

Notes and Documents

English Armies in the Early Stages of the Hundred Years War: a Scheme in 1341

ALTHOUGH ENGLISH RECORDS from the late thirteenth century contain a remarkable amount of detail on the recruitment and organization of armies, evidence of the initial planning stage is surprisingly rare. A series of estimates of the size of armies, their probable cost and their victualling requirements, dating from between 1327 and 1340, survives to illuminate French preparations for war.¹ The only comparable English text to have been studied in detail is a scheme for a small contract army to fight in Scotland in 1337.² There is, however, one document which sets out arrangements for recruiting and financing a major royal expedition; although its existence has been noted, it has not been securely dated, and its full implications for Edward III's intentions at an important turning-point in the war have not been properly appreciated.

This scheme for an English expedition overseas, to be led by the king, was probably drawn up for discussion by the council. It is unfortunately not in sufficiently good condition to provide a full transcript: a summary of its contents is provided in the appendix, below. It sets out the forces to be provided by the royal household, and gives details of the retinues of various magnates. The costs of the army, with those of the fleet needed to transport it, are carefully worked out for a forty-day period, and a method of meeting the bill out of the proceeds of a levy of wool is outlined.

The first problem the document presents is that of dating. Two suggestions have been made: 1340, for an expedition to Flanders, and 1342, for Brittany.³ Unfortunately the very full accounts of the royal wardrobe for those years do not contain any details of military expenditure which tally at all closely with this particular scheme,⁴ and it is clear that in fact it refers to a projected expedition in 1341, which was cancelled. The list of magnates provides some evidence for this. The inclusion of a chancellor with a large retinue suggests that it must postdate the dismissal of Robert Stratford on 1 December 1340: one of his lay successors, Robert Bouchier or Robert Parving is a more likely candidate.⁵ The absence of

¹ M. Jusselin, 'Comment la France se préparait à la guerre de cent ans', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, lxxiii (1912), 209-36, *Adae Murimuth, Continuatio Chronicarum, Robertus de Avesbury, De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii*, ed. E. M. Thompson (Rolls Ser., 1889), pp. 205-8, 364-7. I am grateful to the Research and Travel Funds of the universities of St. Andrews and Durham for financial assistance in the preparation of this article.

² N. B. Lewis, 'The recruitment and organization of a contract army, May to November 1337', *ante*, xxxvii (1964), 1-19.

³ Public Record Office, C 47/2/33. (All subsequent manuscript references are to documents located in the P.R.O.) This document is noted in A. F. Prince, 'The strength of English armies in the reign of Edward III', *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xli (1931), 362, where it is dated to 1340, and in Lewis, p. 8 n.1, where it is attributed to 1342.

⁴ E 36/203; E 36/204.

⁵ Robert Bouchier held office from 14 Dec. 1340 until 27 Oct. 1341, when Robert Parving succeeded him (T. F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England* (6 vols., Manchester, 1920-33), vi, 13-14).

Suffolk and Salisbury from the list of earls strongly suggests a date in the first six months of 1341. Both men were captured by the French near Lille on 11 April 1340.⁶ Although the chronicler Jean le Bel states that they were imprisoned for over two years, they were present at Woodstock in February 1341. However, they had almost certainly returned only briefly to make arrangements for their ransom payments, and were back in France in June. Salisbury's release was agreed at the beginning of the month, but Suffolk was still in custody in late July. Both men were certainly free by October 1341, and they campaigned in Brittany in July 1342.⁷ Warwick and Derby, both included in the list, also suffered imprisonment overseas. They had been handed over as pledges for the king's vast debts in the Low Countries, but a provisional release was obtained on 23 May 1341. The document was probably drawn up between that date and early July, for by 10 July Derby had returned into captivity, not to return to England until September or October.⁸ A further indication that it was drafted before mid July is that on 14 July the earl of Huntingdon, who features in it, was appointed to an embassy to treat with the French.⁹ Lastly, in the course of August 1341 various agreements were drawn up, assigning wool to magnates in payment for the retinues which they contracted to take on the coming expedition. Although the figures of these retinues are not in all cases identical to those set out in the scheme, the similarities in personnel and in the structure of the contingents are such as to make it clear that these assignments represent a modification of the initial proposals.¹⁰

