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THE REGIME OF ISABELLA AND MORTIMER 1326-1330

by

David Anthony Harding

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*in*

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1985



17. JUL. 1985

## The Regime of Isabella and Mortimer 1326-1330

### ABSTRACT

The rule of the Despensers was brought to an end in 1326 by a coalition of magnates, churchmen and Londoners, drawn together by the invasion of Isabella and Mortimer. A carefully orchestrated demand for the removal of Edward II led to his deposition and ultimately to his murder at Mortimer's direction.

Power was centralised in the hands of Isabella and Mortimer who took no steps to broaden the basis of their government. While returning confiscated lands to their supporters, they offered them little else in the way of reward but accumulated land to their own use, Crown land in the case of Isabella and an empire on the Welsh March in the case of Mortimer. Disillusioned by this and by their exclusion from government, the constituent parts of the coalition fell apart.

Active opposition which had begun in Edward II's lifetime culminated in Lancaster's abortive rebellion of 1328-29. The effective suppression of this meant that opposition was stifled by the imposition of recognisances and because several barons fled abroad. This success merely served to increase Mortimer's arrogance and in 1330 he successfully engineered the downfall of Edward III's uncle, the earl of Kent.

In foreign affairs, the failure of the Weardale campaign against the Scots and the unpopular peace of Northampton, coupled with a temporising and indecisive policy towards France over the questions of Gascony and homage, increased hostility towards the government. At home violent unrest continued and an improvident and irresponsible attitude to national finance involved heavy borrowing at a time when Mortimer lived in extravagant state.

Faced by this misgovernment and fearing that Mortimer now aimed at royal power, Edward III built his own supporting group around him. When the opportunity came he struck swiftly at Mortimer, sending him to execution and Isabella into retirement.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.I.H.R.	<u>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</u>
B.L.	British Library
C.Ch.R.	<u>Calendar of Charter Rolls</u>
C.C.R.	<u>Calendar of Close Rolls</u>
C.F.R.	<u>Calendar of Fine Rolls</u>
C.I.P.M.	<u>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem</u>
C.P.R.	<u>Calendar of Patent Rolls</u>
C.P.M.R.	<u>Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London</u>
D.N.B.	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u>
E.E.T.S.	Early English Text Society
Ec.H.R.	<u>Economic History Review</u>
E.H.R.	<u>English Historical Review</u>
G.E.C.	<u>The Complete Peerage</u> , ed. G.E. Cockayne, revised by Vicary Gibbs, H.A. Doubleday and Lord Howard de Walden, 12 volumes in 13 (London, 1910-57)
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
R.S.	Rolls Series
Rot. Parl.	<u>Rotuli Parliamentorum</u>
T.R.H.S.	<u>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</u>

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- 1 -

The Assumption of Power by Queen Isabella and Roger Mortimer

By the late summer of 1326 it was clear that the invasion which had seemed a possibility since Queen Isabella and her son Prince Edward had allied themselves to Roger Mortimer and the other English exiles on the continent would not be long delayed. The insolent oppression of the Despensers' rule continued unabated. Without the support of the magnates, the clergy and the community of the realm their regime was too narrowly based to last. It had no roots in the country and no steps were taken to create new ones.<sup>1</sup> Abroad first in France and then in Hainault, Isabella and Mortimer tried to raise and equip a force which would quickly ensure the collapse of the Despensers' government. When they met with little active support in Paris from the Queen's brother, King Charles IV, the exiles made their way to the court of the Count of Hainault at Valenciennes where they were warmly received not only by the Count himself but also by his brother, John of Hainault, who promised to do all in his power to restore Isabella and her son to their rightful position as Queen and heir respectively of Edward II from which they were excluded.<sup>2</sup>

Rumours of a projected military expedition against England had been rife as early as January 1326 but such an invasion was discounted by Henry of Eastry, the usually well-informed Prior of Christ Church,

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- 1 The most recent examination of the Despensers' regime is to be found in Natalie Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II 1321-1326 (Cambridge 1979); Mark Buck, Politics, Finance and the Church in the Reign of Edward II (Cambridge 1983); and Nigel Saul, 'The Despensers and the Downfall of Edward II', E.H.R. xcix (1984), pp. 1-33.
  - 2 It was reported in England that large sums of money were sent to the French nobles to induce them to arrest the Queen and her son and send them to England. The Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272-1346, translated, Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bart (Glasgow 1913), p. 250. For Hainault see: Chronique de Jean le Bel, ed. J. Viard and E. Deprez, vol. i (Paris 1904), p. 16.



Canterbury, writing in March 1326 to Archbishop Walter Reynolds. If Isabella and her son came peacefully they should be well received, but he conceded that if they brought an army with them then how to resist might create a real dilemma. However the gathering of such an army would take time so that the threat could not immediately be real.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the government was alert to the possibility of invasion and schemes of defence were drawn up by Edward II.<sup>2</sup>

By September the Hainaulters had assembled a fleet at Dordrecht in Holland on Isabella's behalf and there horses, equipment and supplies were embarked.<sup>3</sup> In England the King was experiencing great difficulty in mobilising his forces. When Isabella and her adherents together with John of Hainault and his mercenaries eventually landed they did so without any opposition. The landing was made at the mouth of the River Orwell in Suffolk on Thursday, 24 September 1326. The exact location is subject to some doubt since the majority of the chroniclers refer generally to a landing at Harwich on the Orwell. However the Memorials of the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds suggest that the point at which Isabella and her forces disembarked was Walton.<sup>4</sup> This has been identified as Walton-on-the-Naze which is south of both the Orwell and Harwich; but J.H. Round conclusively argues for the

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- 1 Litterae Cantuarienses, ed. J.B. Sheppard, vol. i, R.S. (London 1887), pp. 172-73.
  - 2 Natalie Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, p. 183, citing Parliamentary and Council Proceedings, P.R.O., C.49/5/17. C.49/5/16 suggests that the King was taking precautions against a possible landing in North Wales.
  - 3 Jean le Bel, op. cit., p. 17.
  - 4 The fullest account of the landing is to be found in Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, ed. W. Stubbs, R.S. (London 1882): vol. i Annales Paulini, p. 313. Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey, ed. T. Arnold, vol.ii, R.S. (London 1892), p. 327.

peninsular opposite Harwich where there is a second Walton,<sup>1</sup> situated in the Suffolk hundred of 'Colenesse' which he identifies with the 'Colvasse' referred to in the Annales Paulini.<sup>2</sup> The precise numbers involved are as usual difficult to ascertain. One chronicler refers to an exact number, 2,757 men<sup>3</sup>, but this seems an impossibly large force for it would have necessitated a fleet of considerable size; even the 1,500 men of the Lanercost chronicler<sup>4</sup> seems too big and one should probably fall back on Froissart's statement that there were no more than 300 men as being much nearer the truth.<sup>5</sup>

The invaders' voyage had been disrupted by storms so that, according to Le Bel, the sandy beach at which they had arrived was not immediately identifiable and they were uncertain as to whether they were in friendly country.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless it seems likely that Isabella had forewarned her supporters of her coming and that both she, her allies and her potential supporters were only too well aware of where she was. In fact Walton was on the lands of the King's half-brother, Thomas of Brotherton, Earl of Norfolk, the Earl Marshal, and he appears to have been one of the first who joined Isabella.<sup>7</sup> His coming must

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1 J.H. Round, 'The Landing of Queen Isabella in 1326', E.H.R. xiv (1899), pp. 104-5.

2 'applicuit in portu de Arewelle, et cepit terram quae vocatur Colvasse', Annales Paulini, op. cit.

3 Thomae Walsingham, Historia Anglicana, vol. i, 1272-1381, ed. H.T. Riley, R.S. (London 1863), p. 180.

4 Lanercost, p. 251.

5 Chroniques de J. Froissart, i, 1307-1340, II Partie, ed. Simeon Luce, (Paris 1869), p. 25.

6 Jean le Bel, op. cit., p. 18.

7 Adae Murimuth, Continuatio Chronicarum, ed. E. Maunde Thompson, R.S. (London 1889), p. 46.

have been reassuring, bringing with it the hope of further defections for during the first few days all must depend on those who came in to identify themselves as opponents of the Despensers. The fact that Isabella had her son, the young Prince Edward, with her created an encouraging rallying point while the determination of the men who had accompanied her, Roger Mortimer, John Cromwell, Thomas Roscelyn and William Trussel, was not in doubt. The loyalty of John of Hainault and his mercenaries was guaranteed by the enormous financial advantages which they stood to gain.

Isabella spent the first night at Walton while the ships were speedily unloaded and sent away thus cutting off any chance of retreat should things go wrong. But the failure of any of the King's forces to oppose the landing or to prevent the subsequent advance in-land merely emphasises that loyalty to the Crown and the government was practically non-existent. The Bury annalist suggests that Robert de Waterville, who had been instructed to hold the coast at Walton, fled with his men. It is quite clear that he completely failed to obey his instructions to resist Mortimer's landing and that even though he was married to Despenser's niece he very quickly transferred his support to the invaders.<sup>1</sup> Other steps taken by the King to protect the east coast also failed. On 16 September, Robert de Leyburn had been appointed admiral of the fleet of Yarmouth to cover the area north of the Thames while ten days later Stephen de Abingdon had been appointed

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1 Waterville's obvious self interest is examined: Nigel Saul, 'The Despensers and the Downfall of Edward II', E.H.R. xcix (1984), pp. 13-15. Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey, op. cit., p. 328. Waterville is named as one of those present at Bristol, a month later, when Prince Edward was chosen keeper of the realm so that he could govern in his father's name. C.C.R. 1323-27, p. 655.



constable of the nearby Pleshey Castle in Essex. Neither of these men made any move to protect the King's interests.<sup>1</sup>

It is not clear when news of Isabella's landing reached Edward II who was at the Tower of London. The Annales Paulini states that one of the Queen's ships sailed round to the Thames after unloading and that the sailors thus reported her arrival.<sup>2</sup> The news certainly spread fairly quickly. On 27 September orders were sent to the counties that men should be arrayed and brought to the King; their wages should be paid by the respective sheriffs until the men actually reached the King when the Wardrobe would take over responsibility for them.<sup>3</sup> This was merely the beginning of what must have been a period of frantic and in fact fruitless activity. It looks almost as if panic had set in for orders were dispatched in rapid succession. Before news of Waterville's treachery could have reached London, further orders were sent to him containing instructions that the men of the eastern counties should be levied and the rebels pursued remorselessly. Every assistance was to be given by the arrayers in the area. Elsewhere the sheriffs were ordered to forbid by proclamation the giving of any assistance to the rebels while throughout the country all letters from the rebels were to be intercepted and sent unopened to the King.<sup>4</sup>

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1 C.P.R. 1324-27, p. 321; C.F.R. 1319-27, p. 417.

2 Annales Paulini, op. cit.

3 C.P.R. 1324-27, pp. 327-8.

4 C.P.R. 1324-27, p. 327; Foedera, conventiones, litterae et cujus-  
cunque generis Acta Publica inter Reges Angliae et alios quosvis  
Imperatores, Reges, Pontifices, Principes vel Communitates, ed.  
Thomas Rymer, vol. II, Pars I (London 1818), p. 643.

By 28 September the government already knew that Isabella was communicating daily, not only with the magnates but with leading clergy and the City of London authorities. Anyone carrying letters to them from the Queen, Prince Edward or the Earl of Kent, another half-brother of the King, who was amongst the invaders, were to be arrested. In fairs and markets throughout the country proclamation was to be made that the King would arrest these traitors and aliens who had invaded the realm and that all able-bodied men who came to serve the King and to resist the invaders would be paid proper wages. So desperate was the government to raise support that they offered to grant pardons for felonies and outlawries and even for adherence to the rebels, if men would join the King. Only Roger Mortimer, his chief supporters and those responsible for the murder of the former Chief Baron of the Exchequer, Roger Belers, were exempted from this. On Mortimer's head a price of £1,000 was placed.<sup>1</sup> All this contrasts with the calm advice of Henry of Eastry writing from Canterbury on the same day to suggest that three bishops should be appointed to inquire into the arrival of the armed men from overseas who should be given the opportunity of justifying their invasion before the King used force against them.<sup>2</sup>

However, the chronicles speak of four bishops already hastening to join Isabella. Alexander Bicknor, Archbishop of Dublin, Henry Burghersh, Bishop of Lincoln, John Hothum, Bishop of Ely and Adam Orleton, Bishop of Hereford all had good reasons for opposing the

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1 C.C.R. 1323-27, p. 650; Foedera II, i, p. 644. Belers' murder was the most notorious crime of the Folville family of Leicestershire. See below, p.260

2 Litterae Cantuarienses, i, p. 194.

Despensers.<sup>1</sup> In fact they did not all arrive immediately and Orleton who had spent September in his diocese of Hereford took some days to move eastwards.<sup>2</sup> Further support came from rather different sources. The men of Ipswich lent £100 when Isabella landed at Walton and many of the East Anglian communities sent armed help.<sup>3</sup> The need for money was urgent and when on Michaelmas Day the Queen arrived on the first stage of her journey at the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds, she appropriated a sum of £800 which had been deposited there for safe keeping by Hervey de Stanton, Chief Justice of the King's Bench.<sup>4</sup> The money was needed to pay the Queen's army which was growing daily and as news of this reached the Despensers their anxiety and depression grew.<sup>5</sup>

Faced by the realisation that they had little support in the country, the King and his advisers now made a strategic error by with-

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- 1 Chronicon Galfridi le Baker de Swynbroke, ed. E. Maunde Thompson (Oxford 1889), p. 21; Murimuth, p. 47 confuses the Archbishop of Dublin with the Bishop of Durham who would have taken some time to receive news of Isabella's arrival. Bicknor, a former treasurer of Ireland had suffered confiscation of his temporalities in 1325 for failing to render proper accounts at the Exchequer. Burghersh, a nephew of Bartholomew Badlesmere, had been imprisoned in the Tower in 1322 and Edward II had demanded that Pope John XXII remove him from office. Hothum had been replaced as Chancellor in 1320 and in the intervening period his temporalities were encroached upon by the Younger Despenser. Orleton was a Mortimer supporter and since 1324 had been the victim of a concerted campaign of vilification. See: K. Edwards, 'The Political Importance of the English Bishops during the reign of Edward II', E.H.R. lix (1944), pp. 311-47.
  - 2 Orleton's itinerary. R.M. Haines, The Church and Politics in Fourteenth Century England (Cambridge 1978), Appendix 3, p. 227.
  - 3 Calendar of the Memoranda Rolls (Exchequer), Michaelmas 1326 to Michaelmas 1327, ed. R.E. Latham (1968), no. 2235, p. 355; Annales Paulini, p. 314.
  - 4 Instructions were sent to the Exchequer on 1 February 1328 for an assignment to be made to Stanton's executors so the £800 could speedily be repaid; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 249.
  - 5 The Brut or Chronicles of England, ed. F.W.D. Brie, Early English Text Society, Part i (Oxford 1906), p. 237.

drawing from London. Edward had apparently sought military help from the Londoners, but received so ambivalent a reply that although he ordered the Tower to be fortified, he moved to Westminster as a preliminary to departing westwards.<sup>1</sup> Since the Despensers had built an empire for themselves in South Wales the King may well have felt that he would be safest there; on the other hand since Mortimer wielded influence on the Welsh March, the scene of conflict in the winter of 1321-22, the Despensers may well have thought that the present battleground would be there. Certainly an order was sent on 2 October to John Inge, keeper of Mortimer's castle at Wigmore, to remain there and to defend it against any possible attacks by Mortimer or his supporters.<sup>2</sup> Isabella and Mortimer did indeed advance westwards, but only behind the King who was increasingly forced onto the defensive as his forces failed to materialise. Furthermore by abandoning London, Edward opened the way for Isabella and Mortimer's supporters in the City to take control when the authorities had already ignored overtures from the Queen because the King was in London.

Briefly, however, at the beginning of October Edward lay west of London, first at Acton, then at Ruislip.<sup>3</sup> But the sense of urgency was still there. The treasurer, Archbishop Melton of York, was ordered to make funds available to pay the men whom John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey was leading against the rebels; a special clerk was detailed to

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1 Walsingham, p. 180. For the urgent fortification of the Tower, 'Et ceo en nul manere ne lessez' ordered on 30 September see Memoranda Roll 1326-7, no. 201, p. 35. The Court at Westminster, 1 October, E.101/382/1, Household Expenses, 20 Edward II.

2 C.C.R. 1323-27, p. 649.

3 Details of Edward's movements may be traced in the Roll of Household Expenses, E.101/382/1.

deal with this, 'Et facez cest besoigne si hastivement et si diligement qe noz busoignes ne soyent desespoitez pardefaute de deniers'.<sup>1</sup> By 6 October the King was at Wallingford, by which time the decision to move west must have been firmly taken since orders were issued on that day for the preparation of the King's rooms in Gloucester Castle.<sup>2</sup> He arrived there three days later to find that his position had deteriorated further. Orders for the raising of troops were having little effect. Thomas Wake, son-in-law of the former Earl of Lancaster, who had failed to appear with his men, was now ordered to be at Gloucester by 18 October or be held contumacious. John Inge was instructed to abandon Wigmore and come to the King with men before 15 October. The continuing stream of instructions indicate an increasing desperation to assemble a viable fighting force. Even men on board the King's ships in London were to be pressed into service, while the sheriff of Stafford was ordered to free men accused of unlawful assembly and bearing of arms provided they would join the King against the rebels.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, Isabella and Mortimer had continued their journey by way of Cambridge to Baldock. On 6 October another appeal was sent to the City of London. The Queen reminded the City of her previous letters which had been ignored; she now concluded her new appeal for help with a scarcely veiled threat of reprisal if they did not help her to advance the interests of the realm.<sup>4</sup> A copy of the letter, which also

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1 Memoranda Roll, 1326-7, no. 214, p. 36.

2 C.F.R. 1319-27, p. 420.

3 Parliamentary Writs and Writs of Military Summons, ed. F. Palgrave (London 1827-34), II, 2, p. 295; C.P.R. 1324-27, p. 326; Memoranda Roll, 1326-7, no. 805, p. 105; Foedera II, i, p. 645.

4 Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London, 1323-1364, ed. A.H. Thomas (Cambridge 1926), p. 42.

contained a request that the Despensers should be arrested, was found fixed to the cross at Cheapside at dawn, while other copies appeared in the windows of individual houses<sup>1</sup> thus indicating a strong support for the Queen in the City while emphasising the government's miscalculation in leaving London to be exploited by the pro-Mortimer party led by Richard Bethune.

The accounts of the chroniclers imply that the invading army was well organised and that the soldiers did little damage as they passed by except when they came across property belonging to Despenser supporters. So at Baldock the brother of the Chancellor, Robert Baldock, was arrested and his goods destroyed; in other cases goods were appropriated to the use of the army whose resources were clearly limited.<sup>2</sup> At the next stopping place, Dunstaple, the Queen was joined by Henry of Lancaster, Earl of Leicester, younger brother of Thomas of Lancaster the leader of the 1322 rebellion. A few days previously Henry's men had had a lucky encounter at Leicester Abbey when Sir John Vaux, who was on his way to the Elder Despenser with his master's treasure and household equipment, was ambushed. The valuables he was carrying were seized and their use thus denied to the King.<sup>3</sup> They were used instead for the maintenance of the Queen's forces. By 10 October Lancaster's defection was known to the King for on that day orders were issued for the seizure of his castles and lands in the Welsh March. It seems that resistance was expected for there were instructions to use the county posse should it prove necessary.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Chronica Monasterii de Melsa, II, ed. E.A. Bond, R.S. (1867), p. 351.

2 Annales Paulini, pp. 314-5.

3 Chronicon Henrici Knighton, I, ed. J.R. Lumby, R.S. (1889), p. 435.

4 C.F.R. 1319-27, p. 419.

Meanwhile, with the added morale boost of Lancaster's arrival, Isabella moved on to her former castle of Wallingford. From there on 15 October a manifesto was issued in her name and in that of her son and of the Earl of Kent. It spoke of the grave wounds inflicted on the Church and realm by the government of Hugh Despenser and Robert Baldock. The Church had been despoiled, the Crown diminished, the nobility without cause put to death, imprisoned or exiled. The common people had been burdened by heavy taxes and despoiled by tallage. So now Isabella and her supporters had come to lift these oppressions and to maintain the honour of the Church, the Crown and the realm. That this might more speedily be achieved she appealed to all who could to hasten to join her.<sup>1</sup> The attack is thus directed against the Despensers. The King is badly advised and those he counts his friends are really enemies to him and to God. As yet the King himself does not appear to be a target even though the unreliable chronicler Geoffrey le Baker reports a sermon preached by Adam Orleton at Oxford a few days later which could be construed as either an attack on the Despenser government or on the Crown. This sermon which he reports as being listened to by the Queen, Prince Edward, Mortimer and other supporters was on the text, 'My head is sick'. However, both the *Historia Roffensis* and the *Chronicle of Lanercost* attribute this text as belonging to a sermon preached by Bishop Stratford of Winchester to the parliament assembled at Westminster the following January.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Foedera II, i, p. 645.

2 Le Baker, p. 23; Historia Roffensis ab anno 1314 ad 1350 Willelmi de Dene, ed. H. Wharton, Anglia Sacra I (London 1691), p. 367; Lanercost, p. 255. The text: Caput meum doleo is II Kings Chapter 4, verse 19. Orleton speaking in 1334 claimed that his text on this occasion was Genesis Chapter 3, verse 15. See: Haines, The Church and Politics in Fourteenth Century England, p. 165.

As Isabella moved westwards so the King's attempts to organise resistance continued. Robert de Micheldure was ordered to raise forces in Wiltshire; the excuses of the sheriff of Sussex that he couldn't raise men because he had no money to pay them were brushed aside by orders for the levies to be paid by the Exchequer; the castles of Berkeley, Rockingham, Bridgewater and Hanley would be more secure in more reliable hands and the appropriate changes were made; supplies were poured into Bristol Castle.<sup>1</sup> But there seems little indication of settled purpose in the arrangements made by the King and the Despensers.

Without any direct pressure from Isabella's forces, Edward had first withdrawn from London; now with the Queen still miles behind him he retreated beyond Gloucester thus putting the river Severn between himself and his enemies. On 12 October he was at Westbury-on-Severn, then at Alvington, then at Tintern Abbey, until on 16 October he arrived at Chepstow where the castle could give security and the river a convenient escape route.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime, the Forest of Dean could afford protection. Provision was made for its defence at the same time as orders were sent to John Felton, Donald of Mar, Hugh Turpington and Geoffrey de Castro to defend the Welsh march. The elder Despenser was placed in command of the royal forces in the south western counties, but the King, perhaps doubting the old man's ability to act decisively, reinforced his command by ordering Donald of Mar to act against the rebels in the same counties.<sup>3</sup> Despenser based himself

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1 C.P.R. 1324-27, pp. 326, 327, 331; C.C.R. 1323-27, p. 619; C.F.R. 1319-27, p. 419. Supplies worth £84 12s. were delivered to Donald of Mar at Bristol Castle by the sheriff of Gloucester on 12 October. Rotuli Parliamentorum II, p. 34.

