[5] and the Lord Edward's crusade to the Holy Land a few years later, by 1277 the landholders of medieval England would not have taken up arms for two decades. For Michael Prestwich, the signing of a peace agreement with Louis IX of France in 1259 marked an important stage in the retreat of the Crown from its military commitments, with the changing of the royal seal at that time being particularly symbolic: 'whereas the king had been depicted on the old one bearing a sword, on the new he carried a sceptre'.[6]

The infrequency of Henry's wars, and their unimpressive scale, meant that upon coming to the throne Edward had a good deal of work to do. The forces that Henry managed to muster, both overseas and within Britain, do not seem to have been particularly large. One reason for this, according to J.S. Critchley, was that while Edward sought to conquer new territories, Welsh campaigns under his father had more often been 'punitive, or attempts to establish secure footholds by constructing yet more castles'.[7] It would be facile to contrast too sharply the size of the mounted forces raised by Edward I with those gathered by his father, for Henry sometimes put into the field men-at-arms roughly equal in number to those recruited for Edward's least impressive campaigns.[8] Henry failed, nonetheless, to draw on as wide a cross-section of English landholding society for his wars as his son. Although Henry III's household force was strong,[9] he does not appear to have exploited, to any great extent, the military potential that lay dormant in the shires. In his perceptive study of the formation of the gentry, Philip Morgan saw the reign of Henry III as a time when the lesser landholders of England occupied their time primarily in non-military pursuits: 'there was simply not enough actual experience of arms to create a class of soldier career-

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4   See P. Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1984), p. 65.
5   The number of knights involved in the civil war does not seem to have been very large: P. Coss, *The Knight in Medieval England*, *1000–1400* (Stroud, 1993), p. 70.
6   Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, p. 14.
7   J.S. Critchley, 'Military Organisation in England, 1154–1254', PhD thesis, University of Nottingham, 1968, p. 173. See also, R.F. Walker, 'The Anglo-Welsh Wars, 1272–1267 with Special Reference to English Military Developments', DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1954, pp. 3–4.
8   For a comparison of the army raised by Henry in 1245 with that raised by Edward in 1277, see Walker 'Anglo-Welsh Wars', p. 510.
9   *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 89–90.