What was the military and diplomatic context in which an expedition was proposed in 1341? Edward III had achieved little in 1340, despite the triumphant start to his campaign with the battle of Sluys. The siege of Tournai failed, and a truce was agreed on 25 September at Espléchin, to last until 24 June 1341.¹¹ Edward anticipated a renewal of hostilities long before that date, however. In February 1341 he ordered the assembly of a fleet by Easter, because of the danger of French attacks. In March the infamous John Crabbe was ordered, along with William Hurel, to take timber for siege engines and hoardings.¹² By April it was quite clear that the king was thinking of an expedition overseas, for Robert Morley, admiral north of the Thames, was ordered to provide 100 small ships for the purpose, and instructions went out for the collection of large quantities of bows and arrows at the Tower of London and at Orwell. A request for further purveyance of bows and arrows from Gloucestershire in July referred to the king's intention of setting out soon for France with an armed force, and on 1 August the sheriff of Norfolk was ordered

⁶ E 36/203 fos. 128v, 129, shows that this was the last date for which they received wages.

⁷ *Chronique de Jean le Bel*, ed. J. Viard and E. Déprez (2 vols., Paris, 1904-5), i, 168-9; A. Gransden, 'The alleged rape by Edward III of the countess of Salisbury', *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, lxxxvii (1972), 335. *Calendar of Close Rolls 1341-3*, pp. 118, 203, 232, 277; E 36/204 fo. 103.

⁸ K. Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant: Henry of Grosmont, 1st Duke of Lancaster, 1310-61* (1969), pp. 35-6. Prof. Fowler does not note Derby's return into captivity, but this is demonstrated by *Cal. Cl. Rolls 1341-3*, p. 193, and *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1340-3*, pp. 238, 276.

⁹ T. Rymer, *Foedera*, ed. A. Clarke, F. Holbrooke and J. Caley (Record Comm., 4 vols. in 7, 1816-69), II, ii, 1168.

¹⁰ *Cal. Pat. Rolls 1340-3*, pp. 259-60, 264-7. For a comparison of these assignments with the military scheme, see the appendix below.

¹¹ H. S. Lucas, *The Low Countries and the Hundred Years' War, 1320-1347* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1929), pp. 408-24.

¹² *Cal. Cl. Rolls 1341-3*, pp. 27, 107-8.

to take victuals that had been collected together to Orwell and Great Yarmouth, where the fleet was to gather.¹⁵

It is usually assumed that Edward's plan in 1341 was to intervene in Brittany: Prince considered that this was the purpose of the contracts made by magnates in August.¹⁴ It was in April that the duke of Brittany died, and the subsequent succession dispute between John de Montfort and Joan de Penthièvre was to provide the English with a splendid opportunity to engage the French on a new front. Yet although Edward sent envoys to Brittany in June,¹⁵ it seems most unlikely that the duchy was the intended destination for the expedition. The planned campaign was abandoned on 2 September, and an extension of the truce with France until the following Midsummer publicly proclaimed on 27 September.¹⁶ Yet on 24 September Edward III made clear his support for John de Montfort, granting him the earldom of Richmond, and on the next day he announced his intention of going overseas 'for urgent business affecting him and the estate of the realm'. On 3 October the arrest of ships preparatory to the departure of English magnates for Brittany was announced.¹⁷ It is most unlikely that Edward would have cancelled one expedition to Brittany only to start preparing another within a month.

The documents concerned with recruitment and purveyance for the proposed expedition provide no clue as to the intended destination. The assignments of wool to the magnates in August merely referred to 'a progress on the sea', but another writ referred to the king going 'to parts beyond the sea for the war of France'.¹⁸ It seems most probable that Edward hoped to continue campaigning in the Low Countries and northern France. In diplomatic terms the year 1341 had begun badly in that region for the English. One of the main planks of Edward's strategy of opposing the French with the aid of a massive coalition of allies had been pulled from under him at the end of January, when his former supporter, the emperor Ludwig IV came to terms with Philip VI of France. Three months later Ludwig revoked his nomination of Edward as his vicar-general.¹⁹ Edward had been unable to fulfil his lavish promises of subsidies to his allies, and they were clearly not anxious to reopen the war. Although Edward appointed an embassy to treat with the French in April, on 24 May he authorized a group of his allies, notably the dukes of Brabant and Guelders and the margrave of Jülich to negotiate an extension of the truce. By 18 June this had been achieved, with a new expiry date for the truce of the end of August. On 14 July the allies were again empowered to negotiate further with the French, and an English embassy consisting of the earl of Huntingdon, Bernard d'Albret, Bartholomew Burghersh, John Offord and Nicholas de Fieschi was appointed at the same time.²⁰ In June Edward III had expressed his concern lest Philip VI was merely using the negotiations as a cover for aggressive military preparations:²¹ it seems very likely that that is just what the English king was doing in July and August.