2 E.101/382/1.

3 C.P.R. 1324-27, p. 332.



at Bristol within reach and communication of the King across the Severn.

Edward's behaviour continued to demonstrate his misjudgement of the situation. When the crisis had first come to a head with Isabella's landing Edward had turned for help to two strong supporters of the Crown in Wales, Gruffydd Llwyd and Rhys ap Gruffyd. On 26 September they had been ordered to raise forces in Wales and it has been surmised that Edward perhaps hoped to establish a base there.<sup>1</sup> But the King's subsequent behaviour gives no indication of a serious attempt to reach any help which might have been forthcoming in the Welsh principality. There is no indication as to what he intended to do when he embarked by boat at Chepstow on 20 October. The Chamber accounts indicate that he remained at sea until he disembarked at Cardiff on 25 October. A payment made to a Carmelite friar who prayed for a fair wind bears out the statement in the Scalacronica that the King endured persistently contrary winds in the Bristol Channel. None of the chroniclers throws any real light on the King's intended destination. Murimuth merely suggests that he was heading across the sea; Le Baker, writing much later, proposes Lundy Island; Walsingham is divided between Lundy and Ireland.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to know where the King could look for refuge. He had plenty of financial

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- 1 J. Beverley Smith, 'Edward II and the Allegiance of Wales', Welsh History Review, 8 (1976), pp. 139-171; Gruffydd Llwyd or Gruffyd ap Rhys was a royal supporter who had helped to bring about the collapse of baronial opposition to the King on the March in 1322. He had captured the Mortimer Castle of Chirk. J.G. Edwards, 'Sir Gruffydd Llwyd', E.H.R. xxx (1915), pp. 589-601.
  - 2 The Chamber Account for May 1325-October 1326 is Society of Antiquaries Library, MS. 122, ff. 44-45; Scalacronica by Sir Thomas Grey of Heton. Translated by Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bart. (Glasgow 1907), p. 151; Murimuth, p. 49; Le Baker, p. 23; Walsingham, p. 183.

resources but few men;<sup>1</sup> Lundy might be a springboard but hardly an ideal rallying point while Ireland, where Mortimer had extensive estates, could not have held very encouraging prospects. Yet the Lanercost Chronicler suggests that from Ireland the King might have gone to Scotland and tried to regain his throne with the help of an Irish-Scots army. It seems that he had already written to the Scots offering to give up his claims to Scotland and promising to hand over parts of northern England to Robert Bruce the Scots' king in return for help.<sup>2</sup> In the event the King and his companions were blown back on to the shores of Glamorgan and after disembarking at Cardiff abortive attempts began again to rally support. On 27 October instructions were sent for commissions of array to raise the whole population in the Lordships of Usk, Neath and Abergavenny, and two days later from Caerphilly orders were sent out for the raising of forces in Pembroke, Gower, Haverford and Glamorgan. Further north on the March in the area of the confiscated Mortimer lands, the sheriffs received orders to give every assistance to those entrusted with the task of suppressing any sign of rebellion.<sup>3</sup>

But the King's orders were not met with instant obedience. His earlier instructions concerning Henry of Lancaster's lands had not been effective. On 20 October his nephew, Hugh, son of the younger

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- 1 The King's clerk, John de Langton delivered the huge sum of £29,000 from the Exchequer to the King about 20 October. Memo-randa Roll, 1326-7, No. 212, p. 36.
  - 2 Lanercost, p. 253. Ranald Nicholson, 'A Sequel to Edward Bruce's Invasion of Ireland', Scottish Historical Review, xlii (1963), pp. 30-40, records under the date 6 February 1327 the payment of 40s. to a Friar for expenses on a mission from Ireland to Scotland touching the King's business. For further reference to this point see below: p.203.
  - 3 C.P.R. 1324-27, pp. 333-34; C.F.R. 1319-27, p. 421.

Despenser, Edmund Hacluyt and Bogo de Knoville were ordered to occupy Lancaster's castles of Grosmont, Skenfrith and White Castle and ensure that they were properly secured. Neither did the King's instructions inspire confidence for he did not always trust those to whom his orders were sent, as is shown in this case when he sent a letter a week later to his nephew. This letter, remitting a fine of 500 marks imposed on Bogo de Knoville, was to be shown to Knoville but only if he bore himself well to the King and to the King's party.<sup>1</sup> Such behaviour was not calculated to win support or gain loyalty. In any case by the end of October it was far too late.

Isabella, pursuing her way westward, had moved on from Oxford to Gloucester. There she received the last big addition to her army with the arrival of the northerners led by Henry Percy and Thomas Wake whom the King had summoned in vain.<sup>2</sup> Another recruit at Gloucester was Thomas de Berkeley, newly released from Pevensey Castle. He was immediately sent to take possession of his castle at Berkeley. The steps the King had taken to protect it proved useless; the men deserted and Thomas de Berkeley was able to use them to defend the castle on the Queen's behalf. His allegiance to Isabella and Mortimer, his father-in-law, did not however spare his lands from depredations when a few days later the army left Gloucester and advanced towards Bristol. The reeves and bailiffs of the Berkeley estates registered complaints about the followers of Henry of Lancaster, the Earl of Kent, John of Hainault and Hugh Audley and even about Berkeley himself because he so laboured

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1 C.P.R. 1324-27, pp. 332, 333.

2 Murimuth, p. 47.

the mares on his journey that they cast their foals.<sup>1</sup>

The arrival of Isabella's army at Bristol trapped Despenser and his forces in the town and castle. His isolation was increased by the King's withdrawal from Chepstow and by 26 October the town and castle had both surrendered and the Elder Despenser was in Isabella's hands.<sup>2</sup> The invaders now immediately took steps to rationalise their position with regard to the government of the realm. However, the Great and Privy Seals and the apparatus of government still remained in the King's hands. Accordingly at a meeting held at Bristol in the presence of the Queen and her son, described in the official memorandum as Duke of Aquitaine, the bishops and magnates who now included the Archbishop of Dublin, bishops Stratford of Winchester, Burghersh, Hotham and Orleton as well as the King's brothers the earls of Norfolk and Kent, Henry of Lancaster, Thomas Wake, Henry Beaumont and Robert Waterville and other knights and barons, chose Prince Edward to be keeper of the realm. He was to rule in the name of his father who was declared to have left the realm without rule by leaving the government in the hands of the Younger Despenser and Baldock. Since no other seal was available he was obliged to use his Privy Seal as Duke of Aquitaine and this was given into the custody of the Queen's clerk, Robert Wyville. This was done, so it was said, with the assent of the community of the

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- 1 The complaints referred to the stealing of geese and ducks at Slimbridge; to the breaking down of the doors of barns and a chapel and to the wasting of oats and the theft of wheat, pigs and cattle. Sir John Smyth of Nibley, The Berkeley Manuscripts. The Lives of the Berkeleys from 1066-1618, I, ed. J. Maclean, Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society (Gloucester 1883), pp. 281-82.
  - 2 Le Bel states that the town wished to surrender saving the life and limb of those within, but that Isabella was determined to secure Despenser's person and the town was obliged to agree. Le Bel, p. 23.

realm; but it is difficult to conjecture who the community of the realm might be if it were not the magnates, bishops and knights of the Queen's company. It seems highly unlikely that the citizens of Bristol, a few soldiers in the retinues of the magnates or household servants could have played any part in what must at the best have been a hastily improvised meeting summoned to buttress the legality of an act of rebellion.<sup>1</sup>

The following day the Elder Despenser appeared before a court presided over by William Trussel.<sup>2</sup> In the presence of Henry of Lancaster, the Earls of Norfolk and Kent, Roger Mortimer and other magnates, Thomas Wake read the indictment. Forbidden to answer the charges, Despenser was adjudged worthy of death by those present for encouraging the illegal government of the previous years, for enriching himself at the expense of other peoples' lands, for despoiling the Church and for involvement in the baseless execution of Thomas of Lancaster in 1322.<sup>3</sup> It may have been this last charge which sealed his fate for the Bury annalist remarks, perhaps not entirely convincingly, that Isabella wished to save him but was dissuaded from such a course by Lancaster's friends.<sup>4</sup> Without further delay Despenser was

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- 1 C.C.R. 1323-27, p. 655. It is interesting to note that the name of Roger Mortimer does not appear amongst those of the other magnates. It is hard to believe that he took no part in the proceedings. This is, however, an indication of the difficulties involved in unravelling the precise part which Mortimer played in affairs.
  - 2 Trussel was a devoted supporter of Thomas of Lancaster and had fought at Boroughbridge before fleeing abroad. J.R. Maddicott, Thomas of Lancaster 1307-1322 (Oxford 1970), pp. 59-60.
  - 3 Annales Paulini, pp. 317-18; Le Bel, p. 23.
  - 4 Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey, II, p. 328.

drawn, hanged and beheaded outside Bristol Castle. His head was sent for display to Winchester, the town from which he had taken his title.<sup>1</sup>

But Despensers was not the first of Edward's ministers to fall. The traditionally turbulent Londoners had taken the opportunity of the breakdown in government to settle a few accounts. The first signs of active unrest had appeared in London nearly a month before. Following receipt of the news of Isabella's landing, Archbishop Reynolds had appeared before the clergy and people of the City in St. Paul's Cathedral. There, in the presence of the Bishops of London and Winchester, he had caused a bull to be read which attacked foreign invaders. The men of the City, however, were not deceived. They recognised the bull as a seven year old document originally prepared for publication in the face of a Scots invasion and there were hostile murmurings.<sup>2</sup> There was a strong pro-Mortimer faction in the City led by Richard Bethune and he was now ready to exploit the situation. The murmurings at St. Paul's were but a forerunner of the days of uncontrolled rioting which erupted a fortnight later after Isabella's appeal to hunt down the Despensers and their supporters had appeared on Cheapside.

The mayor, Hamo de Chigwell, was in a difficult position. He had contrived to ride the crisis of 1321-22 by a compromise which won the City a breathing space. He was, however, one of Mortimer's judges and though he had no particular reason to love the Despensers this identified him with the anti-Mortimer faction. He therefore had to tread carefully, his actions now in the autumn of 1326 only motivated by

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1 Annales Paulini, p. 318.

2 Op. cit., p. 314. Reynolds revealed the deception when the date of the bull was omitted. The bull is identified in Haines, Church and Politics in Fourteenth Century England, p. 22.

self-interest.<sup>1</sup> There were, however, more loyal supporters of the King about in London amongst whom Bishops Stapeldon of Exeter and Gravesend of London were most closely identified with royal policies. Others were anxious to bring about a compromise peace between the King and Isabella.

A meeting was held at Lambeth under the aegis of the Archbishop of Canterbury. There the bishops of London, Exeter, Winchester, Worcester and Rochester discussed the possibility of holding a meeting at St. Paul's to arrange for the sending of mediators to the King and Queen. Rochester, urging the Londoners' dislike of the bishops, persuaded his colleagues to continue the discussions in safety at Lambeth. But next day, although Stratford of Winchester agreed to go as an envoy to the Queen, he could get no partner to accompany him.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile in an attempt to secure the City for the King, Stapeldon and Gravesend had arranged to meet three royal justices, Sir Geoffrey le Scrope, Hervey de Stanton and Walter of Norwich, at Blackfriars on the morning of 15 October.

The Mayor and Aldermen were summoned to the meeting, but the citizens would not allow them to keep the appointment. In view of the unsettled state of the City it is doubtful whether Scrope and the other justices would have kept it either.<sup>3</sup> Chigwell was carried to

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1 The state of London in the years 1321-26 is examined in Gwyn A. Williams, Medieval London. From Commune to Capital (London 1963), pp. 286-96.

2 Historia Roffensis, p. 366.

3 E.L.G. Stones, 'Sir Geoffrey le Scrope (c. 1285-1340)', unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Glasgow (195 ), pp. 132-33. The proposed meeting is also described in the Historia Aurea. V.H. Galbraith, 'Extracts from the Historia Aurea and a French Brut (1317-47)', E.H.R. xliii (1928).

Guildhall where he found himself under pressure from the commons to act against Despenser adherents. Soon hostile shouts were raised in Cheapside against the Queen's enemies. The first to fall a victim was John Marshal, a secretary of the Younger Despenser who was suspected of having revealed the City's counsels to his master. He was dragged from his horse near Walbrook and beheaded in Cheapside.<sup>1</sup> The next victim was Bishop Stapeldon. That he was unpopular in the city cannot be doubted. Why he should have ventured into the City at a time when it was clearly in a disturbed state it is impossible to tell. The chroniclers suggest a variety of reasons but perhaps the most obvious inference is that Stapeldon had not heard of the collapse of the proposed Blackfriars meeting and that he was on his way there when the Londoners fell upon him near St. Paul's.<sup>2</sup> He was pulled from his horse and dragged into Cheapside where, stripped of the armour he was found to be wearing beneath his robes, he was beheaded with two of his squires, John Paddington and William Walle. The bishop's body was left lying where he died until the time of Vespers when it was carried to St. Paul's. But no-one wanted it. The following morning it was carried to the church of St. Clement Dane's where the rector whom Stapeldon himself had presented refused to give it

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1 Croniques de London depuis l'an 44 Henri III jusqu'a l'an 17 Edward III, ed. G.J. Aungier, Camden Society 28 (1844), p. 52.

2 Stapeldon's unpopularity is discussed in Mark Buck, Politics, Finance and the Church in the Reign of Edward II, pp. 197-216. The chroniclers put forward as reasons for Stapeldon being in the City that he was sent to take possession of the City's keys under the King's Commission, The Brut, p. 237; he was on his way to dinner at his house in Elder Dean's Lane, Croniques de London, p. 52; he was seeking refuge in the Tower, Annales Paulini, p. 315.



burial. Eventually it was interred in a derelict graveyard nearby. His head was taken to the Queen at Gloucester.<sup>1</sup>

The rioting in the City and its surroundings continued. The mob got out of hand and the authorities were neither strong enough nor willing to take action. Baldock's manor at Finsbury and his house in Ivy Lane were sacked and the treasure which he had deposited at St. Paul's was seized. The houses of John Charlton, a former mayor of the staple at St. Omer, and William de Clif, a known Despenser supporter, were broken into and robbed, while the treasure of the Earl of Arundel was removed from Holy Trinity Church. These attacks the chronicler reports were called 'rifling'; even foreign merchants did not escape the attentions of the 'riflers'. Arnold of Spain, generally regarded as having been responsible for raising the price of wine, was beheaded and the premises of the royal bankers, the Bardi, where the bulk of the Younger Despenser's treasure was believed to be stored, were attacked by night. The Crown later purchased the Bardi houses in London and in February 1328 the King still owed them £700 for this transaction.<sup>2</sup>

When news of the riot was brought to the Bishop of Rochester he turned for support to Archbishop Reynolds, only to find that the Archbishop had already fled taking the bishop's horses with him. In making his own escape Rochester was obliged to go on foot. Reports

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1 Walsingham, p. 182; Annales Paulini, pp. 315-17; The Brut, pp. 237-38, where Walle is described as Stapeldon's nephew; Le Baker, p. 23. Stapeldon's body was finally buried in his cathedral at Exeter.

2 Annales Paulini, p. 321; Croniques de London, p. 52. E.B. Fryde, 'The Deposits of Hugh Despenser the Younger with Italian Bankers', Economic History Review, 2nd series, iii (1951) suggests that the bulk of Despenser's financial transactions at the end of his life were with the Peruzzi rather than the Bardi. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 230. See also below, p. 279.

of events in the capital had reached the surrounding counties and the bishop was warned that hoodlums from Rochester were on the look out for him as he was known to be a supporter of the King. The bishop was, however, able to reach his cathedral city in safety.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the Londoners had secured the person of John of Eltham, Isabella's second son, who had been lodged for safety at the Tower together with the King's neice, Eleanor, the younger Despenser's wife. A number of hostages in the King's hands, Roger Mortimer's two sons, Sir Roger Clifford and Sir Bartholomew Burghersh were also found and freed. John of Eltham was proclaimed Guardian of the City and those who had been in the Tower were placed under the protection of the Dean of St. Paul's.<sup>2</sup> There is an undated letter from Isabella and Prince Edward thanking the 'seignours' and commonalty of London for their support and requesting them to safeguard the Tower and its contents. The letter probably dates from the third week in October and it reflects some anxiety on the Queen's part with regard to the lawlessness in the City. She requests the City to ensure that no attacks are made on the Bishop of London and that John of Eltham and the others released from the Tower should be sent under safe-conduct to join her. The mayor's reply promised obedience but requested that John of Eltham should remain in London. Le Baker remarks that it was a sensible precaution in uncertain times to appear to be doing things in the name of one of the King's sons.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Historia Roffensis, p. 366.

2 Knighton, I, pp. 434-35; Croniques de London, p. 54.

3 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 42; Le Baker, p. 24.

The nomination of Prince Edward as Keeper of the Realm at Bristol on 26 October clearly marks the assumption of power by Isabella.<sup>1</sup> The deprivations of her army and the chaotic situation in London together with attacks on Despenser adherents in the provinces suggest that events had not moved as peacefully as the majority of the chroniclers would have us believe. Nevertheless the steady advance westwards of the Queen's forces reflects the remorseless purpose of her coming and contrasts with the King's desperate attempts to rally support and establish resistance. That Edward had persistently misread the situation is clear. He does not seem to have realised the nature of his isolation accentuated by the failure of the Despenser regime to build any links between central government and local administration in the counties.<sup>2</sup> A portent of what was to come had already appeared when Thomas le Blount the Steward of Edward's household had deserted him at Chepstow. By the beginning of November his household itself virtually ceased to exist. The record of household expenses ceases although royal orders concerning resistance continued to flow.<sup>3</sup>

Edward had moved to Caerphilly where the last payment was recorded in the Chamber accounts on 31 October. He subsequently moved deeper into South Wales for letters were dated at Margam on 3-4 November and at Neath on 5-7 November.<sup>4</sup> By then the hopelessness of his situation

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1 Above p.16

2 The government's isolation is discussed by Nigel Saul, 'The Despensers and the Downfall of Edward II', E.H.R. xcix (1984), pp. 21, 33.

3 On 2 November pardons were issued to anyone joining the defence of Caerphilly Castle and on 6 November orders were issued for victuals to be purveyed in Swansea and conveyed to the King and his army in commandeered ships. C.P.R. 1324-27, pp. 334, 335. The last entries on the Roll of Household expenses are dated 1 November; E.101/382/1.

4 J. Beverley Smith, 'Edward II and the Allegiance of Wales', Welsh Hist. Rev. (1976), p. 164, n. 136.

must at last have become apparent. On 10 November a safe conduct was issued for a group which included the Abbot of Neath, Rhys ap Griffith and the King's young nephew, Edward de Bohun, to go to negotiate with Isabella and Prince Edward.<sup>1</sup>

Following the Elder Despenser's death, the Queen and her party had left Bristol and established themselves at Hereford, close to Mortimer's Marcher estates. There Isabella, in her son's name, took firm control of the government. On 6 November, Bishop Stratford of Winchester was appointed Treasurer in the place of Archbishop Melton of York. Melton was a known supporter of Edward II and it was now alleged that the Archbishop was too preoccupied with affairs in the north to carry out his duties. The Queen was still concerned to maintain the legality of her government. A further writ, dated 7 November, was entrusted to Stratford by which the Exchequer was ordered to produce the seal which had been used in England on a previous occasion when Edward had been absent from the realm in France. This was duly handed to Stratford in the presence of Hamo de Chigwell and the aldermen and commonalty of London on 14 November and sent to Isabella at Hereford the following day. Stratford began to officiate as Treasurer on 17 November when an indenture was made between himself and Archbishop Melton's clerk, William de Feriby concerning the treasure and other things found in the treasury.<sup>2</sup>

The City of London now had to be secured in the hands of Isabella's supporters. Accordingly Stratford also brought to London with him letters of instruction from the Queen and the Prince ordering the election

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1 C.P.R. 1324-27, p. 336; Foedera, II, i, p. 647.

2 Memoranda Roll, 1326-27, No. 832, pp. 110-11. The amount handed over was £62,000; P.R.O. E.101/332/21.

of a new mayor in the place of Hamo de Chigwell. Accordingly Chigwell was deposed and on 17 November Richard Bethune was admitted as mayor in his place.<sup>1</sup> With a strong supporter of Mortimer now in control in London attempts were made to bring the City back to normality. It may be that it was at this time that the undated proclamation in the Calendar of the Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City was promulgated. It orders the maintenance of the King's peace but it also gives instructions for the courts to be reopened so that any who had grievances could act under the law and not seek private vengeance. Geoffrey le Scrope at Isabella's particular request was not to be molested when he came to the City on royal business; merchants were also to be allowed to go about their business unmolested. 'Riflers' were to be suppressed and apprentices who had perhaps been amongst them were to get back to work. No-one was to be attacked simply on the grounds that they were enemies of the Queen; only John Charlton, a particular enemy of Mortimer's was specifically to be excluded from entering the City. The document reveals a concern for maintenance of law and order, is conciliatory and shows some appreciation of the delicately balanced political situation in the City.<sup>2</sup>

But if Isabella and her son were now carrying on the government in the name of the King then it was essential that the King be found and the persons of his fugitive ministers secured. Henry of Lancaster, William la Zouche of Mortimer and Rhys-ap-Hywel, men who knew the country, were sent into Wales to find the King. Whether he was betrayed

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1 Croniques de London, pp. 55-56; Calendar of Letter Books of the City of London, Letter Book E, c.1314-1337, ed. R.R. Sharpe, (London 1903), p. 214; Memoranda Roll, 1326-27, No. 830, p. 110. Bethune's election was confirmed by a writ of Edward II dated at Kenilworth 5 December 20 Edward II.