¹⁵ *Foedera*, II. II. 1156-7; *Cal. Cl. Rolls 1341-3*, pp. 199, 202. H. J. Hewitt, *The Organization of War under Edward III* (Manchester, 1966), p. 64, shows that more bows and arrows were ordered in 1341 than in 1346, 1356 or 1359.

¹⁴ A. E. Prince, 'The indenture system under Edward III', in *Historical Essays in Honour of James Talbot*, ed. J. C. Edwards, V. H. Galbraith and E. F. Jacob (Manchester, 1933), p. 287

¹⁵ *Cal. Pat. Rolls 1340-3*, p. 225.

¹⁶ *Foedera*, II. II. 1175, 1177.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, II. II. 1176-7; *Cal. Pat. Rolls 1340-3*, p. 325.

¹⁸ *Cal. Pat. Rolls 1340-3*, p. 259; *Cal. Cl. Rolls 1341-3*, p. 186.

¹⁹ H. S. Offler, 'England and Germany at the beginning of the Hundred Years' War', *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, liv (1939), 618, 623.

²⁰ *Foedera*, II. II. 1160-1, 1168; Lucas, pp. 465-8.

²¹ *Foedera*, II. II. 1165-6.

Although precise details of the negotiations are lacking, the scale of the English campaign preparations suggests that Edward was in earnest in planning for war. The well-informed chronicler Adam Murimuth, himself of considerable diplomatic experience, remarked in surprised tones on the way in which the truce was extended when the king and his magnates had made lavish arrangements to provide shipping and victuals for an expedition.²² There seems no reason to disbelieve the statement made by the king in a letter to the citizens of Bayonne issued on 2 September, in which he declared that just as he was ready to set out to sea, messengers came announcing that his allies wished to extend the truce until the following Whitsun. After consultation with the magnates, the king had decided, to his great chagrin, to abandon the expedition.²³ It is hardly surprising that his allies were not prepared to support him: efforts in 1341 to pay them the huge sums owing in subsidies met with little success.²⁴

One other reason for the abandonment of the English expedition of 1341 has been suggested, and should be mentioned, if only to dismiss it.²⁵ David II of Scotland returned from exile in France in June, and in the autumn he raided Northumberland in force. Edward III was not initially much concerned: he did not intend to oppose David in person, but appointed Edward Balliol as his lieutenant in the north on 1 August. Early in October the earl of Derby was entrusted with the custody of the northern marches, and it was not until a month later that the king himself decided to take charge of an expedition to Scotland.²⁶ At the time that the French expedition was cancelled, therefore, it does not appear that the Scottish situation was regarded as being particularly threatening.

The context of the scheme for recruiting and financing an army is clear. It was probably drafted between late May and mid July 1341, at a time when, despite the negotiations that were being conducted with the French, Edward hoped to lead a major force across the Channel, probably aiming at a landing in Flanders. The document raises other problems which are, perhaps, more interesting. How does it compare with earlier indications of the nature of English military planning?

It had, of course, always been necessary to make arrangements for recruitment, victualling and finance. Under Edward I, however, it is clear that plans were often unrealistic: the royal request for 60,000 troops to be assembled at Newcastle was accompanied by the correct calculation that such a force would cost £5,000 a week, but neither the number of men nor the sum of money was practical. The largest army of the reign was not much more than 30,000 strong. Even when reasonable numbers of footsoldiers were summoned, the number that actually mustered was normally much lower. In 1300 commissioners of array were asked to recruit 16,000 infantry, but only about 9,000 were actually raised.²⁷ As far as the cavalry were concerned, the practice of recruiting by issuing individual summonses to a number of selected magnates gave the Crown little control over the numbers who actually appeared on campaign. It was very rare for the government to contract with magnates for them to provide a specific number of men in their retinues.²⁸

²² *Adae Murimuth, Continuatio Chronicarum*, p. 121.

²³ *Foedera*, II. ii. 1175.

²⁴ *Lucas*, pp. 435-7.

²⁵ A. E. Prince, 'The payment of army wages in Edward III's reign', *Speculum*, xix (1944), 151.

²⁶ *Foedera*, II. ii. 1170, 1179, *Cal. Cl. Rolls 1341-3*, p. 347.

²⁷ M. Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance under Edward I* (1972), pp. 93-5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-6.