2 C.P.M.R. 1323-1364, p. 17.

as the chroniclers suggest, or whether the delegation he had sent to Isabella was able to reveal his whereabouts is not clear. Murimuth suggests that bribery was involved and it may well be that in disclosing the whereabouts of the hated Despenser and Baldock, the Welsh also betrayed the King who had put himself in their care. He was found, perhaps at Neath, but more probably near Despenser's castle at Llantrisant and possibly at Penrhys on 16 November. The Younger Despenser, Robert Baldock and Despenser's marshal, Simon of Reading were taken at the same time together with the remaining members of Edward's household. The King was put into the custody of Henry of Lancaster and taken to Henry's castle at Monmouth.<sup>1</sup>

The King's return to his realm brought problems. The seal which Stratford had sent from London could no longer be used and Robert Wyville's authority as keeper of the Duke of Aquitaine's Privy Seal also ceased to be effective. The Great Seal of the realm which was in the King's possession must be handed over and Bishop Orleton was sent from Hereford to Monmouth to get it. After some hesitation Edward handed the seal to Sir William Blount at a meeting held on 20 November. He added the caution that the seal should only be used to implement what was necessary for right and peace. The Bishop and Blount subsequently handed the seal over to Isabella in person on 26 November at Marcle in Herefordshire.<sup>2</sup> Four days earlier rolls and memoranda of the chancery which had been found by William la Zouche of Mortimer in

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1 Murimuth, p. 49.

2 C.C.R. 1323-1327, p. 655. Tout's identification of Markleye with Martley in Worcestershire, Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England, III, p. 3, n. 1, is clearly wrong. The court was at Newent in Gloucestershire on 27 November, P.R.O. E.101/382/9. More significantly Marcle was a Mortimer manor. See below, p.97.

Swansea Castle, had been brought into Isabella's rooms in Orleton's palace at Hereford and there restored to the care of Henry de Clyf, keeper of the rolls in chancery.<sup>1</sup>

Isabella had not left Hereford until her enemies had been dealt with. The first execution had been that of the Earl of Arundel. He was closely allied to the Despensers, had been involved in the trial of Thomas of Lancaster in 1322 and had incurred Mortimer hostility by his interests in the Welsh march. It was probably marcher rivalry which sealed his fate. He was arrested in Shropshire by John Charlton. Charlton's son, John, was married to Mortimer's daughter, while both Mortimer and Charlton had extensive interests close to the Arundel lordships of Oswestry and Clun. Furthermore, after 1322, when Arundel had strongly supported the Crown, he had received some of the forfeited lands of both Roger Mortimer and his uncle, Roger Mortimer of Chirk. He had been appointed Justice of Wales in 1325. Arundel was taken to Hereford and executed there on 17 November. Murimuth observes that in this as in everything else, Isabella was following Mortimer's advice.<sup>2</sup>

The Younger Despenser, Baldock and Simon de Reading in Thomas Wake's keeping had also been brought to Hereford. They were greeted by large, mocking crowds who jeered and blew trumpets as the former

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1 C.C.R. 1323-27, p. 620.

2 Knighton, p. 436. For Arundel's marcher lands see: R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, 1282-1400 (Oxford 1978), pp. 56-7; as Justice of Wales, C.P.R. 1324-27, p. 171. The chroniclers seem confused about the motives for Arundel's execution: Lanercost, p. 252 erroneously identifies him as the Younger Despenser's son-in-law, in fact his son Richard was married to Despenser's daughter Isabel; Annales Paulini, p. 321 reports him as charged with plotting the Queen's death, while as one might expect Knighton, op. cit. concludes he died because of his involvement in Thomas of Lancaster's execution. Murimuth, p. 50.

ministers passed, mounted on grotesque horses. Their arms reversed were carried before them, the words of Psalm 52, 'Quid gloria in malitia', were placarded about their necks and Despensers was crowned with a wreath of nettles. Isabella's intention that he should be taken to London for judgement had to be reversed for since his capture Despensers had refused food and drink and the weakness of his condition was such that a more speedy execution was necessary.<sup>1</sup>

His trial and execution therefore took place at Hereford on 24 November.<sup>2</sup> As had happened at Bristol in the case of his father, William Trussel presided while Henry of Lancaster, the Earls of Norfolk and Kent, Roger Mortimer and other magnates sat with him. The indictment was long and detailed, covering the whole period of Despensers's rule. Although he and his father had been exiled by parliament in 1321 he had returned to the country without permission, acting as a pirate in attacking two merchant ships on his return and robbing them of £60,000 worth of cargo. He had then encouraged the King to ride against the other magnates and in the events of the 1322 conflict with Thomas of Lancaster brought many of the nobility to their death in a way that was contrary to the spirit of both Magna Carta and the ordinances of 1311. His accroachment of royal power had led to the King being persuaded to invade Scotland so inadequately prepared that 20,000 people had been lost, the King had had to beat an ignominious

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1 Knighton, p. 436; The Brut, pp. 239-40.

2 The different surviving accounts of Despensers's trial and the charges on which he was condemned have been examined by G.A. Holmes, 'Judgement on the Younger Despensers', E.H.R. lxx (1955), pp. 261-67, and John Taylor, 'The Judgement on Hugh Despensers the Younger', Medievalia et Humanistica xii, (1958), pp. 70-77. For some discussion about the nature of the court and the procedures adopted in this case and in the trials of Lancaster, the Elder Despensers, the Earl of Kent and Roger Mortimer, see below, p. 319.



retreat and the Queen had been abandoned, leaving her in grave danger of capture by the Scots at Tynemouth Priory. It was an incident which obviously rankled in Isabella's mind. The Church had also suffered at Despenser's hands; the lands and possessions of the bishops of Hereford, Ely and Norwich had been seized, while Crown lands had been appropriated to the loss of the King's majesty. Amidst all the accusations involving offences committed against the realm, there were mixed charges reflecting a more personal sense of animosity as exemplified by the charge that Despenser had brought about the advancement of his father to the Earldom of Winchester and Harclay to the Earldom of Carlisle.

The final charges, however, clearly sprang from Isabella's deep personal hatred for Despenser by reason of the wrongs he had done her. He had perpetually created a rift between her and the King and when she had gone abroad he had tried to bring about her destruction or at the very least prevent her return by the use of bribery. When all that had proved ineffective and she had returned, he had encouraged the King to keep away from her and had accordingly proposed that they should leave the country, taking with them the Great Seal and the royal treasure.<sup>1</sup>

To this indictment Despenser was allowed to make no reply. Sentence was passed immediately. For the treason he was to be drawn; for the robbery he should be hanged; for his unlawful return he should be beheaded and finally as a sower of discord he would be disembowelled. The sentence in all its horror was carried out without delay, the

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1 Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, Vol. II, Gesta Edwardi Tertiū Auctore Canonico Bridlingtoniensis, pp. 87-89.

chroniclers for the most part relishing the appalling details. Once again the horns and the trumpets blew as Despenser was dragged through the streets to a gallows fifty feet high, where, according to the Annales Paulini, he met his fate patiently beside the fire on which his entrails were burned. Beside him but at a lower level, Simon of Reading was also hanged.<sup>1</sup> The French chroniclers add further lurid details and Froissart, after his account of the death of this heretic and sodomite, passes on to his next paragraph with the words, 'Apries ceste justice faite ...'<sup>2</sup> Despenser's head was sent to London and fixed on London Bridge. His four quarters were sent to be displayed at York, Bristol, Carlisle and Dover.<sup>3</sup>

As a clerk in orders the Chancellor, Baldock, could not suffer the same fate though Knighton tells us that he too was subjected to the insults of the crowd. He too had been brought before Trussel and was similarly accused and refused permission to plead. But he could not receive the same sentence and as a clerk he was claimed by the Bishop of Hereford who incarcerated him in his episcopal gaol. There he suffered considerable ill-usage and his removal to London the following February brought no relief. He was seized by the Londoners who shut him up in Newgate where about Ascensiontide (21 May) he was reported to have died in agony.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Annales Paulini, p. 320; The Brut, p. 240.

2 Froissart, p. 35.

3 After Mortimer's fall an order was sent on 15 December 1330 at the request of the prelates and magnates instructing the mayors of London, York, Bristol and Carlisle to allow Despenser's friends to collect his bones and take them for burial. C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 175.

4 Knighton, p. 436; Annales Paulini, pp. 320-21; Murimuth, p. 50.

Arundel, the Despensers and Baldock were disposed of. The Queen and her party moved on from Hereford, but the problem of the King remained. His reluctance to part with the Great Seal may well have suggested to Isabella and Mortimer that he was not going to be as pliable as they had hoped: weak and indecisive men may become stubborn when pressed too hard and Edward's friends had been destroyed by those who claimed to rule in his name. Barely two months had passed since Isabella had landed in Suffolk; a pause was now needed so that a decision could be made as to what to do next. So King Edward was taken in Lancaster's custody from Monmouth, by way of Ledbury to Kenilworth while the Queen and her son with Mortimer made their way from Marcle to Newent and thence to Gloucester and Cirencester.<sup>1</sup>

At Cirencester Abbey on 30 November 1326, in the presence of Roger Mortimer, the Countess of Warenne, Robert Wyville and others, the Queen and her son entrusted the care of the Great Seal to Bishop Airmyn of Norwich.<sup>2</sup> Airmyn carried the Seal to Woodstock where it was once more returned to the custody of the Queen and the Prince, although Airmyn continued to use it when business demanded, as if carrying on the

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- 1 Murimuth, p. 49; E.101/382/9. 20 Edward II- 1 Edward III Wardrobe Account of the expenses of the Joint Household of Queen Isabella and King Edward III.
  - 2 William Airmyn had been provided to the see of Norwich by Pope John XXII in 1325. Edward II had intended Baldock to have the see and it has been suggested that Airmyn only gained the nomination at the instigation of Queen Isabella. Airmyn's subsequent abandonment of Edward II was thus held to be part of a bargain struck between him and the Queen. There is no evidence for this and it is far more likely that Airmyn's flight to France in 1326 was the result of his being made the scapegoat for the poor terms obtained in the treaty with France in May 1325 which was followed by the loss of his temporalities. The temporalities were restored on the day he received the Great Seal, 30 November 1326. J.L. Grassi, 'William Airmyn and the Bishopric of Norwich', E.H.R. lxx (1955), pp. 550-61.

government in the name of the King at Kenilworth.<sup>1</sup> The fiction that the Queen was acting on her husband's behalf continued to be maintained and until a firm decision was reached about the future that must remain the case. When that decision was reached is not at all clear. There seems, however, at this time to have been either a positive change of mind or else a period of indecision.

As early as 28 October writs of summons had been sent out from Bristol expressing the intention of the Queen and the Prince to hold a 'Tractatum' or 'Colloquium' at Westminster on 14 December. These writs had not been authenticated by the Great Seal since at that time it was in the custody of the King. On 3 December, the day of their arrival at Woodstock, new writs dated at Ledbury were sent out proroguing the Parliament which the Queen and the Prince had summoned until 7 January 1327.<sup>2</sup> It may have been felt that now that the Great Seal was in Isabella's possession it would be best to legalise the summons by using it; or more probably she and Mortimer felt the need to take stock of the situation. Certainly by the time the Court moved on to Wallingford for Christmas they had probably decided what needed to be done. At Christmas the Bishop of Winchester and Thomas Wake were at Guildhall in the City of London on the King's business.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 C.C.R. 1323-27, pp. 655-56. Tout, Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England, III, p. 3, no. 1. has pointed out the curious dating of writs at this period. From 5 December all writs were dated at Kenilworth though the Chancellor was never there himself. The Seal remained largely in Isabella's custody and she released it for use when necessary. She was thus able to keep close control over the process of government.
  - 2 Parliamentary Writs, II, 1, p. 453; E.101/382/9; C.C.R. 1323-27, p. 654.
  - 3 Calendar of the Letter Books of the City of London, Letter Book E, p. 215.

Following the recent riots in the City of London the influx of so many prelates, magnates and knights of the shire coming to parliament with their household servants was bound to place a strain upon the law enforcement capabilities of the Mayor and Aldermen. Orders had early been published forbidding the molestation of any of those coming to parliament. As a reinforcement to this order, on 30 December men were obliged to take an oath before the Aldermen of their wards to maintain the peace and any who were unwilling to take such an oath were to be reported at Guildhall.<sup>1</sup> Traders were encouraged to return to the City and steps were taken to ensure that no lodgings in the City or its suburbs should be occupied against the owner's will. The correct procedures for the commandeering of accommodation by the Marshals would be strictly observed and to ensure that there would be as little trouble as possible no-one was to bear arms in the City except those keeping watch in the wards and the Queen's Hainaulters.<sup>2</sup> Such an exception, given the Londoners' hatred of foreigners, must have been irksome but not as troublesome as it might have been. Even before Christmas many of the Hainaulters had expressed a wish to go home and it was only the Queen's intervention which had persuaded John of Hainault himself to stay with a small following.<sup>3</sup>

The Court at Wallingford over Christmas was probably fairly crowded.<sup>4</sup> Both Archbishops were present together with the Chancellor

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1 C.P.M.R. 1323-1364, p. 11.

2 Op. cit., pp. 18-19.

3 Le Bel, pp. 29-30. As early as 6 December Bartholomew Burghersh had been ordered to prepare twenty ships to convey the Hainaulters home, C.C.R. 1323-27, p. 657, and a clerk was sent to Dover on 14 December with money to equip the ships to carry Germans and Hainaulters from Dover to Sluys. Foedera, II, i, p. 648.

4 The household expenses for Christmas week amounted to £420 9s. compared with an average of about £250 for the preceding and succeeding weeks. E.101/382/9.

and the Treasurer. Bishops Orleton and Hothum were also there together with a number of unnamed magnates. Most of the principle figures of the next month's activity would seem to have been present though Hamo de Hethe, the Bishop of Rochester was a notable exception. He had twice been summoned to Wallingford and declined even going so far as to urge Archbishop Reynolds to ignore the prospective parliament and to act as a mediator between the factions from the safety of Canterbury.<sup>1</sup> With all the leading clergy and magnates present it is highly probable that tactics were discussed. At the end of the Christmas festival the Queen and her son moved on by way of Reading and Windsor to London where on 4 January 1327 they were conducted through the City to Westminster. Three days later on 7 January the parliament met which was to settle the fate of Edward II.<sup>2</sup>

The events of the Epiphany Parliament of 1327 have been discussed in a variety of contexts.<sup>3</sup> They have been seen as an important step in the growth of parliamentary government with the Lords and Commons working together in the interests of the realm. The absence of the King has led to the proposition that this was no true parliament and therefore the events which took place in it were constitutionally and legally meaningless. Much play is made with such phrases as 'all the

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1 Walsingham, p. 186; Historia Roffensis, p. 367.

2 E.101/382/9; Annales Paulini, pp. 319, 332.

3 B. Wilkinson, Constitutional History of Medieval England, II, Chapter IV, Deposition of Edward II and the Accession of Edward III, (London 1952); M.V. Clarke, 'Committees of Estates and the Deposition of Edward II, Historical Essays in Honour of James Tait, ed. J.G. Edwards, V.H. Galbraith, E.F. Jacob, (Manchester 1933), pp. 27-45; M. McKisack, 'London and the Succession to the Crown during the Middle Ages', Studies in Medieval History presented to F.M. Powicke (Oxford 1948); P.C. Doherty, 'Isabella, Queen of England, 1296-1330', Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis (Oxford 1977).

people', 'the whole community of the realm', 'all the realm' and 'the common council and assent of the prelates, earls, barons and other nobles' in the context of 'parliament', without in any way being able to explain clearly how the medieval writer understood these words in the context of the situation. Were they of deep constitutional significance or was he casually reporting what he saw or had had reported to him, as one might say 'all the world was there'? It is difficult to accept Maud Clarke's assertion that the 'commonalty of the realm' refers to the commons present acting through the representatives of the clergy, Cinque Ports, shires, cities and boroughs', when that representation was very patchy. It was only decided to summon representatives from North Wales on 8 January 1327 after parliament had already met. There were no representatives from South Wales at all. Those who came were to be at parliament to hear the orders of the King. Since North Wales was an area notoriously hostile to Mortimer, it may well be that the intention was to bring in Mortimer's opponents and bind them to whatever decisions were announced.<sup>1</sup> Neither can there be any guarantee, particularly in view of the prorogation that all those who were summoned actually appeared.

Attendance at medieval parliaments could be very unpredictable and Isabella and Mortimer were to have problems with attendance at the assemblies summoned to York in the Spring of 1328.<sup>2</sup> However, in this case the writs and election returns reveal that there was a widely representative body of knights of the shire and representatives of the cities and boroughs numbering some 176 names in all. Bearing in mind

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1 Parliamentary Writs, II, 1, p. 457; J. Beverley Smith, 'Edward II and the Allegiance of Wales', pp. 165-66.

2 See below, p. 156.

the Despensers' failure to build support in the counties, it is highly unlikely that many of that number would have been willing to oppose the wishes of the magnates and clergy. The prelates who had received notice of the prorogation of parliament to 7 January numbered the full episcopal bench and eighteen abbots.<sup>1</sup> Although the name of the Prior of Christ Church, Canterbury does not appear, we know from a letter of Henry of Eastry that proctors were appointed but it is not clear for how long they actually attended. Some anxiety was expressed about the length of parliament and the need for one of the proxies, brother Geoffrey Poterel, the Almoner, to be in Canterbury to attend to his duties.<sup>2</sup> The summons issued to the magnates could produce even more unpredictable results. The prorogation notices were sent to seven earls. Seventy other names appear, including most of those actively involved in the events of the preceding months.<sup>3</sup> Little opposition to the plans of Isabella and Mortimer could be expected from them.

A widely representative body, however, does not necessarily guarantee that its proceedings will follow strictly the letter of the law. By summoning a parliament in Edward's name, Isabella had acted within the bounds of constitutional custom; indeed it has been noted that the prorogation may have been felt necessary because the original writs had not carried the Great Seal and there was great anxiety that all

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1 Parliamentary Writs, II, 1, i-cxlviii, cli-cclxxiv.

2 Litterae Cantuarienses, p. 204; Parliamentary Writs, II, 1, p. 457.

3 Parliamentary Writs, op. cit. The names include Roger Mortimer, Henry Percy, Thomas Wake, Ralph Neville, Robert de Mohaut, Hugh Courtenay, Henry Beaumont, John Cromwell, Hugh Audley, Thomas le Blount, Robert de Waterville, John Charlton. There seems to have been a strong legal group including Hervey de Stanton, Geoffrey le Scrope and Walter de Norwich. Two whose names do not appear are Thomas Berkeley and William la Zouche of Mortimer.



should be done in customary fashion. There was therefore nothing irregular about the summoning of the assembly. If there was irregularity it lay in the conduct of the business and the way in which Isabella and Mortimer manipulated it from day to day. For it is clear that once parliament had assembled, a well-planned operation was put into effect involving a number of bishops and considerable pressure on the part of Mortimer's allies in the City of London. The absence of the King and his refusal to come to London in no way prevented the plan from being carried out, indeed it may well have facilitated that end for there was hardly anyone in London prepared to speak on behalf of the King at Kenilworth when confronted with political propaganda disguised as episcopal sermons and the use of a form of forced oath which this same parliament was to condemn when it came to record officially the crimes of the Despensers.<sup>1</sup>

In the end, as P.C. Doherty observes, the process involved political chicanery, elaborate stage management and threats and coercion.<sup>2</sup> The acquiescence of the bishops, particularly Orleton and Stratford, and the dominant role of the Londoners suggest that it may have been Mortimer from whom the pressure came while Isabella may have undertaken the more maternal task of winning the obedience of her son, the fourteen year old Prince. That there was a plan seems clear from the carefully orchestrated sequence of events; there must also have been allowance made for changes in that plan if all did not go smoothly. That Isabella and Mortimer achieved their aim of removing Edward II

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1 John Taylor, 'The Judgement on Hugh Despenser the Younger' points out the similarity between the oaths extracted by the Despensers after Boroughbridge and the moral pressures of the Guildhall Oath of 1327.

2 P.C. Doherty, 'Isabella, Queen of England, 1296-1330', p. 193.

without any strong expression of dissent persisting is a mark both of Edward's total personal isolation and of the success of their plan.

It is extremely difficult to reconcile the differing accounts of the chroniclers with regard to the chronology and details of the course of events; such differences should also make us extremely cautious in drawing inferences as to constitutional practice from their accounts. However, though it may be difficult, it is not impossible to hazard a reconstruction.

There seems to be little doubt that the initial move was the dispatch of two bishops to Kenilworth to persuade the King to come to London for the parliament. If parliament was to be used as a court of condemnation then in theory it would be right for the King to appear before it. The difficulty which confronts us is knowing the identity of these two bishops and deciding whether they set out for Kenilworth before or after parliament met on 7 January. Lanercost says that the bishops who went were Stratford and Orleton. The Pipewell Chronicler refers to Orleton and Gravesend of London.<sup>1</sup> The envoys returned to London according to Lanercost on 12 January.<sup>2</sup> If they had been sent on the day on which parliament assembled they would have had to cover the 180 miles from London to Kenilworth and back in five days, an average of 36 miles a day, which would be fairly fast riding and which would not allow any time for the interview at Kenilworth, which was undoubtedly stormy, for the King refused to return with the bishops to submit himself to traitors.<sup>3</sup> The chronological difficulty would be

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1 Lanercost, p. 254; French Chronicle of a Monk of Pipewell, British Library, Cotton MSS., Julius AI, f.56r.

2 Lanercost, op. cit.

3 The Brut, p. 241, says Edward swore by God's soul he would not come.

helped if the envoys had been working to a pre-arranged plan and had been sent to Kenilworth before the opening of parliament so that should he agree they might have Edward in London on or soon after 7 January. Such an early departure would also account for the undated letter from the well-informed Henry of Eastry to Archbishop Reynolds urging that, although the two bishops, whom he does not name, had lately been sent to Kenilworth, a further group made up of two earls, two barons, four burgesses and four knights should be sent to persuade the King to come to London. The omission of bishops from this group suggests that Eastry saw it as reinforcing the mission of the two bishops and that he felt that the King should be persuaded to come to London by as widely representative a group as possible.<sup>1</sup>

But an early departure of the bishops would conflict with the statement in the Historia Roffensis that Bishop Orleton made the keynote speech when parliament met on 7 January.<sup>2</sup> He could hardly have returned from Kenilworth by then. This difficulty would be resolved if in fact it was the Chancellor, Bishop Stratford of Winchester who opened proceedings. One would certainly expect either the Chancellor or the Treasurer to carry out this function and the sentiments expressed that if Isabella were to return to the King she would be killed therefore the assembly must decide whether they wanted the King or his son to rule over them, could be equally attributable to Orleton or

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1 Litterae Cantuarienses, pp. 204-05. There is a further letter fragment apparently addressed to Eastry by his procurator at Parliament, stating that although the two bishops had been sent to Kenilworth and the King had refused their request to come to London, another and larger delegation had been sent to renew the request. Parliamentary Writs, II, i, p. 457. This second delegation could not have left until after 13 January if the two bishops had only returned the day before.