Under Edward II, there was an interesting council memorandum drawn up in 1324, with detailed suggestions for the arrangements to be made for the war in Gascony. Although it provides such details as the recommended purveyance of 100,000 goose feathers, it does not contain any calculations of the numbers of men to be recruited. It merely suggests that all available crossbowmen, archers, slingers and others capable of fighting with sword and lance should be recruited, along with workmen. Hobelars and 'schavaldours' in sufficient quantities should be raised in the north. It was left to a meeting of the magnates to point out that a minimum force of 1,000 men-at-arms and 10,000 infantry would be advisable, and that recruitment on such a scale would leave the country in an insecure condition.²⁹

A detailed scheme was drawn up in 1337 for the small army that was sent to Scotland in that year, which has been carefully analysed by Professor N. B. Lewis. It provides the names of the leaders of retinues in the army, with details of the men-at-arms and horse archers that they were contracted to supply. A comparison with the numbers actually provided shows that the document was over-optimistic: the contract contingents were smaller than had been hoped, and the contingents raised by commissioners of array likewise fell below expectation.³⁰ Nevertheless, the scheme bore a closer relationship to reality than earlier attempts at military planning appear to have done. Another document which testifies to the care with which preparations for war were made in the early stages of the Hundred Years War is a council memorandum drawn up in 1340 for the assembly of a fleet at Portsmouth under the command of the earl of Arundel, with detailed calculations of the quantities of victuals to be provided.³¹

The plan drawn up for the proposed 1341 expedition, however, was much fuller than any surviving earlier document. Not only does it provide for the first time a detailed breakdown of a major royal expedition—that of 1337 was for a small army which was not led by the king himself—but it also contains careful calculations of the probable costs, and shows how the government hoped to finance the operation. The need for careful budgeting was obvious, in view of the effectively bankrupt state to which royal finances had been reduced by 1340.

The means selected to finance the campaign raises questions. The implication of the detailed listing of the various magnate retinues, together with the assignments of wool in payment, is that this was to be primarily a contract army. Indeed, Prince cited the evidence of the assignments to show the extent to which the indenture system was firmly established by 1341.³² Yet although the use of contracts to recruit troops by this date was undoubtedly far from novel, there is no evidence to show that this technique was ever in fact employed for a major royal expedition.

The use of contracts with magnates to provide specific numbers of men for campaigns can first be documented under Edward I. The earls of Lancaster and Cornwall served under contract in Gascony in the twelve-nineties, and in the autumn of 1297 six magnates, five of them earls, contracted to fight in Scotland with 500 horse for three months. The king was not present on these occasions, and the explanation for the use of contracts is probably that they were convenient and simple when there was no elaborate administrative machinery available for the task of checking on the numbers of troops actually in the field and for paying wages on a regular basis. The only occasion when their use was

²⁹ *The War of Saint-Sardos*, ed. P. ChaPlais (Camden 3rd ser., lxxxvii, 1954), pp. 66–8, 89.

³⁰ Lewis, pp. 1–19.

³¹ C. 47/2/29.

³² Prince, 'Indenture system', p. 287.

envisaged when the king himself was present was in the autumn of 1301, when it was hoped to make contracts with a number of magnates to stay with him in Scotland over the winter.⁵⁵

Under Edward II contracts were used, not for major royal armies, but for forces defending the northern marches in the absence of the king and the administrative machinery of the royal household. In 1315, for example, the earl of Pembroke agreed to serve with 100 men-at-arms, and other magnates with smaller numbers.⁵⁶ In Edward III's early Scottish campaigns, contracts with magnates were used for the winter of 1334-5, but for the main expedition of 1335 the troops were summoned by more traditional means, and paid their wages by the royal wardrobe.⁵⁷ Equally, the accounts for the forces used in the Low Countries up to the truce of Espléchin in September 1340 do not suggest that formal contracts were drawn up with the English magnates who provided their retinues to serve at royal wages.⁵⁸ It can be very plausibly argued that the extensive use of contracts later in the Hundred Years War was because so many expeditions were sent to fight in France under magnate, rather than royal, leadership. They could not be directly financed by the wardrobe, and so, as in the reign of Edward I, the use of contracts offered the simplest administrative solution. The contract with Henry, earl of Derby for his expedition to Gascony in 1345 was drawn up for very similar reasons, as was that with his ancestor Edmund of Lancaster in 1294.⁵⁹

If it is the case that contracts were not normally employed for major royal expeditions, how is the 1341 scheme to be explained? The answer lies in the unusual means proposed for financing the army. Instead of wages being paid in the normal way by the officials of the royal wardrobe, the magnates were to be assigned wool to cover the costs of their wages for a forty-day period. To do this it was obviously necessary to know in advance the precise size of the various contingents, so making a contract scheme essential. The sacks of wool replaced the lump sums that were normally promised to those who made contracts to serve on campaign.