2 Historia Roffensis, p. 367.

Stratford since it merely posited the official line. If Orleton gave the address and then left for Kenilworth a further problem is raised. What exactly was happening between then and the return of the envoys from Kenilworth on 12 January? Furthermore, were these envoys the two bishops as suggested by Lanercost or a further delegation such as the one suggested by Henry of Eastry? There really couldn't have been enough time for all this coming and going between 7 and 12 January. One must therefore suppose that the bishops left for Kenilworth before parliament met and that if indeed Orleton was one of them, as seems certain, it was Stratford who spoke at Parliament's opening.<sup>1</sup>

Confronted in that speech with a choice between the King and his son as their ruler, the assembly was sent away to give the matter overnight consideration. When they reassembled some were reluctant to give an answer, not least because they were fearful of the Londoners. Time must therefore be given to persuading the waverers and it was probably this which preoccupied Mortimer and his supporters in the interval before the return of the delegation from Kenilworth. The hesitation of people like the Archbishop of York and the bishops of Rochester and Carlisle makes more convincing the increasing pressure that was brought to bear when the news of the King's refusal to co-operate reached Westminster.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Lanercost, p. 254; Litterae Cantuarienses, op. cit.; Stubbs, The Constitutional History of England, II (Oxford 1875), p. 380, suggests that three separate embassies were sent to Kenilworth. Could it have been that the supplementary lay delegation was sent when Parliament met on 7 January; but that meeting the two bishops returning with the King's firm negative answer, they turned back without reaching Kenilworth? They might well have therefore arrived back in London on or just before Lanercost's 12 January.

2 Historia Roffensis, p. 367. M.V. Clarke's statement, 'Committees of Estates and the Deposition of Edward II', that homage was sworn to the Prince on 8 January, really seems to conflate events too much. The chronology of the Historia Roffensis is not clear, but assuredly no offering of homage to the Prince would have taken place until his father's response was known.

On 12 January, perhaps as soon as the envoys from Kenilworth had reported, Richard Bethune sent a message to parliament asking if the members were willing to take an oath to maintain the cause of Isabella and her son and to depose the King.<sup>1</sup> The next morning, Mortimer appeared before parliament to announce that the magnates had unanimously agreed that the King should be deposed: assuming a mantle of humility he protested that he was speaking to the brief which had been given to him by common consent. As if on cue, Thomas Wake raised his hands and cried that as far as he was concerned the King should no longer reign, whereupon Orleton launched into a political harangue on the text, 'An unwise king destroyeth his people', a more suitable theme than that suggested by the *Historia Roffensis*, 'Woe to the land whose King is a child', which would have been a particularly tactless choice in view of the proposal to replace the King by his fourteen year old son.<sup>2</sup> That same day writs were issued to Thomas de Useflete, clerk of the wardrobe, ordering him to provide decent apparel for those to be knighted on 1 February.<sup>3</sup> Already before Edward II had been deposed, the inauguration of his son was being planned.

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1 C.P.M.R. 1323-1364, pp. 11-12.

2 The text is *Ecclesiasticus*, Chapter 10, verse 3. Lanercost, p. 254; *Historia Roffensis*, p. 367; 'A Canterbury Chronicle', Trinity College, Cambridge, MS. R5.41, f.125r, 'ubi non est gubernator populus corruet' Proverbs, Chapter 13, as the theme. This account of Edward's deposition is printed as Appendix 2, Natalie Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, pp. 233-35.

3 E.101/382/8. Mandamus vos quod pro dilectis consanguineis nostris Edmundo de Mortuo Mari, Rogero et Galfrido fratribus eiusdem Edmundi ac etiam Rogero Lestraunge apparatus tamquam pro banerettis pro se novis militibus faciendis in vigilia purificationis Beatae Mariae proximo futuro de eadem garderoba de dono nostro liberari faciatis.

13 January was the crucial day. Later on that day the prelates and magnates came to Guildhall where the mayor, Richard Bethune, the chamberlain, Andrew Horn and a great crowd of citizens were waiting for them. Here they were obliged to take an oath, administered by one of the sheriff's clerks to safeguard Isabella and her son and the liberties of the City. But the oath went further, for those who swore undertook to maintain not only the ordinances which had already been decided by parliament, but also those which would be made in the future.<sup>1</sup> Thus Mortimer and his allies in the City succeeded in binding under pressure those who had expressed doubts in parliament. There was now an apparently unanimous force demanding the removal of the King. The process of swearing in seems to have lasted over a number of days. The first name on the City's list of those who took the oath is that of Roger Mortimer. The names of his leading supporters follow, Henry Percy, Thomas Wake, John Charlton, Robert de Waterville and his sons Edmund, Roger and John. Justices like Geoffrey le Scrope and John de Stonor were obliged to swear and on 15 January four earls, Norfolk, Kent, Hereford and Surrey were at Guildhall with their retinues. It is remarkable that Henry of Lancaster, who bore the title Earl of Leicester, was not amongst them. It is likely that he remained at Kenilworth in charge of the King. The Archbishop of Canterbury and thirteen other bishops had been sworn with the magnates on 13 January. They do not include the Archbishop of York, or the bishops of Carlisle and London. Rochester swore but only saving his order and Magna Carta. Of the others summoned by writ the Bishop of Durham and the three Welsh bishops from

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1 The text of the oath taken from Reg. K12 in Archives Eccl. Cant. p. 144 is reproduced in Parliamentary Writs, II, 2, p. 354. The relevant sentence reads: Et les ordinances qe sont fait et serront faitz en ceste parlement fermement ~~garderez~~ **garderez**.

St. David's, Bangor and St. Asaph would seem to have been absent. It rather seems as if a further oath may have been extracted from Archbishop Reynolds and his suffragans on 20 January. A statement to this effect in the French Chronicle is borne out by the City records.<sup>1</sup>

If we compare the list of those sworn with the names listed on the Parliamentary Writs, it at once becomes apparent that there were a large number of absentees. Only twenty eight of the fifty three magnates summoned were sworn; only four out of eighteen abbots did so and of the sixty eight knights of the shire listed only twelve, all of them from South of Trent and one of them not a member, took the oath. The burgess list is also interesting for apparently only those who came from St. Albans and Bury St. Edmunds appeared and of these eight out of the thirteen St. Albans men and four out of the five Bury men were later found involved in attacks on their abbeys.<sup>2</sup> Thus amongst all sections of the community there were absentees, the most unanimously hostile seemingly being the bishops.

It thus seems clear that after Mortimer and the Londoners, it was the bishops who played a key role in Edward II's fall. They did so by helping to create such an atmosphere that it was extremely difficult for any opposition to stand out. Following Orleton's address on the foolishness of the King, Bishop Stratford addressed himself to the text, 'Caput meum doleo'. He spoke of the feebleness of England's head and of the consequent dangers to the rest of the country inherent in such a situation. He showed how evil had indeed befallen the realm and

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1 The names of those sworn are to be found in C.P.M.R. 1323-1364, pp. 11-14; Croniques de London, p. 58; Annales Paulini, pp. 322-23.

2 The absenteeism is also referred to in M.V. Clarke, 'Committees of Estates and the Deposition of Edward II', pp. 27-45.

the Church. Accordingly the magnates and prelates had decided that the King should no longer reign, if the people agreed.<sup>1</sup> At this point Wake, once more waving his hands above his head, demanded to know if the people did agree and amidst much noise they assented. The final appeal came from the Archbishop. Reynolds based his words on the text, 'Vox populi, vox dei'. The people, he said, had long been oppressed by the King and his evil counsellors. Now their voice had been heard, because by the unanimous consent of the magnates, the King was deposed and his son should be enthroned if they should unanimously express their consent. At once his hearers responded with the cry, 'Let it be done'.<sup>2</sup>

Lanercost suggests that the addresses of Orleton, Stratford and Reynolds took place on three successive days, culminating with the cry for Edward's deposition on 15 January. None of the other chronicles has so precise a time scale. The Canterbury Chronicle says that Stratford spoke 'subsequenter' to Orleton and 'Tandem dominus archiepiscopus Cantuariensis sic incipit alloquendo populum'.<sup>3</sup> The cumulative effect of the sermons, if they can be so called, would have been most effective if they had been delivered one after the other. Furthermore, in this three-fold appeal to the people and their clamorous response, there is an echo of the three-fold acclamation of the people at the Recognition in the Coronation Service itself. Perhaps therefore Mortimer achieved his aim by inciting those cries of the people and that

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1 Trinity College, Cambridge, MS., Natalie Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, p. 234. For a comment as to whether this text was used by Orleton at Oxford on 15 October 1326, see above, p.11 and n.2

2 Trinity College, Cambridge, MS., op. cit.

3 Lanercost, pp. 254-55; Trinity College, Cambridge, MS., op. cit.



the true moment of Edward's deposition is to be found there. The Historia Roffensis certainly presents such a picture. There the Prince is led into the hall before the people with the words 'Behold your King'. Then the addresses are given in the opposite order to the Lanercost account, Reynolds, Stratford, Orleton. Amidst the uproar which followed, Wake restored sufficient calm for the Prince to be proclaimed King, a moment at which the Bishop of Rochester was subject to threats because he refused to join in the singing of 'Gloria, Laus et Honour'.<sup>1</sup> It is not difficult to reconcile these two versions of events for one can clearly see the mounting crescendo of excitement after each address, culminating in the exultant shouts of the Londoners at the conclusion of the third harangue. In the face of such mob rhetoric it would take the strongest spirit to remain opposed.

There is little doubt that these events in London were carefully orchestrated. The name of Queen Isabella appears hardly at all and Mortimer's but seldom. It is Lancaster's son-in-law, Thomas Wake, who plays a leading role. But it seems most likely that Isabella and Mortimer set up the whole scheme with the connivance of bishops and magnates during the Christmas stay at Wallingford. In the actual manipulation of events it would seem that Mortimer was in control through his own direct appeal to parliament and through the Londoners who almost certainly stamped out any possible opposition amongst the bishops. Reynolds in particular was under considerable pressure in the City. He had not been forgiven for the publication of the old bull. He had ordered fifty casks of wine to be given to the Londoners as a sign of

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1 Historia Roffensis, p. 367.

his friendship, but even so he was manhandled as he left Guildhall after taking the oath of loyalty.<sup>1</sup> Of the other magnates little is heard except for their acquiescence in taking the Guildhall oath. Carefully planned and carried out with political skill and judgement, all that now remained to complete the deposition was for the unfortunate King at Kenilworth to confirm his own downfall.

So one more delegation left London for Kenilworth. If, as seems probable, the deposition was decided upon on 13 January, there was plenty of time for this group to reach Kenilworth and return by 24 January. Not, however, enough time to return, as the Historia Roffensis suggests, by 20 January when the bishops took the second oath.<sup>2</sup> Once again the chroniclers fail to agree, this time concerning the composition of the delegation. Most of them agree that there were three bishops, two earls, two abbots, two barons and representatives of the shires, boroughs and Cinque Ports. Lanercost alone includes four friars. By conflating all the lists, Maud Clarke suggests that the size of the delegation must have been between twenty seven and thirty one people.<sup>3</sup> The borough representatives would seem to have been confined to Londoners. There were at least three official representatives of the City present.<sup>4</sup> A comparison of the various lists, however, suggests that Maud Clarke's figure is slightly on the large

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1 Historia Roffensis, p. 367.

2 Cotton MS., Faustina B.V., f.50r.

3 Lanercost, p. 255; M.V. Clarke, 'Committees of Estates and the Deposition of Edward II', pp. 27-45.

4 John de Gisors, Reginald de Conduit, John Hauteyn and others of the Commonalty received £50 on 18 September 1327 for their journey to Kenilworth when Edward II surrendered the Crown. C.P.M.R. 1323-1364, p. 30.

size and a delegation of twenty four or twenty five seems a more reasonable number.

When it comes to identifying individuals reports are similarly conflicting. Lanercost refers to Bishops Stratford and Orleton; the Historia Roffensis, in a passage omitted by Wharton in Anglia Sacra, to Bishops Gravesend, Hothum and Orleton; the Monk of Pipewell lists Gravesend, Stratford and Orleton, while Le Baker has Stratford, Orleton and Burghersh. In view of the connection of Le Baker's patron, Thomas More, with Bishop Stratford, it seems most likely that he was present. All are agreed that Orleton was there, the presence of Burghersh seems unlikely, Gravesend was a supporter of Edward II and might have been sent for that reason though he would most probably have been extremely reluctant, while Hothum was a firm supporter of Isabella. In view of the fact that the Brut refers to Hothum's presence he seems the most likely person. Only the Monk of Pipewell refers to the abbots of Glastonbury and Dover, although Dover was in fact a priory. There seems little doubt that the earls were Lancaster and Surrey but the barons present further difficulty. Lanercost has the Yorkshire baron, William de Ros of Hamelake and Hugh Courtenay, Pipewell, while giving Courtenay's name, has Richard de Grey as his companion. The Brut names Sir Henry Percy. The justices, according to Pipewell, were Geoffrey le Scrope and John de Boussier and the delegation was completed by two barons of the Cinque Ports, four burgesses of London and 'quatre chivalers pour la communalte de la terre'. Two others who were clearly present were William Trussel, speaking on behalf of the knights, according to the Brut, and Thomas le Blount,

the Steward of the Household who had deserted Edward in South Wales.<sup>1</sup>

Le Baker's account is extremely full and although it seems to be circumstantial, the emphasis he lays on Orleton's role seems overdone. Nevertheless it is the only picture we have and even though it begins with a clear error that does not necessarily negate the rest of the story. According to Le Baker, before the rest of the delegation arrived, Bishops Stratford and Burghersh saw the King privately with his keeper, Henry of Lancaster, in an effort to induce him to resign the Crown in favour of his son. They threatened that if he did not resign the people would repudiate his son and crown someone other than royal blood.<sup>2</sup> Fearful of seeing his son lose the Crown, the King submitted with tears and sighs so that when Orleton arrived with the rest of the party all was complete except the formalities. The only thing wrong with this scenario is that it is highly improbable that Burghersh was ever present and the whole episode looks suspiciously as if Le Baker or his informant has confused the preliminary expedition of the two bishops before parliament met with the mission of the full delegation. The confrontation between the King and the party from

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1 Lanercost, pp. 255-56; Cotton MS., Faustina B.V., f.49v.; Cotton MS. Julius AI, f.56v.; Le Baker, p. 26; The Brut, pp. 241-42. A complete list of those present is impossible, but the delegation probably included: the Bishops of Winchester, Hereford and Ely; the Earls of Leicester and Surrey; Hugh Courtenay, Richard de Grey, William de Ros, Henry Percy and William Trussel; the abbot of Glastonbury and the prior of Dover, Geoffrey le Scrope and John de Boussier; John de Gisors, Reginald de Conduit and John Hauteyn. There were almost certainly in addition another Londoner, two other burgesses, two barons of the Cinque Ports and at least three knights of the shire. A total of twenty five.

2 Le Baker, pp. 26-27. It is difficult to imagine who was intended by this. Any such action would have aroused open war. Henry of Lancaster would certainly never have acquiesced in the elevation of a Mortimer. It seems that this was nothing more than an idle threat.

London was highly dramatic. Edward, dressed in a black robe, was brought into the presence of the delegation; but the strain was too great and he fell headlong to the ground in a faint. Raised and supported semi-conscious by Stratford and Lancaster, the King listened as Bishop Orleton addressed to him the reasons for their coming.<sup>1</sup> He may well have read out the contents of the agreement reached in London for the King's replacement and the reasons for it.<sup>2</sup>

These are arranged in six paragraphs, the first of which refers to the King's incompetence as a ruler. Subjected to evil advisers he took no steps to remedy the situation, instead giving himself over to pursuits which were unbecoming to a King. Because of his incompetence he had lost Scotland and lordships in Gascony and Ireland. He had permitted his evil advisers to exploit the Church and he had failed to carry out his Coronation oath to see that right was done to all. The sixth clause is in some ways the most damning of all. He had abandoned his realm; he had lost his people's loyalty. His cruelty, his defects of character were to blame and there was no hope of any amendment.

It was a damning indictment, and as he listened to Orleton, the King was reduced to weeping. Then he replied, expressing grief that his people so resented his rule and agreeing that if his son was acceptable to the realm he should take his place. The next day the formal renunciation of allegiance took place, Sir William Trussel as procurator for the whole parliament renounced the homage of them all. 'Ego, Wilhelmus Trussel, vice omnium de terra Angliae et totius par-

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1 Le Baker, p. 27.

2 Foedera II, i, p. 650, referring to Historia Anglicana, Twysden, Script.X, col. 2765.

liamenti procurator, tibi Edwardo, reddo homagium prius tibi factum et ex tunc diffido te et privo omni potestate regia et dignitate, nequaquam tibi de caetero tamquam Regi pariturus'.<sup>1</sup> The proceedings concluded when Sir Thomas Blount, breaking his wand, announced the disbandment of the royal household. Then the delegation returned to London to report that they had successfully completed their task.<sup>2</sup>

The news of all that had happened at Kenilworth was published in London on Saturday, 24 January 1327. 'Sir Edward, late King of England, has of his good will and by common counsel and assent of the prelates, earls, barons and other nobles and commonalty of the realm, resigned the government of the realm and granted and wills the government shall come to Edward, his eldest son and that he shall govern, reign and be crowned King for which reason all the magnates have done homage. We proclaim the peace of our said Lord, Sir Edward the son, and command under pain of disinheritance and of loss of life and limb that no-one infringe the peace of our said Lord the King. If anyone have anything to demand from another let him demand it by way of law without using force or violence'.<sup>3</sup>

The fiction was maintained to the end. The first regnal year of the new King began on 25 January 1327. It also marks the official beginning of the reign of Isabella and Mortimer.

The deposition of Edward II was only accomplished because the King had completely lost the trust and loyalty of his subjects. Baldock, the Despensers, Arundel and Bishop Stapeldon had succeeded in

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1 Foedera, II, i, p. 650.

2 Le Baker, p. 28.

3 C.C.R. 1327-1330, p. 1.

distancing the King from his people by the government which they carried on in the King's name. Their rapacity and high handed ambition had succeeded not only in isolating the King but in bringing together the Church, the baronage, the commons and the City of London. As soon as Isabella and Mortimer recognised the totality of the King's isolation the way was open for them to rally the opposition round the person of the young Prince Edward so that they could bring about an end to the Despenser tyranny. In accomplishing this it was essential for Isabella and Mortimer to keep the support of all those opposed to Edward II and no group was more important than the Church, whose members had suffered at the hands of the government. That the bishops played a key role is self-evident. While there was some lead from Archbishop Reynolds, his attitude was at times ambivalent; Stratford Orleton and Airmyn all played a more dominant role, Hothum and Burghersh were not far behind. But the episcopate was not united and Melton, Ross, Gravesend and Hamo de Hethe remained doubtful. Nevertheless there was sufficient weight of support amongst the bishops for their voice to be influential in parliament and at Kenilworth and in the end even the doubters are to be found carrying on under the new regime with Hamo de Hethe taking an active part in the coronation of the young Edward III.

If the support of the bishops was to some extent individually based, so too was that of the magnates. Edward II's half-brothers, the former supporters of Thomas of Lancaster and the barons of the northern and Welsh marches were united in their desire to regain the lands and influence of which they had been deprived since 1322. Several of them, like Mortimer, were in exile, but even those who had remained at home and come to some kind of terms with the regime by

carrying out the functions of administration at the local level only did so to preserve their own skins after the executions of 1322. They had received no thanks for their pains and were the recipients of little patronage. The opportunities for reward afforded by a new regime could not be overlooked. Self interest drove many to rally around Isabella and Mortimer in October 1326.

With the magnates therefore bound together momentarily by a common purpose, Mortimer personally saw to it that the people of the realm added their voice to that of baronial protest. London was the key to the 'Vox populi'. The loss of the City's privileges had been deeply resented; the judicial eyre of 1321 with its interference with the City's traditional judicial processes was remembered with anger. It was not difficult to rouse this latent hostility into a bloody attack on the King's supporters. It was but a short step to use the threat of further violence to pressurise those who might be uncertain about their adherence to the cause of Isabella and Mortimer. The significance of the part played by Richard Bethune at Guildhall and then the role of Mortimer and Thomas Wake in parliament in persuading the prelates, the magnates, the knights of the shire and the burgesses of the city to acquiesce in the proposal to depose the King, must not be overlooked. The disturbances at Bury St. Edmunds, St. Albans and Abingdon in the course of 1327, though directed against oppressive ecclesiastical landlords, can be associated with the mood of violent unrest amongst the commons which in London had been so skilfully channelled to bring about the achievement of political ends.<sup>1</sup>

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1 The nature of the disturbances at Bury St. Edmunds, St. Albans and Abingdon are examined below: Section 5, pp. ~~252~~-58.



The role of Isabella and Mortimer themselves in all this cannot always be seen clearly. Nevertheless it is apparent that all did not happen entirely by accident.<sup>1</sup> If there is an element of pragmatism about the destruction of Arundel and the Despensers, the downfall of Edward II seems to follow a carefully worked out plan involving the Church, the Londoners and the magnates in parliament. There is a seeming anxiety to ensure that all that was done should have a legal veneer and at the same time there is no evidence to suggest that anything was done in a hurry. In this regard the Christmas gathering at Wallingford occurred at a crucial moment. It gave time for reflection, but with so many leading figures at the Prince's Christmas court, it also gave Isabella and Mortimer time to weigh opinion, discuss strategy and allocate parts. Here there was no pragmatism but political skill of a particularly cunning nature. One can hardly doubt that the minds of Isabella and Mortimer controlled the outlines of policy as well as the unfolding of the events in London and Kenilworth in January 1327. With rare skill they had harnessed the united hostility of the Church, the baronage, the commons and the City of London. That coalition had enabled them to achieve power. Whether they succeeded in maintaining their position would now ultimately depend on whether they were able to maintain that coalition. The key to that lay in their ability to bring about an acceptable distribution of power and patronage.

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1 As examples of this one might cite the fact that the meeting of parliament was deferred to January 1327, and the formal nature of Trussel's procuratorship.

- 2 -

Power and Patronage under Isabella and Mortimer

All the elements of the coalition which had put Isabella and Mortimer into power had to be satisfied when it came to the distribution of patronage, but perhaps most important of all was that they should keep the support of Henry of Lancaster and his followers. Lancaster could easily become the focus of a potential opposition and with his wealth and the prestige of his brother's name he had the resources available to detach the Londoners and leading churchmen from their support of the new government. Others, too, could easily be disappointed, and with disappointment could quickly come disillusionment. Isabella and Mortimer had embarked on a political exercise which required great skill and personal tact. In gaining power they had displayed considerable political skill; but in the end their own personal greed and ambition called into question their whole political strategy. This desire for personal advancement soon made itself evident and sometimes in comparatively insignificant ways.

Thus it has already been noted that orders had been sent on 13 January 1327 to Thomas de Useflete to provide decent apparel for those to be knighted on 1 February. Edmund, Roger and Geoffrey, the three sons of Roger Mortimer were to be provided with apparel suited to the rank of bannerets, as was to be done for the young Hugh Courtenay, Roger Lestrangle and others. Three days later this order was superceded by one instructing Useflete to provide for Mortimer's three sons, robes fitting for earls. These clothes were received on 20 January on their father's behalf by a member of his household.<sup>1</sup>

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1 See above, p.41 for the original order. The writ in this case can be found, E.101/382/8. Nos volentes eisdem consanguineis nostris decentiorem apparatus pro se novis militibus in dicta vigilia faciendis liberari vobis mandamus quod pro eisdem Edmundo, Rogero et Galfrido decentem apparatus tamquam pro comitibus pro se novis militibus ... liberari faciatis.

The Coronation of the young Edward III took place at Westminster on 1 February 1327. The fourteen year old King was knighted before the ceremony by John of Hainault,<sup>1</sup> together with Mortimer's three sons and other young nobles. It would appear from the passage of the Historia Roffensis, omitted by Wharton in his Anglia Sacra, that before the crowning took place a former member of the royal household, the knight Sir John de Suly,<sup>2</sup> asked the Bishop of Rochester whether the King would guard the law as his people should determine. To this the Bishop replied that in no way could the King be crowned unless he took an oath to keep the laws.<sup>3</sup> There is no reason to doubt this account nor that despite his earlier reservations about accepting the new King, Rochester took his place at the ceremony and sang the Litany in association with Bishop Airmyn of Norwich. The official account, however, does not mention his presence although it reports that nine bishops in addition to the Archbishop of Canterbury were there. As might be expected, they included those prominent in the events of the preceding weeks, Hothum, Orleton, Stratford, Burghersh and Airmyn. Amongst the magnates the King's uncles were present as well as the earls of Lancaster, Surrey and Hereford, John of Hainault, Henry

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- 1 Walsingham, p. 188 states that he was knighted by the Earl of Lancaster. Knighton, the Lancastrian chronicler, makes no mention of this. Both the Canon of Bridlington, p. 95, and the Historia Roffensis, Cotton MS. Faustina, B.V., f.50r. refer to John of Hainault.
  - 2 John de Suly had been connected with the King's household as long ago as 1306 when he appears as the King's chamberlain. C.P.R. 1301-07, p. 460. This incident at the Coronation is particularly interesting as showing the way in which the Coronation oath was regarded by contemporaries.
  - 3 Historia Roffensis, op. cit. 'Dominus Johannis de Suly miles Roffensis episcopum requisivit an Rex legem quam populus suos elegit custodire vellet. Episcopus querenti respondens quod alioquin non coronabitur nisi prius prestito iuramento de servando leges'.

Beaumont and Roger Mortimer.<sup>1</sup> There is a difference of opinion as to whether Isabella was present to see her son crowned. Walsingham reports that she stood nearby feigning grief; but the Historia Roffensis reports that she was absent, having withdrawn herself to Eltham for three days. The actual crowning was performed by Archbishop Reynolds while the young King was supported by the Bishops of Winchester and London who held the heavy crown above his head because of his tender age.<sup>2</sup>

The details of the Historia Roffensis account of the Coronation do not make any reference to the actual oath taken by the young King. In view of the reported conversation between Suly and Hamo de Hethe, it is worth noting the form of the oath. In its essentials it was the same as that which had been taken by the King's father at his Coronation in 1308 which had contained four promises. It was the last of these which has caused considerable discussion between H.G. Richardson and B. Wilkinson. In 1327, Edward III was asked, 'Sire, grantez vous a tenir et garder les leys et les custumes dreitureles les quelx la communaute de vostre roiaume aura eslu, et les defendrez et afforcerez, al honur de Dieu, a vostre poair?'<sup>3</sup> Twenty years before his father had sworn an identical oath, 'les quiels la communaute de vostre roiaume aura eslu', or in Latin, 'quas vulgus elegerit'.<sup>4</sup> The controversy

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- 1 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 100.
  - 2 Walsingham, p. 188; Historia Roffensis, op. cit. Gravesend's presence is not reported in the Close Roll.
  - 3 Foedera, II, ii, p. 684.
  - 4 H.G. Richardson, 'English Coronation Oath', T.R.H.S., 4th Series, xxiii, (1941), p. 147. In referring to the oath of 1327, Richardson quotes, 'les quels le poeple eslira'. He points out the difficulty of securing word perfect copies of 14th century documents, p. 155.

rages because it is not agreed whether this refers to the past only or to the future as well. Richardson maintains that the earls in 1312 at the time of their conflict with Edward II over Gaveston, did not claim that the oath bound the King to new laws chosen by the people. Wilkinson on the other hand says that discord had long been building up between Edward II and the magnates over Gaveston and that the oath gave the magnates the right to impose reforms on the monarch. Wilkinson therefore concludes that Edward II in promising to observe whatever just laws his subjects would 'elect' in the future was making an unprecedented concession.<sup>1</sup>

More recent statements on the oath agree with Wilkinson. Maddicott, referring to the events of 1308, states that the King was bound to accept the magnates' decision about Gaveston because by his Coronation oath he had promised to keep the laws which the people would choose. There could be no misunderstanding about the phrase, 'qe le poeple eslira'.<sup>2</sup> It is very hard to disagree with the conclusion that the concession made by Edward II in the oath of 1308 was both unprecedented and revolutionary. It opened the way for the community and for the magnates in particular to impose demands upon the King and it justified the calls of the supporters of Thomas of Lancaster for the right to a share in the decisions of government. It might also be used to justify the action of the magnates against the Despensers and even the deposition of Edward II, given that Edward had agreed to his

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1 B. Wilkinson, 'The Coronation Oath of Edward II and the Statute of York', Speculum, 1944, pp. 445-69; B. Wilkinson, Constitutional History of Medieval England, 1216-1399, II, Politics and the Constitution, 1307-99, p. 98.

2 J.R. Maddicott, Thomas of Lancaster, 1307-1322, (Oxford 1970), p. 82. Other references to the Coronation Oath of 1308 may be found on pp. 112, 122, 136, 148, 266, 322.

own deposition. When, therefore, the oath was used in identical form at Edward III's Coronation in 1327, it may well have been a move to emphasise the role of the 'vulgus' or the 'populus' in the election of laws, and a move in view of the tendencies of the previous reign, to limit the King's room for manoeuvre in any future conflict with the baronage.<sup>1</sup>

The session of the parliament which met at Westminster after the coronation was dominated by the affairs of the Lancastrian contrarians and by the desire of the Despensers' opponents to regain possession of their lands. On 3 February 1327 a petition was presented to parliament on behalf of those who had been supporters of Thomas of Lancaster. They claimed that they had been unjustly treated in the past and requested the restoration of their lands and tenements in England, Wales and Ireland, together with the issues and arrears of farms. They sought too the recovery of their goods and chattels and the making good of all waste and damage done by those who had had the keeping of their property. But it was not just the restoration of what they had lost which they requested. They required an indemnity to cover all the outstanding debts which had been incurred in connection with fines of lands, recognisances, sales of land and gifts made under duress at the instigation of the Despensers, Arundel, Baldock and Stapeldon; furthermore, they requested protection against the possibility of proceedings being taken against them for their involvement in Isabella's invasion. They did not want to incur any penalty for the seizure of people, castles or property or for having caused mens' deaths in the pursuit of her quarrel. Finally those who had

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1 There is further discussion on the role of the people and election in B. Wilkinson, 'Notes on the Coronation Records of the 14th Century', E.H.R. lxx, (1955), pp. 581-600.

escaped from prison during the Despensers' rule, the most notable of whom was Mortimer himself, requested a full pardon for that offence. In effect, the petition amounted not only to a restoration of the position obtaining in 1322, but to the erasure of any possible penalties incurred since that date as a result of opposition to the former tyranny.<sup>1</sup>

Ten days later, by common assent, the petition was granted.<sup>2</sup> In practical terms, however, the actual implementation of the petition was bound to be extremely complicated and some limit had to be drawn. Thus, those who had sold, released or quit-claimed their land of their own free will were not bound by the terms of the parliamentary order. Yet the order did apply to women. Widows, whose dower lands and whose lands acquired by joint purchase had been seized into royal hands were to receive them back again.<sup>3</sup> Steps were also taken to ensure that those who had in the meantime held the lands as of the former King's gift should be treated as if they had been keepers of the land. This made them answerable to the original holder of the land for all issues, wastes and destruction during their period of tenure. This was perhaps the simplest and most practical way of dealing with the situation and no time was lost in putting the process of restoration under way. On 17 February an order was sent to the sheriffs instructing them to restore confiscated lands to former supporters of Lancaster. It must have

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1 Rot. Parl. II, pp. 5-6; C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 101-02.

2 Op. cit.

3 This stipulation was to benefit Mortimer's widow, Joan, after his fall in 1330. See below, p. 351.



been a formidable task involving as it did nearly two hundred names and every county in England.<sup>1</sup>

Henry of Lancaster had requested an investigation of the processes by which his brother had been condemned on the grounds that the condemnation was erroneous. When asked to identify the errors Lancaster explained that Earl Thomas had been declared guilty of felonies and seditious without being arraigned or being permitted to answer as was the custom according to law. Only in time of war when the royal banners were displayed and the courts closed could a record of guilty be made in that way. Furthermore, Thomas of Lancaster had been condemned without the judgement of his peers and this was contrary to Magna Carta. That the Despensers had been condemned in a similar way did not prevent the King and the magnates from considering the petition and in due course declaring that the judgement should be revoked and Henry admitted as his brother's heir.<sup>2</sup>

But full restoration of their lands to Lancaster and his adherents was neither easy nor immediate. Despite the fact that orders had already gone out on 10 February ordering Thomas of Lancaster's lands to be taken into the King's hands<sup>3</sup>, his executors did not receive delivery of his rolls and accounts until the middle of the following month<sup>4</sup> and it was not until the beginning of April that

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1 Those involved included many who were to be prominent in the years of Isabella and Mortimer's rule. Thomas Gurney, John Mautravers, Thomas de Berkeley, Robert Holland, Hugh Audley, John Cromwell, John Lisle, Robert Walkefare, Simon de Bereford, Bogo de Knovill as well as Mortimer himself, his mother Margaret, widow of Edmund Mortimer and Margaret, widow of Bartholomew Badlesmere. Foedera, II, ii, pp. 690-91.

2 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 105-06; Rot. Parl. II, pp. 3-5.

3 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 10.

4 Memoranda Roll 1326-27, No. 629, p. 84.

orders were issued for Henry of Lancaster to receive his inheritance. Even then the necessary inquisition returns had not been made.<sup>1</sup> This delay must have been all the more frustrating since some effort had already been made at a much earlier date to put Henry of Lancaster in control of his inheritance. On 6 December 1326 he had been appointed keeper of an important part of the estate, the castles and honours of Lancaster, Tutbury and Pickering, and he received custody of a further group of manors a fortnight later.<sup>2</sup> When in April, Henry did homage for his brother's lands now granted to him by the King, he was discharged of the issues of these honours and manors.<sup>3</sup> Yet even then the matter was not finally settled for there was a dispute with John Warenne, Earl of Surrey over property which included the castles of Sandal and Conisborough, the manor of Wakefield and five others. All this land was to remain in the King's hands until the matter was settled.<sup>4</sup>

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1 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 33. Henry of Lancaster did not receive all his brother's lands. An exception was made with regard to lands formerly held by the Knights Templars.

2 This group included the manors of Melbourne in Derbyshire and Stanford in Berkshire. C.F.R. 1319-27, pp. 424, 429.

3 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 77-78.

4 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 33. The quarrel between the house of Lancaster and Warenne dated from 1317 when Warenne abducted Thomas of Lancaster's wife, Alice Lacy, not for the sake of adultery, says the Chronicle of Melsa, but to insult the Earl. Walsingham, however, refers to the role of Richard de St. Martin, a member of Warenne's household, who claimed that Alice was rightfully his wife since he had known her carnally and she was reported to have acknowledged this to be true. F. Royston Fairbank, 'The Last Earl of Warenne and Surrey and the Distribution of his Possessions', Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, xix, (1907), pp. 193-264.

Alice Lacy apparently did not return to her husband, by whom she was childless, but Lancaster gained his revenge on Warenne in 1318-19, when he coerced Warenne into handing over his Yorkshire lands which included Conisborough, Sandal and Wakefield. Despite

Lancaster was not the only one to experience delays. Not until March were orders sent granting writs of 'venire facias' against all who should be answerable at the Exchequer as keepers, receivers or farmers of the issues and arrears of the formerly confiscated lands.<sup>1</sup> The delays were probably due to the complex nature of the exercise and to the inability of the administrative machine to deal speedily with the necessary changes, rather than to any deliberate slowness on the part of the regime. Nevertheless the delays merely served to emphasise the uncertain nature of the times.

Further moves with regard to the rehabilitation of Thomas of Lancaster were made when parliament decided that the clergy should pursue the question of his canonisation. The King took the matter up. William Trussel and two others were ordered to the Roman Curia to press the case.<sup>2</sup> In the event there was no quick response to this request either and the matter dragged on for some years without a favourable answer being received by Lancaster's family.

The Despensers' opponents did not only seek the restitution of their lands. They had requested and been granted the reversal of all fines of lands, recognisances and penalties made under duress. The records for the opening months of the new regime contain numerous entries relating to the extortions and injustices of the Despensers' rule which now had to be put right. In some instances the cases referred specifically to individuals as having been supporters of Thomas

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1 Memoranda Roll, 1326-27, No. 497, p. 69.

2 Rot. Parl. II, pp. 7, 11; Foedera, II, ii, p. 695. Lancaster wrote to Archbishop Melton on 15 February seeking his help and requesting that letters be sent to Pope John XXII supporting the accounts of miracles performed at Thomas's tomb at Pontefract. This Melton did. Historical Papers and Letters from the Northern Registers, ed. James Raine, R.S. (London 1873), pp. 339-42.

of Lancaster, in others it is clear that personal enmity on the part of the Despensers was the cause of the imposition. So we find an order dated 7 February 1327 in favour of Nicholas de Stapelton, a member of Thomas of Lancaster's household,<sup>1</sup> who had been fined in the sum of 2,000 marks to save his life and have the restoration of his lands which had been taken by the former King. But his lands, the Yorkshire manors of Carleton and Haddlesey, had not been returned. This was now to be rectified and the fine annulled.<sup>2</sup> More distinguished supporters of the Lancastrian cause were involved. John Neville of Hornby had been fined £500 and Gilbert Talbot had entered into a recognisance for £200 for saving his life and £2,000 and a tun of wine to have his lands again after he had suffered imprisonment and confiscation.<sup>3</sup> The amounts which had been demanded seem to have been entirely arbitrary; in some cases they had been made with regard to life, sometimes they were connected with property and sometimes, as in the case of Talbot, both.<sup>4</sup>

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1 See, Maddicott, Thomas of Lancaster, p. 55.

2 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 4-5. Two other members of Lancaster's household, Adam de Everyngham of Birkyn and Robert de Reygate were declared quit of fines of 250 marks and 5 marks respectively. See, Maddicott, op. cit., pp. 57-8, 61-2.

3 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 21, 35.

4 The sheriff of Leicester was ordered to hand over the manor of Whitwick, which Despenser had held by virtue of a recognisance of £4,000, to Henry Beaumont and his wife, Alicia. The recognisance was now cancelled. Foedera, II, ii, p. 687. Bogo de Knoville was declared quit of the balance of his fine of 1,000 marks, Memoranda Rolls 1326-27, No. 447, p. 64. For Edward II's promise to remit this fine if he bore himself well in supporting the King against Isabella, above, p. 15. Others who were declared quit included Edmund Hakelut, the balance of £100; Hugh Turplington, £100; John de Clyf, the balance of £20; Baldwin de Fryville, the balance of 100 marks; Thomas Butler, the balance of 200 marks; Thomas Wyther, the balance of 300 marks. Memoranda Rolls 1326-27, No. 460, p. 65; No. 470, p. 66; No. 454, p. 64; No. 511, p. 70; No. 462, p. 65; No. 480, p. 67.

Nor had the clergy escaped the greedy demands. Bishop Airmyn of Norwich had been a particular victim of royal vindictiveness for Edward had never really reconciled himself to the fact that Airmyn had obtained the see at all. The Bishop only obtained restoration of his lands and goods after Isabella's invasion when he was appointed Chancellor on 30 November 1326.<sup>1</sup> Orleton of Hereford had also suffered. The parliament of 1324 had inquired into his conduct when he had refused to answer at Hereford the charges that he had given support in the form of men, horses and arms to Roger Mortimer and other of the King's enemies. As a result the temporalities of his see had been confiscated and Orleton himself had been prevented from carrying out his episcopal functions in a proper manner.<sup>2</sup> Orleton's temporalities were restored to him on 16 February 1327 together with all the issues outstanding from the date of confiscation. This was accompanied by the annulment of the original process against him.<sup>3</sup>

The Bishop who seems to have been under the most persistent financial pressure at the hands of the previous government, was John Stratford, the bishop of Winchester. He was another who had gained his see against the wishes of Edward II. His temporalities had been withheld until the King had imposed heavy financial obligations upon him. The King had demanded recognisances from Stratford of £10,000 and £2,460 5s. 10d. He was also bound to Baldock in the sum of 1,800

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1 C.C.R. 1323-27, p. 621. For Airmyn see, J.L. Grassi, 'William Airmyn and the Bishopric of Norwich', and also above, p.31 and n.2

2 Murimuth, pp. 42-3. The attack on Orleton is discussed, Haines, The Church and Politics in Fourteenth Century England, pp. 144-51.

3 Foedera, II, ii, pp. 689-90; Haines, op. cit., pp. 178-79.

marks and to the Younger Despenser for £2,000.<sup>1</sup> The two recognisances entered into with the King were cancelled on 9 February 1327. 800 marks had already been paid to Baldock, but the amount outstanding, 1,000 marks, described as having been entered into under duress was annulled on 6 March. The £2,000 owed to Despenser fell due to the new King by virtue of the forfeiture of all the Despenser property. It might have been expected that this, too, would be annulled; but it was renewed as a recognisance to the King on 25 February 1327.<sup>2</sup>

As a special favour for his good service, Henry Burghersh, the bishop of Lincoln, was declared quit of the expenses he had been put to when the temporalities of his bishopric had been in the King's hands at the behest of the Younger Despenser and Baldock. He was also acquitted of the amercements laid on him by reason of his refusal to admit to benefices those presented during the time he had not had control of his revenues.<sup>3</sup>

The property of alien priories which Edward II had confiscated at the time of the Gascon war was also restored to the Church. The process began in parliament when the magnates agreed that this restoration should take place and that all the alien priories should be discharged of the farm imposed upon them as a surety by the former

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- 1 The details of Stratford's financial dealings with the government are set out in Natalie M. Fryde, 'John Stratford, Bishop of Winchester and the Crown', B.I.H.R., xliv, (1971), pp. 153-61.
  - 2 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 24; Memoranda Rolls 1326-27, No. 521, p. 72, No. 1488, p. 210. Natalie Fryde, *op. cit.* suggests that the renewal of the recognisance to the King was enforced by Isabella as a surety for Stratford's good behaviour. It certainly seems to be an indication that his loyalty to the new regime was somewhat suspect.
  - 3 The order is dated 10 March. C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 34.

King. An immediate start was made to dealing with the problem. On 4 February, livery of lands and tenements was to be made to the Abbess of Caen or her proctor and the abbey was granted quittance of all arrears of the farm, saving revenue normally due to the King. Further orders were issued during the following week. Some thirty six entries on the Memoranda Roll indicate the extent to which these priories had been affected.<sup>1</sup>

Parliament had been particularly busy in the days following the young King's coronation dealing with this series of petitions designed to erase the effects of the Despenser tyranny and restore the fortunes of those who had been opposed to it. Parliament, however, had not neglected to give its attention to wider aspects of government, particularly in view of the youth of the King. There are distinct echoes of Thomas of Lancaster and the Ordinances of 1311 in the petitions submitted requesting the observation of Magna Carta and the Forest Laws.<sup>2</sup> Of far greater importance, in the light of future events, is the request that wise and responsible men should be placed about the King to advise him. It was linked with a demand that private quarrels should not disturb the peace,<sup>3</sup> and was clearly designed to prevent the emergence of faction and to ensure that power was not concentrated in the hands of too small a group of individuals. Isabella and Mortimer agreed to this request.<sup>4</sup> By so doing they would seem to have been demonstrating that they were confident that they could maintain their

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1 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 18; Memoranda Rolls 1326-27, No. 309, p. 49, and pp. 49-63.

2 Petition No. 3. Rot. Parl. II, p. 6.

3 Petition No. 33. Rot. Parl. II, p. 10.

4 Op. cit., p. 12.

own authority even in the face of an official body designed to curb individual influence.

That their confidence was justified is shown by the fact that from the outset very little is heard of a Council. The chroniclers make little or no reference to it; so far as they were concerned the country was governed by Isabella and Mortimer, although Le Bel remarks that the government was undertaken with the advice of the Earl of Kent, Roger Mortimer, Thomas Wake and others.<sup>1</sup> Thus Isabella and Mortimer were able to prevent elements hostile to them from approaching the King and it was to be one of Lancaster's subsequent complaints against the regime that Mortimer had controlled access to the King.<sup>2</sup> Only when Lancaster's dissatisfaction became public knowledge at the time of his abortive military action in the winter of 1328-29 did the chroniclers indicate that Lancaster had been intended to exercise a particular role in the government. Henry Knighton, the Lancastrian writer from Leicester, then notes that at the time of the King's coronation, Lancaster had been nominated keeper of the realm and chief counsellor. This statement is borne out by the Chronicle of Melsa which refers to the appointment of Lancaster as the King's governor. The Croniques de London and Walsingham both confirm this.<sup>3</sup> It does look, however, as if, at a time when hostility to Isabella and Mortimer was growing, the chroniclers were seizing upon Lancaster's own political propaganda and presenting it as a well established fact.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Scalacronica, p. 153; Le Bel, p. 36.