This method of paying for a major part of the costs of the campaign was a perfectly plausible one. The Crown was in considerable financial difficulties, and there was a very real shortage of coin in the country as a whole.⁶⁰ A levy in kind made more sense than a money grant, and in April 30,000 sacks of wool were granted in parliament to the king. Despite inevitable local opposition which on occasion took a violent form, this levy of wool was the most successful of all those that Edward III attempted to collect. In practice, only about 1,392 sacks were handed over to military leaders or to clerks responsible for war finance, but that was the result of the abandonment of the planned campaign, rather than of a shortage of wool. There were some problems in allocating adequate quantities to the earl of Warwick and to Walter Mauny, since so much of the wool in Oxfordshire and Essex had been assigned to meet the needs of the royal household.⁶¹ The calculations of the scheme for the expedition in 1341 are not

⁵⁵ Prestwich, pp. 73, 76.

⁵⁶ E 101/14/5.

⁵⁷ R. Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 177, 194, 199.

⁵⁸ E 36/203; Prince, 'Indenture system', p. 287.

⁵⁹ The 1345 contract is printed in Fowler, pp. 230-2.

⁶⁰ N. J. Mayhew, 'Numismatic evidence and falling prices in the 14th century', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd ser., xxvii (1974), 1-15; for a contemporary comment, see *Adae Murimuth, Continuatio Chronicarum*, p. 89.

⁶¹ T. H. Lloyd, *The English Wool Trade in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 166-8; *Cat. Cl. Rolls 1341-7*, pp. 186, 213.

entirely clear, as greater quantities are set out as being allocated to the counties than were in fact needed, and it is not apparent why certain quotas are marked as 'sold'. Where, of course, the scheme was unduly optimistic was in the assumption that the campaign would last only for forty days, and in not making any allowance for such inevitable expenses as those incurred in recompensing men for the value of horses lost in war. The arrangements, however, were probably adequate to persuade men to co-operate with the king's plans, and to finance the initial stages of the expedition. These methods of recruiting and financing an army were not, however, those usually employed by Edward III, and their potential is therefore hard to assess.

The 1341 scheme differed from normal practice in another important respect. The retinues that it lists were almost all made up of men-at-arms, armed men ('gentz armez') and foot archers. The royal wardrobe accounts for the armies of this period, notably those in Flanders in 1339-40 and in Brittany in 1342, show that the retinues almost all consisted of knights, men-at-arms and mounted archers. Foot archers were very rare in retinues, and the only 'armed men' mentioned were thirty-nine recruited in London in 1339, who were paid eight pence a day each, and a proportion of Northampton's retinue in 1342, paid six pence.⁴⁰ Armed men, however, are mentioned in some sources for this period. The chronicler Henry Knighton thought that there were 800 such men in the small army in Flanders in 1339, and in orders for the array of forces for coastal defence in the same year relatively small numbers of men-at-arms were ordered, along with substantial, and equal, numbers of armed men and archers.⁴¹ A brief memorandum for the recruitment of troops to assemble at Portsmouth at Whitsun, which suggests that it was drawn up for the 1342 Breton expedition, specifies 2,000 'hommes armetz', and explains how they were to be equipped, with large spears and burnished bacinets ('grosses launces e bacinetz bournies'). In addition, this document calls for 4,000 archers drawn from south of the Trent, and 4,000 spearmen, of whom one third were to be Welshmen.⁴²

The documents do not, unfortunately, make clear the important question of whether these armed men were mounted. Prince assumed that they were, and that they were similar to hobelars, although more heavily equipped.⁴³ It is possible, however, that they were in fact heavily armed infantrymen, similar to those recruited on occasion by Edward II. They were to be paid double the rate of the ordinary foot archers, and this six pence a day was the normal wage of a mounted archer or hobelar: but under Edward II a fully armed footsoldier received double the pay of his less well-equipped colleague.⁴⁴ It is hard to see, if the armed men were mounted, what distinguished them from ordinary hobelars or even men-at-arms. It is relevant to note that heavily armed infantry were used in the early stages of the Hundred Years War in Gascony. There the standard rates of pay were, in local currency, eight *sous* a day for a knight; six *sous* for a mounted man-at-arms; three *sous* for an armed footsoldier; and one *sou* for an ordinary infantryman.⁴⁵ It is likely, therefore, that the use of heavily armoured spearmen was envisaged in 1341: a type of soldier rarely used by the English in the Hundred Years War, and totally unsuited to the type of raid or *chevauchée* which was soon to prove so successful.

⁴⁰ E 36/203 fo. 149; E 36/204 fo. 106v.

⁴¹ *Chronicon Henrici Knighton*, ed. J. R. Lumby (2 vols., Rolls Ser., 1889-95), ii, 14; *Foedera*, ii, ii, 1070-2.

⁴² C 47/2/31.

⁴³ Prince, 'Strength of English armies', p. 362 n.1.

⁴⁴ J. E. Morris, 'Mounted infantry in mediaeval warfare', *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.*, 3rd ser., viii (1914), 89.

⁴⁵ E 101/166/12.

The inclusion of 'armed men' is not the only curious feature of the composition of the proposed 1341 army. The plan makes no provision for mounted archers: all the archers specified were to be paid three pence a day, the rate for a footman. Mounted archers had first appeared in the royal accounts in 1334, and in the host in the Low Countries in the autumn of 1339 some 1,500 were present. It seems that for some unknown reason this type of soldier, later to be so invaluable in the campaigns in France, temporarily went out of fashion. Surprisingly few of them were recruited for the Scottish campaign which began in the autumn of 1341, their place largely being taken by the lightly-armed and mounted hobelars. Mounted archers were, however, once again very much in evidence in the expedition which sailed for Brittany in 1342.⁴⁶ In fact, although no mounted archers featured in the 1341 scheme, some were recruited for the proposed campaign. John Deyncourt led sixty such men, and an equal number of footsoldiers, from Lincolnshire to London early in September: they stayed there for six days, and were then dismissed.⁴⁷ It may be that had the full host actually mustered, it would not have been as atypical of English armies in this period as the scheme suggests.

The division of the forces outlined in the 1341 document into those of the royal household, and those provided by the magnates, is an interesting feature. The total number of men-at-arms provided by the household, 895, is very similar to the figures from Edward I's reign: in 1298 there had been just under 800, and in 1300 about 850. However, the clear distinction between those men permanently in household employment, and those merely accepting pay from the wardrobe for the duration of a campaign, was already becoming blurred by the end of Edward I's reign.⁴⁸ In the accounts of Edward III's reign there is little differentiation between household and non-household troops: in 1334-5 the more important household bannerets were listed with the magnates, rather than the household knights, while in 1342 the carl of Devon appears rather incongruously in the middle of a number of household names.⁴⁹ The 1341 scheme provides interesting evidence that the household could still be regarded as an independent entity within the army in Edward III's reign. It was, indeed, to remain an important element until the final expedition in which the king himself took part, that of 1359-60.⁵⁰

The total size of the proposed army in 1341 was very large, totalling as it did over 13,500 men. In contrast, English troops in the Low Countries in 1339 had numbered only about 1,600 men-at-arms, 1,500 horse archers and 1,650 infantry, while in Brittany in the autumn of 1342 the equivalent numbers were 2,000, 1,780 and 1,750. Larger armies were feasible, however. In Scotland in 1335 Edward III had some 15,000 men in his service, and the great army at the siege of Calais in 1346-7 totalled about 32,000 in all.⁵¹ The project for 1341 was not, therefore, totally unrealistic. The size of the magnate retinues was certainly in line with current practice. Henry of Derby, for example, is listed as being due to provide 200 men-at-arms: he in fact served with 195 in the autumn of 1341 in

⁴⁶ Prince, 'Strength of English armies', pp. 354-5, 351-3. By my calculation from E 36/204 there were 1,780 horse archers in Brittany in 1342, rather than 1,890 as Prince suggests.

⁴⁷ E 101/23/8.

⁴⁸ Prestwich, p. 52.

⁴⁹ Nicholson, p. 176, E 36/204 fos. 104v, 107v.

⁵⁰ See the wages section of E 101/398/11 fo. 79 seqq.

⁵¹ Prince, 'Strength of English armies', pp. 356-64. I have recalculated the figures for 1342, using E 36/204.