2 Below, p. 321.

3 Knighton I, p. 447; Chronica Monasterii de Melsa II, p. 358; Croniques de London, p. 61; Walsingham, p. 192.

4 For Lancaster's attack on the government in the winter of 1328-29, see below, pp. 158-180.



The Brut alone gives any details of such a Council. It refers to a membership of twelve and names the counsellors as the two Archbishops, Reynolds and Melton, Bishops Stratford and Orleton, the Earls of Lancaster, Norfolk, Kent and Surrey, Thomas Wake, Henry Percy, Oliver Ingham, and the steward of the Household, John Ros. They were to answer in parliament once a year for their conduct of the government, but this stipulation was soon ignored and to the King's detriment, says the chronicler, the real power remained in the hands of Isabella and Mortimer who proceeded to follow their own way.<sup>1</sup>

Tout, in discussing the influence of this Council, suggests that the supporters of Lancaster mustered strongly amongst its members and that the policies of the new government were proof of Lancastrian influence.<sup>2</sup> This emphasis on the Lancastrian element on the council would seem to be misplaced. An examination of the Council's membership does not give substance to the claim. It is particularly dangerous to talk in terms of parties or even of groups. Bishops and magnates had come together to overthrow Edward II and the Despensers. They were bound by a common interest; that is to say their individual interests focussed on a common aim. Once that had been achieved it was likely that their individual ambitions would reassert themselves. Thus while the allegiance of the members of the council may be held to have tilted in favour of the King and the court, in practice it would seem that the balance was even. It certainly did not lean towards Lancaster. Mortimer himself was not a member but he could count for support from Bishop Orleton, the Earl of Surrey and Oliver Ingham, while the King's

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1 The Brut, pp. 254-55.

2 Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, III, pp. 10-11.

two uncles of Kent and Norfolk, Archbishop Reynolds and Henry Percy would have been unlikely Lancastrian supporters. So, in addition to himself, Lancaster could only certainly call on Bishop Stratford, Thomas Wake and John de Ros. Archbishop Melton as a supporter of Edward II and therefore an opponent of Mortimer, could also probably be called upon. In practice, therefore, this is a balance of seven to five in favour of the court, but it is a balance which could not be maintained.

Orleton almost immediately ceased to play a prominent part in government. He left London at the end of March 1327 on a diplomatic mission, while his acceptance of papal provision to the see of Worcester the following autumn may well have blocked the advancement of Isabella's clerk, Robert Wyville, and thus put Orleton out of favour.<sup>1</sup> Ingham, who had served in Gascony in the previous reign, was almost certainly still there at the beginning of 1327, for letters of protection were issued for him in Gascony on the King's service on 8 February.<sup>2</sup> It is unlikely that Archbishop Reynolds was particularly active during these months since he was to die before the end of the year. This leaves the royal uncles, Surrey, whose hostility to Lancaster has already been discussed,<sup>3</sup> and Henry Percy. Percy had been present at Pontefract and at Sherburn in May and June 1321 when Thomas of Lancaster had tried to rally opposition to Edward II. But he was a young man and he did not fight at Boroughbridge. He had spent most of his career on the Scottish march and it was probably

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 61; Le Baker, p. 42.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 6.

3 Above, p. 61 and n. 4.

his claims to land in Scotland which were at this time uppermost in his mind. His attendance at court in 1327 seems to have been rare.

Thus there were only three and at the most four amongst the twelve who were Mortimer supporters. But the Lancastrian element fared little better. In addition to Lancaster himself, there were his son-in-law, Thomas Wake, Bishop Stratford and John de Ros, chamberlain of the household. The balance was thus even, for the one remaining member of the twelve, Archbishop Melton, seems to have remained in the north. The council must then have been little more than a centre of deadlock and must quickly have become a source of frustration and irritation to Lancaster as the real business of government was carried on elsewhere.

That this was so is further borne out by an examination of the Charter Rolls for the period 1327 to 1330, with particular reference to the witnesses who were present at Court. Although this cannot be regarded as conclusive, certain indicative trends do emerge. The presentation of the names of the witnesses to each charter follows a set pattern. Invariably the Chancellor and the steward of the household are named. Others appear in strict order of rank, the Archbishops are named first before the episcopal chancellor; the names of other bishops follow. The laymen are headed by the earls, the King's uncles first although the King's brother, John of Eltham, takes precedence when he starts to witness at the end of 1328; they are followed by Lancaster and the other earls. The barons follow, Mortimer's name at the head, although when after 1328 he is listed as Earl of March, his name comes at the end of the list of earls. There is then a strict order of precedence with the steward of the household always named last. The names are not exclusive for every entry concludes with the

phrase et aliis; but those who are named are clearly the more important and the number of times their name appears cannot be without significance.<sup>1</sup>

An analysis immediately reveals that during 1327 the most regular attenders were Bishop Hothum of Ely, who was Chancellor until 1 March 1328, and the steward of the household, John de Ros. In this period Mortimer and Lancaster each witnessed just over fifty times while the only others to approach this number were the Earl of Surrey and Thomas Wake. Archbishop Melton's name also appears prominently but mainly only during the time the Court was at York and in the north of England between June and August 1327.<sup>2</sup> With the exception of Hothum these were all members of the council, but once again we should note the maintenance of a balance between those who supported Mortimer and those who were inclined to Lancaster. There is a distinct movement against the Lancastrians in the course of 1328. The substitution of Burghersh of Lincoln for Hothum as Chancellor would have made little difference; but while Mortimer's involvement remains constant, Lancaster's falls. As steward of the household the Lancastrian Ros is replaced, first by John Mautravers and then by John de Wysham, both Mortimer supporters; and while Wake's presence also decreases that of Surrey increases. Henry Percy also becomes a more constant witness,

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- 1 See below, Appendix 1. A typical entry is that of the witnesses to Charter No. 65, C.53/114. *Hiis testibus venerabilibus patribus W. Archiepiscopo Eborensis Anglie Primato et J. Eliensis episcopo cancellario nostro Thoma comite Norffe et marescallo Anglie Johanne de Warena Comite Surre Rogero de Mortuo Mari Ricardo de Grey Johanne de Ros senescallo hospicii nostri et aliis. Datum per manum nostrum apud Ebor xiiij die Junii.*
  - 2 C.53/114. The figures for 1327 are, Hothum 80; Ros 86; Mortimer 55; Lancaster 51; Surrey 45; Wake 41; Melton 35. All the figures quoted in the footnotes refer to the regnal year.

most notably during the Salisbury Parliament of November 1328. The court's stay at York in February and March and again in August together with the fact that he was present at the Northampton parliament in May boosted Melton's tally for the calendar year to forty five.<sup>1</sup>

By 1329 the pattern had noticeably changed as Isabella and Mortimer tightened their grip on affairs following Lancaster's abortive movement in the winter of 1328-29. As might be expected, Lancaster, Wake and Melton seldom appear; the names of the Chancellor Burghersh and the steward of the household, John Mautravers, are prominent; but it is Mortimer's name which alone stands comparison with them in 1329 and continues to do so until his fall. In 1329 he witnesses forty eight times out of fifty seven, being absent apparently only during February<sup>2</sup> when the court was at Westminster between 13th and 20th.<sup>3</sup> In the year beginning January 1330, out of seventy five charters dated before his fall Mortimer witnesses fifty seven, his longest absence apparently being during part of May when the court was at Woodstock awaiting the birth of the King's first child.<sup>4</sup>

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1 C.53/115. The figures for 1328 were, Hothum 57 and Burghersh 70; Ros 21; Mautravers 25; Wysham 50; Mortimer 56; Surrey 57; Lancaster 37; Wake 29. Percy who had witnessed on only 4 occasions in 1327 appears 40 times in 1328.

2 C.53/116.

3 E.101/384/9, account of the Keeper of the Wardrobe for household expenses, shows that the court was at Westminster on 13 February and at Eltham on 22 February.

4 C.53/117. Burghersh appears 79 times during the year. He surrendered the Great Seal on 28 November and his name last appears on 5 December 1330. Mautravers witnesses 56 times; but not after he was replaced as steward by Hugh Turplington at the end of July.

Surrey's presence during these years is less noticeable and after the Winchester parliament of March 1330 when the King's uncle the Earl of Kent was tried and executed, he witnesses but rarely until after Mortimer's fall. In his place Mortimer's supporter, Sir Oliver Ingham, appears. He was in attendance almost continuously throughout the late Spring and Summer. His name only disappears at the same time as his patron Mortimer's in October. Two other names deserve comment. The King's brother, John of Eltham, seems to have been in continuous attendance from the end of October 1329;<sup>1</sup> but more significantly the name of William Montagu, which first appears in February 1329, becomes a regular feature from April 1330. From a total of twelve appearances in 1329, he rises to forty eight in 1330, a change which marks the King's increasing reliance upon him. It is clear that after the disappearance of Lancaster and his friends in January 1329, the court was dominated by a very small group.<sup>2</sup> What is more, it was a group which was gradually shrinking until Mortimer, Burghersh, Ingham and Mautravers alone remained continuously about the King and Isabella. The presence of such a small group of obvious Mortimer supporters is sufficient to account for the unease which clearly marks the country's and the barons' attitude to government following the elimination of Kent. Mortimer's reliance on so small a group also suggests that he and Isabella were increasingly aware and fearful of the uncertain loyalty of the other leading magnates.

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1 He witnesses 79 times in 1330. C.53/117.

2 Even Henry Percy who seems to have been present fairly consistently in the first half of 1329 and again in the Spring of 1330 disappears almost entirely during the following months to emerge again at Nottingham in October at the time of Mortimer's arrest. He resumes as a regular witness at the end of November 1330.

If the dominant group at court was small, there were inevitably a number of lesser men whose presence was less regular but nevertheless who hung around the centre of power. These included both churchmen and laymen. During 1327 there are thirty two different names on the list of witnesses to charters, ten of whom witnessed four times or less. For 1328 these figures are thirty six and eleven respectively; in 1329, thirty two and thirteen; and in 1330, thirty three and nine. In addition there were those described as et aliis; men who were surely not of the same class and were most probably clerks of chancery. The named casual witnesses include men of distinction like Bishop Gravesend of London and the Chief Justice of the King's Bench, Sir Geoffrey le Scrope. Standing virtually alone in a class by himself between the more regular and the more casual witnesses is Gilbert Talbot who, for the four years under review, averages some twenty appearances a year. Talbot appears as King's Chamberlain in March 1328 and would seem to have been loyal to the young King, for on Mortimer's fall in October 1330 he was rewarded with the Justiciarship of South Wales.<sup>1</sup>

While we have noted that the presence of the Chancellor and the steward of the household were extremely regular, the other important officer of state, the Treasurer, is far less prominent. While there were only two individual Chancellors between January 1327 and November 1330, there were no less than five treasurers acting during the same

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1 As Chamberlain, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 371; as Justice of South Wales, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 10. This appointment was extended for life in December 1339, C.P.R. 1338-40, p. 402. Talbot had been involved in the rebellion against the Despensers in 1321-22 and was among those released from recognisances to Edward II in February 1327; above, p. 63. He died in February 1346, G.E.C. xii, pp. 610-12.

period.<sup>1</sup> Bishop Orleton of Hereford was appointed Treasurer on 28 January 1327 but was replaced by Bishop Burghersh of Lincoln on 25 March at a time when he was sent overseas on royal business.<sup>2</sup> Burghersh remained in office until 2 March 1328 when he was replaced by Bishop Northburgh of Coventry and Lichfield. However, Northburgh never acted as Treasurer<sup>3</sup> and a mere seven weeks later he was sent overseas on royal business and Bishop Charlton of Hereford took his place.<sup>4</sup> Charlton in his turn was replaced on 16 September 1329 by Robert Wodehouse, Archdeacon of Richmond, who retained the office until after Mortimer's fall. During his tenure as Treasurer, Orleton was a regular witness of royal charters; but throughout the period the court was at Westminster where the Exchequer was located. During his time as Treasurer Burghersh witnessed only irregularly, most noticeably during the period when the royal army was in the north of England for the Scots' campaign of June-July 1327 and during the court's presence at York in February 1328, by which time the Exchequer had been transferred from London to York.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Hothum of Ely had been appointed Chancellor on 28 January 1327, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 98. He surrendered the Great Seal on 1 March 1328 when it was placed in charge of Henry Clyf, keeper of the rolls in Chancery and William Herlaston, clerk of Chancery. Clyf seems to have had official charge of the Great Seal but it could only be used under Hothum's supervision since it was left in a bag under his seal. Neither of them witness during the period the Great Seal was in their custody and it was surrendered to the King during the Northampton Parliament when Bishop Burghersh of Lincoln was appointed Chancellor on 12 May 1328. C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 371, 387. Those present on that occasion included Mortimer, Ingham, John Cromwell, Gilbert Talbot, William la Zouche of Ashby and Bishop Orleton.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 1, 58.

3 Below, p. 159.

4 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 249, 266, 303.

5 The sheriff of London had been ordered to provide carriage for transporting the equipment of the Exchequer to York in September 1327. C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 31.



Northburgh's name seldom appears and Charlton's only does so during the time the court was again at York in August 1328. Robert Wodehouse's name does not appear at all. This would therefore suggest that while the Treasurer clearly held an important office he was only in the position to influence the processes of government at a time when the court was in the vicinity of the Exchequer. Burghersh's transference from the Treasurership to Chancellorship in the late Spring and early Summer of 1328 is a clear indication of his value to Isabella and Mortimer. This evidence also reinforces the conclusion that very few individuals were actively involved in the processes of government during these years.

This, therefore, must indicate that Isabella and Mortimer fell into the same trap as the Despensers. They failed to secure and they certainly failed to make good use of those magnates and barons who believed themselves to have a natural right to a share in the processes of government. But did Isabella and Mortimer compound that failure by ignoring the need to secure their power base by keeping the support of the coalition which had helped them to power? What evidence is there for a wider exercise of patronage?

The room for manoeuvre in terms of generous land grants as reward for support was extremely limited. Natalie Fryde has recently pointed out that the royal victory over Lancaster in 1322 meant a 'social dislocation and territorial revolution which has hitherto passed without much comment'.<sup>1</sup> The lands of the Contrariants were swept into royal hands, leaders and retainers suffering alike confiscation of their

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1 Natalie Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, p. 69.

goods and property. Some were able to recover part or all of their property only after paying fines, many of them made payable on an instalment system. The land of others remained in the hands of the Crown. Surveys of confiscated property had been carried out in 1322 and again in 1323 under the supervision of Walter Norwich, Chief Baron of the Exchequer. Royal officials were put in charge with instructions to inquire 'which are worth keeping in the King's hand for stock and other profits, which would be better let to farm to tenants and at what rates and terms'. The government was eager for quick returns and this meant at first leasing all that could be leased, but after March 1324 the policy changed. All properties worth less than £40 a year were still to be leased, but larger estates were to be exploited by their custodians for royal profit.<sup>1</sup> Edward II thus retained in his own hands the greater part of the lands of the dead Contrariants as well as the lands of those in prison and exile, and although the Younger Despenser, through the King's generosity, continued to add to his lordship in South Wales and on the March and the Earl of Arundel was rewarded with forfeited Mortimer lands, most notably Chirk,<sup>2</sup> others did not benefit. The income of such lands was too valuable for it to be diverted from the Crown and even Edward's brothers, the Earls of Norfolk and Kent, received nothing.

The parliament of 1327 demanded that all these lands be restored to their original holders.<sup>3</sup> This left the Crown with its traditional

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- 1 Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, Chapter 6, investigates the process of confiscations and the territorial settlement.
  - 2 R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, 1282-1400, pp. 280, 57.
  - 3 Above, p. 54

demesne holdings augmented by the temporary addition of lands which came into its hands by reason of wardship or through the vacancies of episcopal sees. Since the lands held by the Despensers and their adherents were in great part connected with the confiscations of 1322 which had to be returned to their original tenants, Isabella and Mortimer were able to make only limited grants. Yet this should not have been so. Isabella had originally been assigned dower to the value of £4,500 in March 1318.<sup>1</sup> These had subsequently been taken back into Edward II's hands. At Kenilworth on 10 January 1327 these lands together with the County of Cornwall were restored to her. They comprised towns, manors and farms in fifteen southern counties.<sup>2</sup> Three weeks later, as a result of a resolution in parliament, the grant to Isabella as dower was increased to the value of 20,000 marks by the grant for life of honours, lands and tenements valued at £8,722 4s. 4d.<sup>3</sup> It has been pointed out that this endowment with the exception of estates in Wales, Chester and Cornwall constituted the whole of the Crown estate and that this placed the whole royal patronage at Isabella's disposal.<sup>4</sup> We should not ignore the fact that this grant was made to Isabella in return for her services with regard to the French Treaty of 1325 and her part in bringing about the fall of the Despensers. Yet the fact remains that most of these estates remained in the Queen's hands. This was politically short-sighted for while large grants could have encouraged opposition from a rival land base, to retain all was soon seen as testimony to Isabella's rapacity.

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1 C.P.R. 1317-21, pp. 115-16.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 346. For a fuller account of the restoration of Isabella's lands, below, pp. 119-21.

3 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 66-69.

4 B.P. Wolffe, The Royal Demesne in English History, (London, 1971), p. 55.

The King's uncles, the Earls of Kent and Norfolk, might have been expected to share in the Crown estate. They had not been fairly treated by Edward II. Their father, Edward I, had made assignments of land and rent to them, 10,000 marks in the case of Norfolk and 7,000 marks in that of Kent. Edward II had assigned 2,000 marks of land to Kent and had augmented this by a further grant. Kent now regained possession of this endowment. At the same time, in response to a petition for the remainder of the 7,000 marks, his nephew, with parliament's consent, made a grant of lands and tenements worth £296 12s. 5d. as a reward for Kent's services to himself and Isabella. But this grant was made out of the forfeited lands of the Despensers and tended to be concentrated in the counties of Suffolk, Essex and Kent. A further gift of £1,401 14s. 3d. included the far more significant castle and honour of Arundel, forfeited by the Earl, as well as a number of manors in Gloucestershire forfeited by the elder Despenser. These grants still left Kent 2,000 marks short of his father's original intentions.<sup>1</sup>

The case of Norfolk was rather different. Edward I's original grant had been the assignment of the castles, honours and lands of Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk. This had been implemented by Edward II in 1312 and the grant had amounted to 6,000 marks. Thomas of Brotherton now asked for the remainder of his father's intention to be fulfilled. The request brought only a limited response. The grant made at the beginning of March 1327 was only to the value of 1,000 marks and mainly consisted of forfeited Despenser manors in Oxford, Buckingham and Berkshire.<sup>2</sup>

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1 C.Ch.R. 1327-41, pp. 2-3, 4.

2 Op. cit., pp. 3-4.

There were others who gained some benefit from the redistribution of Despenser lands, but nothing was done in haste. Orders concerning the Elder Despenser's lands in Gower had been sent out at the beginning of November 1326<sup>1</sup> and following the executions of the Younger Despenser Arundel and Simon of Reading later that month, their holdings reverted to the Crown. There is a certain irony in the fact that the orders concerning the disposal of this property were in the initial stages issued in the name of Edward II. The Earl of Surrey and his wife Joan of Bar received custody of lands and goods at Axholme in Lincolnshire; Mortimer was appointed keeper of the former Lancastrian castle of Denbigh while Roger de Swynnerton was given custody of manors in Shropshire and Cheshire.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile Roger de Chaundos had been appointed keeper of Glamorgan in December 1326 with orders to deal with Despenser property there. The responsibility for accounting for the issues of this Glamorgan land was committed to a different person, Matthew de Crauthorne.<sup>3</sup>

But the process for the transference of these lands and goods did not proceed entirely smoothly. In March 1327 William Trussel was ordered to take control of two Despenser manors in Wiltshire because a previous order to that effect had not been observed, and thorough searches should be made for jewels, muniments and goods which could easily have been removed before the receivers arrived. Elsewhere

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1 C.F.R. 1319-27, p. 422.

2 Axholme had formerly belonged to Arundel. C.P.R. 1324-27, p. 337. The Mortimer grant is dated 15 December 1326, C.F.R. 1319-27, p. 428. Swynnerton was a former royal household knight. He had been admitted to the household in 1317. He was also a former member of Thomas of Lancaster's retinue with interests in Staffordshire. Op. cit., p. 429.

3 C.F.R. 1319-27, pp. 429, 428.

sheriffs were instructed to act because unnamed persons had entered into possession of property illegally.<sup>1</sup>

But a greater sense of urgency began to creep in as an attempt was made to bring some order into the process. An instruction dated 16 April 1327 provided for an inquisition into the lands held by Despenser and Baldock. A full valuation was to be made and a list compiled of all debts due to them which were still outstanding. The inquisition was to be completed by 7 June (Trinity). It was an optimistic assignment, but the regime's need for ready cash was already pressing as a military campaign against the Scots appeared more and more likely.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the demand for haste was counter-productive. Two years later in March 1329 a new commission was ordered to investigate Despenser lands in Lincolnshire. But the lapse of time must have made it extremely difficult to assess what goods and chattels had been there at Michaelmas 1326, let alone decide what their value was and what debts had been then outstanding. Further inquiry was ordered concerning those to whom the lands and goods had passed. Since the original commission had not made any mention of these things the new commission's task was all the more difficult. It would be easy to trace who was actually holding the property but a valuation at two years distance in time could soon become a source of bitter argument. Yet it was anticipated that this would be done urgently. Six months later a whole new series of inquisitions into confiscated lands was ordered.<sup>3</sup>

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1 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 24, 32-33, 38.

2 Op. cit., p. 39.

3 Op. cit., p. 126. A commission issued on 22 September 1329 states that a new investigation is needed in Shropshire and Staffordshire since a member of the former commission has died and another (William de Ercalowe) is engaged elsewhere on the King's business. C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 149. On 6 October new arrangements were made for Northamptonshire and Rutland, Op. cit., p. 151.

Nevertheless despite illegal entry, inefficiency and the death of members of the commissions limited grants were made. Any unlimited grants of new land as a reward was restricted by the need to restore, in accordance with parliament's instructions, what had been lost through confiscation to the original owners. So Henry Beaumont and his wife Alicia, one of the coheirs of John Comyn, the former Earl of Buchan, took possession of the manor of Whitwick in Leicestershire, which Despenser had occupied by virtue of a recognisance valued at £4,000. On the other hand, John Mautravers received Despenser lands in Dorset and Wiltshire as a reward for service while John Wysham, who like Mautravers was subsequently to hold the office of steward of the household, received two Despenser manors in Oxfordshire and one in Yorkshire in return for surrendering the castle and honour of Knaresborough to Isabella.<sup>1</sup> In fact this was not a fair exchange and some months later the grant had to be made up from moneys on the farm of Shrewsbury.<sup>2</sup> Delays in obtaining what had been granted were not uncommon. Simon Bereford had been granted the manor of Iselhamsted in Buckinghamshire but he was unable to take possession because of illegal entry and the King resumed it into his hands.<sup>3</sup> Bishop Orleton also had to wait delivery of the manors of Ashchurch and Temple Gitting in Gloucestershire granted to him at the time of Despenser's execution at Hereford; but he got them in the end.<sup>4</sup>

Some of those to whom the regime might have been expected to show harshness were treated with leniency. Eleanor Despenser, the King's

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- 1 Beaumont, Foedera II, ii, p. 687. Mautravers, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 59. Wysham, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 114.
  - 2 3 March 1328. The grant was £22 6s. 8d. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 249.
  - 3 Op. cit., p. 125; C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 53.
  - 4 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 86; C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 42.

cousin had been confined to the Tower since her husband's death. Orders for her release were given in February 1328 and a safe conduct issued for her, her children and household to join the King at York.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently she received the castles, manors and lands of her inheritance including property in Glamorgan and Ireland, some of which was in Mortimer's custody and that of Maurice de Berkeley and Simon de Grimsby.<sup>2</sup> Some eighteen months later when inquiries were being made into the demesne lands of the Despensers, specific instructions were issued that Eleanor's lands were not to be touched.<sup>3</sup> Another widow who might have been expected to suffer as a result of her husband's forfeitures was Alice, Countess of Arundel. But she was the sister of John de Warenne and this doubtless had something to do with the fact that as early as March 1327 she had been granted manors in Surrey, Hampshire, Buckingham and Gloucestershire. It soon emerged, however, that several of these were already occupied and a new assignation of £240 per annum was made for the maintenance of the Countess and her children.<sup>4</sup> But this was not the end of the complications: another of the manors originally granted to her, that of Farlington in Hampshire, turned out to have been unjustly seized from William de Stotewille by the Elder Despenser. It was only worth 6s. 2d. but proper compensation was promised as also occurred when it was subsequently found that the manors of Stanvord in Buckinghamshire,

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1 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 261; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 243.