Scotland. Walter Mauny promised 80 men-at-arms; he provided 100 for service in Brittany in 1342.⁵²

The fact that the scheme proposed that there should be no less than 12,000 sailors to transport 13,500 men with their horses and equipment is at first sight surprising. Yet in 1297 5,800 sailors had been required to take some 9,000 troops to Flanders,⁵³ and in 1342 an enormous fleet was assembled for the expedition to Brittany in the autumn. In all, 374 ships appear in the wardrobe account book, with a total complement of about 8,500, employed for differing lengths of time between September and December. No more than about 5,530 troops were transported to Brittany.⁵⁴ Of course, these large numbers of sailors can in part be explained by the fact that there were horses and supplies to be taken overseas, while a few ships had double crews so that they could fight more effectively. The 1341 scheme, indeed, was that all the large ships should be manned in this way, with fifty men to each vessel. It is very likely that in 1341 Edward III expected to fight a major naval battle, as he had done at Sluys in 1340. Although the proportion of sailors indicated by the scheme is not completely out of line with usual practice, it was not always necessary for it to be quite so high. For the 1346-7 host of 32,000 men, some 738 ships crewed by 15,000 sailors were required.⁵⁵

The scheme for recruiting and financing an army in 1341 was not to provide a precedent for the future. The method of paying troops by assigning quantities of wool to cover the expenses of the royal household and of the various captains who provided retinues was copied in the following year, but was not used later. It was this method of payment that meant that this had to be a contract scheme, and when the Crown used more traditional methods of payment through the wardrobe, as in 1346-7 and 1359-60, it does not seem that formal contracts were drawn up with the leaders of retinues. It is possible that in 1341, with the political situation still tense following the conflict with Archbishop Stratford and his supporters, the king and his advisers were anxious not to adopt recruiting methods which might arouse resentment and criticism, though it is more likely that the contract scheme was simply a result of the Crown's acute financial problems. It was easier to assign wool to the leaders of retinues than to raise money from the wool with which to pay the wages of the soldiers.

Although retinues of men-at-arms and mounted archers were by far the most important element in the armies which fought in France, and although expeditions such as those of Henry of Lancaster and the Black Prince were largely recruited by means of contracts, Edward III did not develop the recruiting methods outlined in the 1341 document for major royal expeditions. Instead, from 1344 to 1347 he revived and elaborated the system by which men were assessed according to their wealth to provide specific numbers of troops, who were then recruited by means of commissions of array. This system was used to provide forces not merely for local defence, but also for the king's expedition to France. There were widespread protests, and the measures that were taken might have led to a major crisis had it not been for the news of the great triumphs of Crécy and the capture of Calais, which helped to defuse the

⁵² E 36/204 fos. 99, 102v.

⁵³ Prestwich, p. 142.

⁵⁴ E 36/204 fos. 108-16. For a brief discussion of this fleet, and of the problem of the way in which many shipmasters deserted the expedition once it reached Brittany, see T. J. Runyan, 'Ships and mariners in later medieval England', *Jour. British Studies*, xvi (1976-7), no. 2, pp. 12-13. Unfortunately, Dr Runyan did not use the main wardrobe account in his analysis.

⁵⁵ N. H. Nicolas, *A History of the Royal Navy* (2 vols., 1847), ii. 507-10.

situation.⁵⁶ If the contract system envisaged in 1341 did not provide a blueprint for future campaigns, neither did the structure of the army that was proposed. The absence of mounted archers and the inclusion of large numbers of armed men, equipped with long spears and some armour, would have made the host of 1341, had it mustered according to the terms of the scheme, wholly untypical of the English armies of the Hundred Years War.

The document should not, however, be dismissed as an irrelevant curiosity. It helps to show how very seriously Edward III contemplated the prospects of an overseas campaign in 1341, despite the dire state of his finances and the dwindling degree of support he was receiving from his allies. It would be easy to dismiss his plans as misguided: circumstances were certainly not propitious for a renewal of the war in Flanders and northern France. The scheme demonstrates, however, that behind the king's bellicose attitudes there lay some hard work on the detailed planning of the proposed expedition. In many ways the plan was realistically conceived and carefully worked out: it is both more detailed and more comprehensive than any surviving earlier attempt at military planning by the English government.

MICHAEL PRESTWICH

APPENDIX

*Public Record Office, Chancery Miscellanea, C 47/2/33*⁵⁷

Heading: 'Le nombre des divers gentz Dengiltere . . . passerount prochainement ove le roi'

The first section is in bad condition. Twelve retinues are listed, all composed of men-at-arms ('hommes darmes'), armed men ('armez') and archers. Only the chamberlain, Robert de Ferrers, and Michael Poyning can be clearly identified.

Totals of household troops		Cost for 40 days
Men-at-arms	895	£2,110
Armed men	150	£150
Archers	6,000	£3,000
Welsh with lances	2,000	£1,000
For purveyance of 400 tuns wine		£700
Miscellaneous purveyance		£1,000
Debts incurred for the campaign		£1,500
Other debts incurred by the king's council		£3,130
Total for wages and expenses for 40 days		£12,590

2,000 sacks of wool are to be assigned for this, worth 10 marks each, total value £13,333 6s 8d, leaving a surplus of £744 6s 8d.