2 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 275-76.

3 22 August 1329, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 146.

4 One manor was in the hands of Hugh Audley, one was held by Lancaster and a third belonged to the heir of John de Berwick who had come of age. C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 80.



Fairford in Gloucestershire and Caversham in Berkshire were part of Eleanor Despenser's inheritance and had to be returned. Fairford had been worth £130, Caversham £90, and for this the Countess received a grant from the farm of London. She was also to receive a further £100 to compensate for the loss of Marlowe and Bulstrode in Buckinghamshire which had also been returned to Eleanor. The compensation was not insubstantial, but further orders had to be made to ensure the rights of the Countess were not abused and in November 1328 the sheriff of London had to pay £180 and the sheriff of Surrey and Sussex £140 otherwise she might not have secured her due. It would seem therefore that everything was done to see that the Countess did not suffer loss, even to the extent of sending instructions to make certain that the profits from the corn sown by Alice on the manors returned by her to Eleanor Despenser should be allowed to her. But the whole series of transfers show how uncertain was the position with regard to land and how in some cases grants were of little worth as long term security.<sup>1</sup>

Those foreigners who had lent their support to Isabella and Mortimer had also to be rewarded. The wages and expenses paid to John of Hainault during 1326-27 present a separate problem;<sup>2</sup> but they were not the only reward he gained. Early in February 1327 he received a grant of a 1,000 marks per annum on the custom of London until he should receive a grant of land to the same value and this pension was paid regularly. It seems to have been regarded as having some sort of priority as orders were sent to ensure its payment in January and

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1 For these transactions relating to the Countess of Arundel between 28 February 1328 and November 1328, see, C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 254, 285, 290, 351. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 271.

2 See below, pp. ~~280-81~~, 288.

December 1328, July and December 1329 and March 1330. Clearly promises had been made by Isabella and Mortimer on the King's behalf before the invasion had taken place and we find the confirmation of such promises being enrolled in May 1328. Rents for life worth 500 marks were allotted to John de Florence, while John de Bierners, the Provost of Valenciennes was promised land in England or Ponthieu worth 100 livres tournois. A similar amount of land had also been promised to William Donnort, the Count of Hainault's chamberlain and to Sir Gerald de Potes.<sup>1</sup>

Good service had to be rewarded; but Isabella and Mortimer were indebted to a large number of people and it is difficult to escape the conclusion that they were not always willing or able to fulfil the expectations of their supporters. Land was not available and money payments were not always promptly paid. Even where assignments were made against particular sources of revenue this was the case, for such assignments were sometimes duplicated and so exceeded the funds available in ready cash. This no doubt helped to contribute to the disillusionment that was setting in by the autumn of 1328. That disillusionment was bound to be exacerbated when supporters who suffered delay saw how Isabella and Mortimer secured their own position.<sup>2</sup>

After Lancaster's failure in the winter of 1328-29 the court was increasingly dominated by Mortimer, Bishop Burghersh, Ingham and Mautravers.<sup>3</sup> It is not therefore surprising to find these men bene-

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1 The grant to John of Hainault, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 9; orders for payment, C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 247, 352, 473, 511, C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 14. For the other promises, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 270.

2 For details of this see the next section, pp. 104-128.

3 Above, p. 73

The rewards of men like Simon de Bereford, Hugh Turpington and John Darcy were small compared even with the grants already discussed.<sup>1</sup> Prominent names do appear amongst those rewarded by the regime for loyalty, but the grants made in 1328 and 1329 were limited in scope. Generosity was precluded by the fact that many of Lancaster's supporters entered into recognisances to secure their life and property and only four prominent men, Beaumont, Roscelyn, Trussel and Wyther fled abroad leaving lands in the hands of the regime.<sup>2</sup> Grants, however, continued from the forfeitures of 1326 and the Earl of Surrey and John Wyard, one of the King's yeomen gained some Arundel manors and messuages which had belonged to Simon of Reading.<sup>3</sup> In the event it was Isabella and Mortimer who continued to gain real benefit.

Thus they fell into the trap which had ensnared the Despensers. It was all very well building a secure land base for themselves and eliminating active opposition; but the foundation of their power had been a coalition of disaffected barons, the Church and the commons, notably the commons of London. By 1329 there is nothing to suggest that any positive steps had been taken to advance any of these groups and so give them confidence in the regime's intentions. The policy

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1 Bereford, the Escheator south of Trent, who held the custody of Tickhill Castle and its honour together with the towns of Tickhill, Yorkshire, and Gringley and Wheatley, Nottinghamshire was granted them for life in the event of Isabella's death, December 1328, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 344. Turpington, who had March and Irish connections which link him with Mortimer, received confirmation of grants of land in Ireland, December 1328, op. cit., p. 345; while Darcy, Justiciar in Ireland, received some of the goods forfeited by William Trussel.

2 For the collapse of the Lancastrian rebellion, see below, pp. 178-79. Wyther died abroad and Trussel was pardoned in March 1330. The others did not return until after Mortimer's fall.

3 November 1328. C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 337, 343.

of the regime appeared to be directed towards no more than restoring the situation to that which had obtained before the rule of the Despensers. The magnates had not benefitted as they might have expected from the change of government in 1326; the Church had certainly received no benefits while the City of London having regained its privileges in 1327 soon found itself looking to Lancaster when the Exchequer was removed to York and Mortimer's supporter, Richard Bethune found himself supplanted by Hamo de Chigwell whom he had himself ousted in 1326. Those who were advanced were lesser men like Mautravers and Ingham; of the earls only Surrey seems to have remained consistent in his loyalty. Lancaster himself kept a low profile after his failure, while Isabella and Mortimer looked in other directions for support.

Yet, just as the Lancastrian upheaval had produced few signs of generosity, so the elimination of the King's uncle, the Earl of Kent, in the Spring of 1330 led to few rewards. Following his arrest at the Winchester parliament, swift steps were taken to secure his property. Orders were sent to Simon Bereford as escheator South of Trent on 14 March to deal with this and two days later Arundel Castle was secured with the appointment of Roger-atte-Ashe as its custodian. This appointment was subsequently extended to cover all Kent's lands in Sussex.<sup>1</sup> That the regime's concern went well beyond Kent himself is indicated by the commission to Mautravers, Ingham, Stonor and Willoughby and two others to act in Hampshire to discover adherents of Kent. At the end of March orders were sent for the arrest of forty supporters of the dead earl.<sup>2</sup>

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1 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 166, 168.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 556; C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 169-70.

There was little delay in making grants from Kent's lands although once again Isabella seems to have been the main beneficiary. The names of the other grantees also have a familiar ring about them. John Darcy received two manors in Lincolnshire and another in Norfolk; Bishop Burghersh received Thurleye in Lincolnshire and Wykham in Kent and his brother manors in Hertfordshire, Essex, Northamptonshire and Surrey. Mautravers received manors in Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Surrey and Devon, Ingham was granted the manor of Lammersh in Essex and the farm of Andover in Hampshire which rendered a mere 55s. 4d. a year. This was an insignificant grant compared with the farms valued at nearly £240 secured by the Earl of Surrey. Hugh Turpington was granted land valued at £98.<sup>1</sup> But there are indications of coming change. Amongst the names already mentioned others are to be found which suggest that the seventeen year old King was looking to reward his own personal friends and thereby to secure a group loyal to himself who owed little to his mother or to Mortimer. Robert Ufford, Edward de Bohun and William Montagu all benefitted at this time and all remained close to the King following Mortimer's fall.<sup>2</sup>

The summer of 1330, which was a time of considerable uncertainty for Isabella and Mortimer, did not bring any upsurge in the number of grants. The King's yeoman Richard de Monmouth, who was also a servant

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1 Darcy, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 513; Bishop Burghersh, C.Ch.R. 1327-41, pp. 178, 177; Bartholomew Burghersh, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 516; Mautravers, op. cit., p. 517; Ingham, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 174; Surrey, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 517; Turpington, op. cit., p. 524.

2 Ufford received the castle and town of Orford, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 522; Edward de Bohun was granted manors valued at £74 in Somerset and Essex and further land in Devon, op. cit., p. 517; Montagu received manors and rents in Somerset, ibid.

fitting from further grants. At the end of November 1328 Ingham was appointed Justice of Chester for life and this secured for him the important castles of Chester, Rhuddlan and Flint at a yearly rent of 1,000 marks. Mautravers, at the end of October, had been appointed keeper of the stannary of Devon and of the waters of Dartmouth. A month later he was entrusted with the keepership of the castle at Careg Cennan which had belonged to John Giffard of Brimpsfield. Since no-one had come forward to prove satisfactorily that he was Giffard's heir, Mautravers' second appointment as Steward of the Household in March 1329 was marked by the grant to him of Giffard's estates, subject to any claims being made on the estate. For these he should be answerable. He had further benefitted by the extension of a grant relating to property in Dorset and Northamptonshire which had formerly belonged to the Elder Dispenser and to Edward II's favourite, Donald of Mar.<sup>1</sup> With lands being confiscated from Lancastrian supporters in the Spring of 1329 we find Ingham receiving estates which had been forfeited by Thomas Roscelyn. Robert de Ardern, John de Lisle and Bartholomew Burghersh, brother of the bishop of Lincoln, benefitted from Beaumont's forfeitures. Burghersh also secured the keepership of the lands of Henry de Leyburn while Hugh Hakeluyt, one of the King's yeomen, received Thomas Wyther's lands at Kimbolton.<sup>2</sup>

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1 C.F.R. 1327-30, pp. 113-14. Ingham had been appointed Justice during pleasure the previous February. For the grants to Mautravers, C.F.R. 1327-30, pp. 107, 113, C.Ch.R. 1327-41, p. 117 for the transfer of Giffard's lands. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 346 for the granting of the knights' fees and advowsons of the manors of Winterbourne Houghton, Dorset, and Overstone, Northamptonshire.

2 Roscelyn, 13 February 1329, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 364. Beaumont, 5 February 1329, 1 and 15 September 1329, C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 119, 147, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 440. Wyther, 1 February 1329, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 118. Henry de Leyburn, 22 February 1329, op. cit., p. 122.

of Isabella, received part of the Gloucestershire lands forfeited by the Earl of Arundel.<sup>1</sup> Turpington received more forfeited Kent property<sup>2</sup> and an enlargement of this grant is to be found dated 19 October 1330, the day of Mortimer's arrest and Turpington's death.<sup>3</sup> But right to the end Isabella and Mortimer kept tight control of land grants.

Grants of lands and rents were undoubtedly one way in which government could secure loyalty. More profitable for the recipient could be a grant of wardship with the right of marriage of an heir under age. In this respect Isabella and Mortimer were unlucky. No large estate of great significance came into their hands between 1327 and 1330. Bishop Burghersh had received the grant of wardship and the marriage of his cousin Giles de Badlesmere, the heir of Bartholomew Badlesmere who had been executed after Boroughbridge.<sup>4</sup> He added to this the wardship of the heirs of Paulinus de Peivre, Thomas de Vere and John de Mohun; but these could hardly be held to be vast rewards.<sup>5</sup> At one time or another Mautravers, Ingham and Surrey all received wardships but none of them could have been of great significance.<sup>6</sup> The rewards

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- 1 The grant was probably consequential on the involvement of Arundel's heir, Richard Arundel, in a confederacy against the government earlier in the summer. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 549.
  - 2 Caldecote under Brouneswold in Huntingdon valued at £11 on 22 September 1330, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 3.
  - 3 Op. cit., p. 9.
  - 4 Much of the Badlesmere estate had been in the hands of the Elder Despenser. The grant is dated 26 February 1327, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 20.
  - 5 Paulinus de Peivre, 25 November 1328, op. cit., p. 112; Thomas de Vere, 16 May 1329, op. cit., p. 135; John de Mohun, 31 August 1330, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 551.
  - 6 Mautravers had custody of the heir of Hugh Wake, 19 June 1329, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 144; Ingham, the heir of Robert de Thorp, 15 September 1330, op. cit., p. 190; Surrey two parts of the land of the heir of Thomas Bardolf, 27 February 1330, op. cit., p. 164.

to be gained by the faithful supporters of the regime were fairly small.<sup>1</sup>

The fall of Mortimer inevitably brought about a further reallocation of land. The years between 1320 and 1330 had seen lands changing hands with considerable rapidity. The forfeitures which so frequently came to the Crown were used to a limited extent to its own advantage but more so to the advantage of individuals like the Despensers, Isabella and Mortimer. As we shall see, there is little distinction to be drawn between the greed of the leaders of these two regimes. The fall of Edward II achieved a change of government. It did little to change the narrow, self-seeking basis of government. The patronage of Isabella and Mortimer was exercised as carefully as that of their predecessor. When one considers the large amount of land which being channelled into their hands, remained there and the obvious opportunities that this created for a power base, it is not surprising that disillusionment gradually grew and that bit by bit the alliance which had placed Isabella and Mortimer in power fell apart. Of the twelve names referred to by The Brut as members of the royal council in 1327, only Ingham was in attendance at court with any regularity during the summer of 1330. Even Surrey and Percy were absenting themselves by then, leaving Mortimer, Bishop Burghersh, Ingham and the Steward of the Household<sup>2</sup> at the centre.

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- 1 Henry Percy received the wardship and marriage of the heir of Robert Fitzwalter in 1328, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 96, and Isabella de Vesci had charge of David de Strabogli, Earl of Athol, op. cit., p. 2. But these would hardly seem to come into the category of rewards. The grants of wardship for this period would seem otherwise to be routine grants to relatives or lords. Altogether between 9 May 1328 and 15 September 1330, thirty three grants involving wardship were made. C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 91-190, *passim*.
  - 2 Mautravers witnessed for the last time on 29 July 1330; Turpington regularly from 10 August, C.53/117.



The regime was unable to secure the loyalty of its servants and the uncertainties led to a continuance of that insecurity of land tenure which had begun with the Despensers' threats to the lands of the Marcher lords a decade before. The continuing forfeitures and reallocations of land which took place following Boroughbridge in 1322, the fall of the Despensers in 1326, the Lancastrian upheaval in 1328-9 and the Kent fiasco in 1330, drew to an end with Mortimer's fall. The young King now had a certain amount of land at his disposal and was thus able by a more judicious use of patronage than had been exercised by the government of his mother and Mortimer to make proper provision for his Queen, Philippa of Hainault, and for those who had served him well as he asserted his own authority at Nottingham on the night of 19 October 1330.

Seven years later when creating his eldest son Earl of Cornwall, Edward III in an unprecedented act rewarded those who had helped him in Mortimer's overthrow. William Montagu, William Clinton and Robert Ufford were made Earls of Salisbury, Huntingdon and Suffolk. With them were associated two others, William Bohun and Hugh Audley, who received the earldoms of Northampton and Gloucester respectively. These creations were accompanied by grants of land or moneys in lieu. The total value of these grants was £1,000 in the case of Bohun, but only 1,000 marks in the cases of Clinton, Ufford and Montagu. Audley's creation remains the odd one out. He had a claim to the earldom of Gloucester through his wife Margaret, the widow of Piers Gaveston and the second daughter and coheiress of Gilbert de Clare, the earl of Gloucester. On her brother's death at Bannockburn, she had inherited extensive lands. When Audley's lands had been returned to him in February 1329 after Lancaster's rebellion the sheriffs in sixteen

counties were involved in the restoration. He therefore already held extensive estates. Accordingly in 1337 he received grants only to the value of £120.<sup>1</sup>

Ten years after this there were further shifts of land with the death of Earl Warenne. All his property north of Trent was absorbed by the royal family. The grant was to the King's son, Edmund of Langley with remainder to his brothers, John of Gaunt, Lionel of Antwerp and finally to the King himself. Other lands granted to Warenne by Edward II in 1326 in Surrey, Sussex and Wales passed to his wife Joan of Bar for life, with remainder to the heirs of Edmund, Earl of Arundel. In December 1347, in an arrangement with Richard Arundel, she exchanged some of her lands on the Welsh March for a lump sum of £900. Two years later the King reasserted that at her death the rest of her property in Surrey, Sussex, Wales and the March should pass to Arundel. She did not die until August 1361.<sup>2</sup>

All these changes were not on the scale of those made in the earlier upheavals and although it is arguable that the growth during Edward III's reign of enfeoffment to uses<sup>3</sup> provided a new flexibility

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- 1 These grants were all dated between 17 and 19 March 1337 and can be traced in C.Ch.R. 1327-41, pp. 400-02; C.P.R. 1334-38, pp. 409, 414-18, 426-27. Extensive use of remainder occurs in these grants with a consequential burden on the Exchequer's sources of revenue till the lands were available. For Audley in 1329, C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 434-35. For the rewards given following Mortimer's fall in 1330, see below, p. 347.
  - 2 F. Royston Fairbank, 'The Last Earl of Warenne and Surrey and the Distribution of his Possessions', Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, xix, (1907), pp. 255-264. The grant to Edmund of Langley, dated 6 August 1347, C.Ch.R. 1341-1417, p. 63.
  - 3 The question of enfeoffment to uses is examined by J.M.W. Bean, The Decline of English Feudalism, 1215-1540, (Manchester, 1968), pp. 104-79.

in the landholding structure, it would seem that Mortimer's fall in 1330 brought an end to that worrying instability in land holding which marked the years 1320 to 1330. There was therefore a return to a more settled security of tenure; without that the Crown could not count on the continuing support of its baronage. Edward III did not imitate the mistakes of the Despencers and Mortimer.

- 3 -

The Basis of Isabella and Mortimer's Power

Security of land tenure was of fundamental importance to the nobility of medieval England, for from the land the greater part of the wealth of the individual baron was drawn. It was one of the responsibilities of the King and his government to create conditions of stability which protected the land rights of the magnates and ensured continuity of possession. It was the failure of Edward II and his ministers to do this which led to the revolution of 1326. With the example of Despenser greed before them it might have been expected that Isabella and Mortimer would have exercised great care to ensure not only that wrongs were righted and lands confiscated restored to their owners, but that they themselves held only what had been in their hands before Mortimer's lands had been confiscated in the aftermath of Thomas of Lancaster's failure in 1322 and before the seizure of Isabella's lands in September 1324.<sup>1</sup> At the very least they should have been as careful over what they took for themselves as they were in rewarding their followers.

That those rewards, over and above the restoration of property, were limited we have already seen. The contrast between the acquisitions of earls like Lancaster and Surrey, of curialists like Ingham and Mautravers, even of the royal uncles Kent and Norfolk, with what accrued to Isabella and Mortimer is very striking. There can be little doubt that Mortimer wished to create for himself a power base on the Welsh March while Isabella sought to concentrate in her own hands the total wealth of the Crown. To seek to achieve these ends in an indiscriminate and arrogant manner with little regard for the

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1 This had been done on the pretext that there was grave danger of a French invasion following the Gascon War of St. Sardos. Much of Isabella's land was close to the south-west coast of England. C.F.R. 1319-27, p. 300.

position of others was bound to undermine the coalition of 1326. It was a particularly foolish way of proceeding since the concentration of Marcher land in the hand of the Despensers and the retention of land by Edward II had been two of the factors contributing to the hatred of the Despensers' government. But, either Isabella and Mortimer were confident that they could succeed where others had failed or they allowed their greed and ambition to blind themselves to the consequences of the concentration of so much landed wealth in their own hands.

The initial growth of the Mortimer family fortunes had been largely due to the thrust and ambition of Roger Mortimer II (c. 1231-1282) who had won the confidence of Edward I when heir to the throne and duly reaped his reward when the Prince became King. He had, however, already made a judicious marriage to Maud de Braose, a daughter and coheiress of William de Braose and his wife Eve, who was in her turn sister and coheiress of Richard Marshal, Earl of Pembroke. Roger thus acquired a third of the marcher Lordship of Brecon and the Lordship of Radnor together with great estates in Carmarthen and significant amounts of land in South Wales, England and Ireland.<sup>1</sup> When he died in 1282, Roger held in right of his wife lands in Gloucester and Somerset in England, in Carmarthen and Pembroke in Wales and in Kildare, Carlow and Kilkenny in Ireland. It is noted that he held nothing in Ireland of his own inheritance.<sup>2</sup> But his adherence to Edward I in the

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1 For an account of the growth of the Mortimer fortunes, see, B. Penry Evans, *The Family of Mortimer*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Wales, 1934.

2 Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, II (Edward I), No. 446. Roger de Mortuo Mari the Elder, pp. 265-68.

Barons' War and during the Welsh War had brought him gains of his own in the shape of the lordships of Ceri and Cydewain and the castle of Dolforwyn (1279). He also held Cleobury which became an independent liberty of the Marcher type.<sup>1</sup> Cleobury Mortimer was in Shropshire and Roger held this together with Chelmarsh and members of that manor at Ernewood and Hugeley.

Like his father, Roger's second son and heir made a useful marriage. About 1285 he had married Margaret, daughter of Sir William de Fiennes (or Fenles) who was a second cousin of Edward I's first queen, Eleanor of Castile. Although there is no evidence that Edmund possessed his father's ruthless drive, when he died in 1304 he had holdings in twenty one counties stretching from Yorkshire to Dorset and from Suffolk to Somerset as well as in Wales. On the March in Herefordshire he held jointly with his wife the manors of Kingsland, Eardisland, Pembridge, Orleton, Thornbury and Great Marcle. In addition he held the castles and towns of Radnor and Wigmore as well as the town of Presteigne while in Shropshire his holdings included the manor of Cleobury Mortimer, Leintwardine hamlet, Knighton, Norton by Knighton and Pilleth. These last three places were classed as being in Welshry. Edmund Mortimer also held lands in Wales as members of the barony of Radnor.<sup>2</sup>

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1 For further information concerning Mortimer fortunes, see article by Tout in The Dictionary of National Biography, xxxix; R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, 1282-1400; G.E.C., ix, pp. 276-81.