A small group of retinues follows, in which the wage rates of 4s for a banneret, 2s for a knight, 1s for a man-at-arms, 6d for an armed man and 3d for an archer are set out. Figures in square brackets are from the assignments on the patent rolls.⁵⁸

	men-at-arms	armed men	archers
Walter Mauny	80	30	100
Reginald Cobham	120 [110]	50 [48]	200 [200]
The chancellor	60 [70]	25 [25]	100 [100]
Edward Montague	20 [20]	18 [12]	12 [12]
Total	280	132	412

⁵⁶ M. Powicke, *Military Obligation in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 195-8; G. L. Harriss, *King, Parliament and Public Finance in Medieval England to 1369* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 384-7, 392.

⁵⁷ Unpublished Crown copyright material reproduced by permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

⁵⁸ *Cal. Pat. Rolls 1340-3*, pp. 259-60, 264-7. The patent roll also gives details of the following retinues not included in the scheme for the army: Robert of Artois, with 120 men-at-arms and 80 armed men; Thomas Breadstone, 40 men-at-arms, 10 armed men and 20 archers; John Darcy, 50 men-at-arms, 30 armed men and 40 archers.

Total cost: not wholly legible, but at least £1,400, and by calculation £1,403.

Quantities of sacks of wool assigned in payment follow, but the document is holed, and only 50 sacks for the chancellor is clear.

Further retinues follow:

	men-at-arms	armed men	archers
Earl of Derby	200	100	200
Earl of Northampton	250 [280]	100 [200]	200 [250]
Earl of Arundel	120	80	200
Earl of Huntingdon	80	80	200
Earl of Gloucester	100	60	160
Earl of Warwick	100 [100]	40 [40]	100 [100]
Earl of Oxford	50 [50]	30 [30]	60 [60]
Count of Beaumont ⁵⁹	120 [61]	30 [43]	— [40]
Earl of Pembroke	50	40	60
Earl of Devon	60	40	60
Hugh Despenser	50	40	100
Robert Morley	100 [100]	—	60 [100]
James Audley	40	20	100
Richard Talbot	50	30	60
Henry de Ferrers	50 [50]	40 [50]	60 [40]
Total	1,420	730	1,620
Total wages	£5,235		

200 large ships, each crewed by 50 men, paid 2d a day, making a total of 5,000 men, costing £5,000 for 40 days.

100 small ships, with a total of 2,000 sailors, costing £1,000 for 40 days.

Totals of men: men-at-arms	2,590, including 1 king, 10 earls, 49 bannerets, 489 knights
armed men	1,012
archers	7,952, of whom 2,000 are Welsh
Welsh spearmen	2,000
sailors	12,000

Total estimated cost for 40 days, £25,236, for which 4,206 sacks worth £6 each are required, to be raised as follows from the counties:

sold	Yorkshire	500 sacks to be carried to Hull
	Lincolnshire ⁶⁰	500 sacks to be carried to Boston
	Berkshire	200 sacks to be carried to London
	Shropshire	200 sacks to be carried to London
	Staffordshire	200 sacks
	Northamptonshire	100 sacks
	Warwickshire	200 sacks
	Oxfordshire	350 sacks to be carried to London
	Leicestershire ⁶¹	70 sacks
	Buckinghamshire	100 sacks to be carried to London
sold	Derbyshire	100 sacks to be carried to Boston
	Hertfordshire	200 sacks
	Essex	250 sacks
	Somerset	300 sacks

⁵⁹ MS.: 'le compte de Beaumont'. There was no such person, but presumably John of Hainault, sire de Beaumont, is intended.

⁶⁰ The following 5 counties are bracketed together in the MS.

⁶¹ The following 3 counties are bracketed together in the MS.

sold	Nottingham	150 sacks to be carried to Boston
	Dorset	200 sacks
sold	Surrey	200 sacks to be carried to London
	Sussex	300 sacks
sold	Middlesex	100 sacks to be carried to London
	Suffolk	300 sacks
	Norfolk	400
	Kent	200

Total number of sacks: 5,120, of which 2,200 are to be sold.

Memorandum: John de Beauchamp is staying with the king with 15 men-at-arms, total cost £44 for 40 days; William FitzWarin with 10 men-at-arms, 4 armed men, 10 archers, cost £33, Robert Ufford junior with 60 men-at-arms, 20 armed men, 60 archers, cost £202;⁶² Michael de Poynings with 20 men-at-arms, 12 armed men, 40 archers, cost £84.⁶³