2 Inquisitions Post Mortem, iv, (Edward I), No. 235. Edmund de Mortuo Mari, pp. 157-66. He held land either in chief or jointly with his wife in the counties of Buckingham, Berkshire, Hampshire, Somerset, Gloucester, Worcester, Hereford, Shropshire and Wales. In addition he held fees in those counties and in Yorkshire, Nottingham, Leicester, Northampton, Huntingdon, Cambridge, Suffolk, Bedford, Oxford, Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall.

However, if Edmund Mortimer seems merely to have been content with his father's inheritance and the lands his wife brought with her, his younger brother Roger had his own way to make. In practice, Edward I created a new Marcher Lordship for him when, in 1282, he granted him the lands of Llewellyn Vaughan. Thus appeared the estate of Mortimer of Chirk, who high in the favour of Edward II during the earlier part of his reign, added the custody of Blaenllyfori and Dinas in County Brecon (1310) to what he already held. The Mortimer family were firmly entrenched in their Marcher lordships by the early years of the 14th Century, even if the drive towards independent Marcher status exempt from the King's writ, justice and taxes had lost momentum in the face of increased vigilance on the part of Edward I who in 1290 twice confiscated the liberty of Wigmore because Edmund had infringed the King's liberties as lord of Montgomery.<sup>1</sup>

The growth of Mortimer fortunes continued when, in 1304, the inheritance passed to Edmund's seventeen year old heir, Roger.<sup>2</sup> Being under age he was committed to the wardship of the Prince of Wales who transferred it to Gaveston. Mortimer soon secured release from this constraint by paying Gaveston a fine of 2,500 marks. While still a

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1 D.N.B. op. cit. G.E.C., ix, pp. 251-56. R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, pp. 25, 260.

2 Roger Mortimer's date of birth has been ascribed to 17 April 1288, Et mille, cclxxxviiij xv Kl. maii natale Rogeris, Chronicon de Heiles, B.L. Cottonian MS. Cleopatra, D3, f.46v.; and to either 3 May 1286 or 25 April 1287 by D.N.B. on the basis of Inquisitions Post Mortem, op. cit. Roger, his son aged 18 at the feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross in the year aforesaid (32 Edward I, that is 1304) is his next heir. Heir, as above, aged 17 on the day of St. Mark last. Heir, as above, aged 17 on the feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross last. Heir, as above, aged 17½ years.



minor therefore he took livery of his lands on 9 April 1306.<sup>1</sup> Although he was amongst the three hundred new knights created at the knighting of the Prince of Wales on 22 May 1306<sup>2</sup>, his involvement in campaigns in Scotland seems to have been comparatively small<sup>3</sup> and his attentions were increasingly focussed on Ireland.

Some time before 6 October 1306, Roger Mortimer had married Joan de Joinville, daughter and heiress of Peter de Joinville and his wife Joan, a daughter of Hugh XII, Count of La Marche and Angouleme.<sup>4</sup> Peter de Joinville's father, Geoffrey, had been married to Maud, the younger daughter and co-heiress of Gilbert de Lacy of Ewyas Lacy in Herefordshire. In 1283 Geoffrey and his wife gave all their lands in England and Wales to their son Peter, who died in 1292 leaving three daughters as coheiresses. Since two of these became nuns at Aconbury near

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- 1 9 April 1306, Roger Mortimer to have seisin of knights fees and advowsons of churches that belonged to Edmund Mortimer, his father, as the King lately granted to Edward, Prince of Wales the wardship of the lands which belonged to Edmund which were taken into the King's hands after Edmund's death by reason of Roger's minority and Roger has satisfied Peter de Gaveston to whom the Prince of Wales gave the wardship, for the said wardship, and the King makes this order although the knights fees and advowsons of the wardship ought to be in the King's hands during Roger's minority, C.C.R. 1302-07, p. 377.
  - 2 Annales Monastici, iv, Annales Prioratus de Wigornia, ed. H.R. Luard, R.S. (London 1869), p. 558.
  - 3 In January 1307, his lands, which had been seized because he had left the King's service in Scotland without permission, were restored to him at Queen Margaret's request, C.C.R. 1302-07, p. 481. Four years later he received £1,000 for his stay in Scotland with thirty men-at-arms for the short period between 1 February and 20 March 1311, Bedleian MS. Tanner, 197, fos.28, 52.
  - 4 Joan of La Marche was the widow of Bernard Ezy I, Sire d'Albret in Gascony. The marriage of her daughter to Roger Mortimer is dated 20 September 1301 by B. Penry Evans, *The Family of Mortimer*, p. 205.

Hereford, the whole of the inheritance in England and Wales passed to the third daughter Joan. On her marriage to Roger Mortimer she brought with her the important town and castle of Ludlow and the liberty of Ewyas Lacy, thus filling a significant gap in the Mortimer possessions on the March.<sup>1</sup> But this was not all. As heir of her grandmother Maud de Lacy, Joan inherited, when Maud died in 1304, the lordship of Trim in Ireland, which included a moiety of the Lacy palatinate of Meath. These Irish lands also passed at the time of Joan's marriage into Mortimer's hands. On 15 December 1307, although still under age, Mortimer took deliverance of his Irish inheritance. A few days later, 24 December 1307, his wife's aged grandfather was granted licence to surrender to Roger and Joan the lands he held by courtesy after the death of his wife Maud and which at his own death would pass to the Mortimers.<sup>2</sup> A year later in October 1308, Mortimer and his wife took possession of their Irish lands and Geoffrey de Joinville retired to a Dominican friary at Trim where he died in 1314.<sup>3</sup>

Although his lands both on the March and in Ireland were in a disturbed condition, a whole set of possibilities were opened up to the young Mortimer. In the event he concentrated on Ireland. He strengthened his hold on the liberty of Trim by securing restoration of the

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- 1 Information concerning Joan's parents and grandparents is to be found in B. Penry Evans, *The Family of Mortimer*, pp. 205-06; *G.E.C.*, viii, pp. 433-34; R.W. Eyton, *Antiquities of Shropshire*, V, 11.
  - 2 *C.C.R. 1307-13*, p. 15; *C.P.R. 1307-13*, p. 33. For further information, see below, p. 113.
  - 3 *Chartularies of St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin, Annals of Ireland*, II, ed. J.T. Gilbert, R.S. (London, 1884), p. 293. Item. Dominus Rogerus de Mortuomari cum sua consorte, recta herede Midie, intraverunt Hiberniam in festo Sanctorum Simonis et Jude et seisinam ceperunt de Midia, Domino Galfrido de Geynville cedente eisdem et intrante Ordinem Fratrum Predicatorum apud Trym. See also p. 337.

liberties which his predecessors had enjoyed and he subsequently laid claim to Leix as part of his grandmother's inheritance. This alarmed the Lacy family who were already dismayed by the growing Mortimer influence and they made a counter-claim for Leix which led to a long drawn out conflict which culminated in the Lacys seeking the help of the Scots and so supporting Edward Bruce's Irish invasion in 1315. Under this pressure Mortimer was compelled to abandon his lands and fall back on Dublin from where he returned to England. His appointment in November 1316 as the King's Lieutenant in Ireland gave him new resources so that when he returned to Youghal in the spring of 1317 he was able to take the offensive, defeating the Lacys and forcing Edward Bruce to retreat to the north of the country.<sup>1</sup> Mortimer as Lord of Meath entered the Lacy lands and seized their stock and treasure. With the Lacys outlawed as felons and their estates taken into the King's hands, Mortimer had won a victory that was essentially personal although it was of political significance as well.<sup>2</sup> When he was appointed Justiciar of Ireland in March 1319 together with the keepership of the castles of Roscommon, Randown and Athlone<sup>3</sup>, he was able to consolidate his position, achieving in Ireland a position not dissimilar to that which his grandfather had won for the family on the Welsh March nearly forty years before.

Mortimer's preoccupation in the first part of Edward II's reign had thus been with securing his interests in Ireland where he showed the same ruthless efficiency which he was later to reveal in building

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1 An Anglo-Irish force under John de Bermingham defeated and killed Edward Bruce at Faughart near Dundalk in October 1318. M. McKisack, The Fourteenth Century, 1307-1399, pp. 41-44.

2 G.E.C., viii, pp. 433-42.

3 C.P.R. 1317-21, p. 317; C.F.R. 1307-19, p. 393.



upon his inherited landed interest on the March. There had during these years been little build up of his power in this area. He had been granted the lordship of Cwmwd Deuddwr in August 1309 and had received the custodianship of Builth Castle in February 1310 though he does not seem to have retained this after 1315.<sup>1</sup> The more influential figure at this time would seem to have been his uncle Roger Mortimer of Chirk<sup>2</sup>, although by judicious use of patronage and marriage alliances the nephew consolidated his position. He was granted the marriage of the heir of Nicholas Audley in 1316 and more significantly that of Thomas Beauchamp, heir of Guy of Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, in 1318. Two of his daughters were thus disposed in marriage, Catherine to Thomas Beauchamp and Joan to James Audley. Before 1319 another daughter, Maud, had been married to John Charlton of Powys whose father Mortimer had supported in the succession dispute to Powys, which had involved not only Edward II but also Thomas of Lancaster and Edmund Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel;<sup>3</sup> while a fourth daughter, Margaret, was married to Thomas, Lord Berkeley.<sup>4</sup> A further link had been established in 1316 when Edmund Mortimer, Roger's heir, had been married to Elizabeth, daughter of Bartholomew Badlesmere who was at that time closely linked with the King.<sup>5</sup>

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1 C.P.R. 1307-13, p. 183; C.F.R. 1307-19, p. 58; C.C.R. 1313-18, p. 153.

2 R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, p. 46.

3 For this dispute see, R.R. Davies, op. cit., p. 286 and the references there.

4 For these marriages, G.E.C., viii, pp. 433-42.

5 A reference to this marriage will be found in G.A. Holmes, The Estates of the Higher Nobility in Fourteenth Century England, (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 43-44.

If before 1321 Mortimer had achieved considerable success in building up power and influence, there are also indications, not only from these family alliances, that his ambitions had not been satisfied by his gains in Ireland. Events now involved him more closely in the politics of the March when he joined the combination of Marcher lords in their stand against the pretensions of the Despensers in Gower. His aims like those of the other Marchers were opportunist and largely parochial; but opportunism failed and when Mortimer surrendered to the King's forces at Shrewsbury in January 1322 his imprisonment in the Tower meant the forfeiture of his estates and the loss of all that he and his family had gained over the previous years.<sup>1</sup> It might also have meant loss of his life as well had he not managed to escape from the Tower in the summer of 1323.<sup>2</sup> He made his way to France where he remained for the next three years awaiting an opportunity to return.<sup>3</sup>

In the general wreck of Mortimer fortunes his uncle Roger Mortimer of Chirk was also involved. The older Mortimer remained a prisoner until his death in the Tower in August 1326.<sup>4</sup> Eight weeks later his nephew returned<sup>5</sup> to create a power base wider than all that had gone before and to reveal that Mortimer ambition, particularly with regard

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1 The events of 1321-22 have most recently been examined by J.R. Maddicott, Thomas of Lancaster, pp. 259-317 and by Natalie Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, pp. 37-68.

2 Any doubt about the date of Mortimer's escape has been dispelled by E.L.G. Stones, The date of Roger Mortimer's escape from the Tower of London, E.H.R., lxxv (1951), pp. 97-8.

3 Annales Paulini, pp. 305-06; Chronica Monasterii S. Albani. Johannis de Trokelowe et Henrici de Blanford, Monachorum S. Albani, ed. N.T. Riley, R.S., (London, 1866), p. 139.

4 Annales Paulini, p. 312.

5 Above, p.4

to the Welsh March, was greedier and more ruthless even than that of the Despensers. The next four years saw Roger Mortimer of Wigmore rebuilding and extending his power base in Wales and on the March and in Ireland; and as he regained his old lands and acquired new, he buttressed his land holdings by grasping after official positions and amassing wardships.

This process began almost immediately before Edward II's reign had ended and while Queen Isabella and her son were still at Woodstock on the way to London. On 15 December 1326, Mortimer was appointed keeper of Denbigh Castle which had recently been forfeited by the Elder Despenser. Combined with the castle's contents and any debts due from the land it was a modest start.<sup>1</sup> But a more cynical and unscrupulous act was soon to follow. In common with those others who suffered at the hands of the Despensers, Mortimer had petitioned in the parliament held at Westminster in February 1327 for the reversal of the judgement passed against him and his uncle Roger Mortimer of Chirk. He petitioned on the grounds that the judgement of August 1322 had contained errors. When it was agreed in parliament that this was so the young King and his council revoked and annulled the judgement and the younger Mortimer's lands and tenements were restored to him. But in the petition relating to the lands of Mortimer of Chirk, Roger Mortimer of Wigmore makes the significant claim that he is his uncle's heir. There is no explanation of this.<sup>2</sup> The heir to Mortimer of Chirk

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1 C.F.R. 1319-27, p. 428. The court seems to have been at Woodstock between 3 and 22 December when it moved to Oseney, E.101/382/9.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 141. Roger Mortimer of Wigmore prays that as divers errors are to be found in the judgement passed upon Roger Mortimer of Chirk, his uncle, whose heir he is ...

appears to have been his son, yet another Roger. He was certainly dead before October 1333 when his son John sued as heir in an attempt to recover property. The defendants in this particular case alleged illegitimacy but the City of London certified that John was legitimate.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore possible Mortimer of Chirk's son Roger was already dead or incapacitated by 1327 and that his son John was a minor and even then perhaps tainted with bastardy. It would seem that parliament was not anxious to get involved in a disputed inheritance for it decided in February 1327 in response to the petition that "the heir of Roger the uncle should have his inheritance". They made no attempt to specify who that heir was and on 23 November 1327 Roger Mortimer of Wigmore obtained livery of the Chirk lands as his uncle's nephew and heir.<sup>2</sup> Only sheer greed seems to account for the way in which Mortimer of Wigmore brought about the collapse of the fortunes of his uncle's family.

The executions of the two Despensers and the Earl of Arundel had brought their lands onto the market. William la Zouche of Mortimer

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1 G.E.C., ix, pp. 254-55.

2 Ibid, C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 141-43. This episode is also dealt with by R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, p. 47, who states that Mortimer of Wigmore granted his nephew the lands he had inherited from his mother at a token rent for life. This would imply that Roger, son of Mortimer of Chirk, died between 1327 and 1333. Robin Frame, English Lordship in Ireland, 1318-1361, p. 61 and n. 43, states that Roger, son of Mortimer of Chirk, very much a poor relation, acted as Joan Mortimer's attorney in Ireland in 1338. This must be a wrong identification; C.P.R. 1334-38, p. 566 states simply that Joan, wife of Roger Mortimer, nominates Roger Mortimer and Walter Colyn as her attorneys. Is it possible that this was her son, Roger, one of the three sons of Mortimer knighted at Edward III's coronation? The family of Mortimer of Chirk finally abandoned hope of their inheritance in 1359 when John Mortimer released to the Earl of March all rights in the castle of Narberth and all manors formerly belonging to Mortimer of Chirk. Two months later on 12 October 1359, John, son of John de Mortimer released to Richard, Earl of Arundel all right in the castle and lordship of Chirk. G.E.C., ix, p. 255.

had been appointed keeper of the Despenser territory of Glamorgan with the right to appoint sheriffs and officers and to maintain castles. Four months later on 12 June 1327, he was superseded by Mortimer, whose appointment as custodian was made in the same terms.<sup>1</sup> This change may have been made because la Zouche was not pursuing his task with sufficient zeal; only a month before he had been ordered to take positive steps to reverse the prejudice the King was suffering through unlicensed appropriation of Despenser property. Matthew de Crauthorne, the receiver of issues and profits in Glamorgan was also replaced by Andrew de Ralegh for whose good behaviour Mortimer was prepared to vouch.<sup>2</sup>

At some time during the months of preparation for the invasion of 1326, the young Prince had promised Mortimer as reward for his good service a £1,000 in land and rents. On 13 September 1327 this promise was fulfilled by grants from the forfeited lands of the Despensers and Arundel. The keepership of Denbigh Castle was now made into a formal grant, but more important was the fact that a large gap in the Mortimer possessions on the March was filled by the grant of all Arundel's castles and lands in Shropshire, Wales and the March which included the castles of Oswestry, Shrawardine and Clun and the manors of Ruyton, Wroxeter and Cound. The Cheshire manors of Trof-ford and Dunham were excepted but for good measure the Oxfordshire manor of Chipping Norton was included. At the request of the Earl of Kent the manor of Stretton in Shropshire was added to these holdings

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 18, 125.

2 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 41, 49. Matthew de Crauthorne was appointed sheriff of Devon in December 1330, following Mortimer's fall.



in November, while a messuage at Bisley, Gloucestershire was secured in December.<sup>1</sup>

Hitherto, in accordance with the grant of 1326, Mortimer had answered at the exchequer for the issues of Denbigh. In March 1328 he was granted these and the issues of the other Arundel and Despenser possessions in his hands. To avoid any misunderstanding the situation was further clarified in June when it was made apparent that the grant of Denbigh Castle for life in September 1327 had not absolved him from answering for the issues up to that date and again in October when he received exemplification of the letters patent of 13 September 1 Edward III which had granted him the Despenser and Arundel property worth £1,000 in fee simple.<sup>2</sup> A further parcel of Despenser land came his way at much the same time in the shape of a messuage at Winstone in Gloucestershire which carried with it a carucate of land, six acres of meadow, two of pasture, thirty of woodland and £4 2s. 6d. in rent.<sup>3</sup>

For the moment there seems to have been a pause. £10 of rent due to the exchequer for land in Bromsgrove and Norton in Worcestershire, which had been granted by Edward II to Mortimer's brother John, was released in fee simple to Mortimer himself early in 1329.<sup>4</sup> Other

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1 C.Ch.R. 1327-41, p. 55; C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 192, 202.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 238; C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 300-01; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 328.

3 C.Ch.R. 1327-41, p. 98. The writ of privy seal for this grant was issued at Westminster, 25 November 1328, C.81/158/2220.

4 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 410. Two years before, Mortimer as heir of his brother John had been distrained to answer for relief on these manors. Memoranda Roll, 1326-27, No. 1771, p. 243. This is dated February 1327. The manors had been included in the grant to Isabella augmenting her dower on 1 February 1327. C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 66-9.

concessions that year seem to have centred on two important reversions. The castle and cantred of Builth and the castle of Montgomery had been included in the augmentation of Isabella's dower at the time of the King's coronation. With his consent she had granted it to Mortimer at a rent of £113 6s. 8d. Mortimer now secured the reversion of Builth on Isabella's death at fee farm, the King undertaking to maintain the castle and garrison in wartime. On similar terms Mortimer secured the castle of Montgomery and the Hundred of Chirbury at a rent of 85 marks. A few months later, in April 1330, Isabella actually granted him Montgomery and Chirbury at the same yearly rent.<sup>1</sup> Another gift which Isabella had made with the King's agreement had been the castle and manor of Hanley in Worcestershire and the chase of Malvern which Mortimer was to hold for her life. In this case too he secured a reversionary grant. There were more to follow. He secured the reversion of Fulbrook in Oxfordshire on John de Wysham's death and that of another forfeited Despenser property, the castle of Clifford and the nearby manor of Glasbury on the Herefordshire March which was held by Ebulo Lestrage and his wife Alice, the widow of Thomas of Lancaster.<sup>2</sup>

Slowly the holdings grew. In April 1330, the town of Droitwich had passed to Mortimer at the same time as his son Geoffrey received a substantial grant from the forfeited lands of the recently executed Earl of Kent. This included the important castle and manor of Donington in Leicestershire, the manors of Lechlade and Siddington in Gloucestershire, Caistor in Lincolnshire and Ashford in the Peak as well as other manors in Rutland and Wiltshire and wapentakes in

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1 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 147-48; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 506. On Isabella's death the rent was to fall due to the King.

2 C.Ch.R. 1327-41, p. 178; C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 538, 546.

Derbyshire and Nottingham. They were all remaindered to Geoffrey's father.<sup>1</sup> During Mortimer's remaining months in power the flow continued. Isabella had already granted him the castle and town of Bristol for her life; in August the grant was extended so that after her death Mortimer should render the farm at the Exchequer.<sup>2</sup> The situation with regard to the Arundel lands was clarified in September when it was made clear that Mortimer should hold them on the same terms as Arundel had with regard to knights' fees, advowsons and free customs.<sup>3</sup> There was an enlargement on the original grant for life when Mortimer received the manor of Church Stretton in fee simple. He was also pardoned the issues of the Arundel manors which were still outstanding at the Exchequer.<sup>4</sup> All these changes meant that there were ample opportunities for defaulting on payments and there are clear indications that Mortimer himself had been defrauded of some of Arundel's goods and the debts due to him.<sup>5</sup>

This accumulation of land on the March had been primarily brought about by the acquisition of the forfeited Arundel estates. Mortimer thus fulfilled long held family ambitions and built for himself on the March a power base more massive in extent than that of the Younger Despenser. He had also secured from the Exchequer a remission of all

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1 C.Ch.R. 1327-41, pp. 172, 176.

2 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 187.

3 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 2.

4 C.81/175/3931, 3954, 3958.

5 C.81/175/3933. A writ pointing out that Arundel's goods and debts had been granted to Mortimer and that the people of Shropshire were withholding them. There is similar evidence of concealment relating to the Younger Despenser's goods in Pembrokeshire which had also been granted to Mortimer with outstanding debts. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 471.

debts outstanding in his own name and those of his ancestors<sup>1</sup> while he went on to buttress his land holdings by securing a series of offices and wardships which left him in undisputed mastery on the March.

The Warwick and Audley wardships which he had lost at the time of his disgrace were restored to Mortimer in February 1327. To these was now added the wardship of Laurence Hastings, heir not only of the Hastings lordships of Abergavenny and Cilgerran but also to the Valence earldom of Pembroke. Hastings had been in the custody of the Younger Despenser. Mortimer swiftly capitalised upon the right of marriage which went with the wardship and his daughter Agnes was married to young Hastings at Hereford in June 1328. At the same time another daughter, Beatrice, was married to Edward, the son of the King's uncle, the Earl of Norfolk. A further marriage was projected between Mortimer's second son, Roger, and the widowed Marie St. Pol, Countess of Pembroke. She managed to avoid this fate.<sup>2</sup>

There is little doubt that Mortimer was determined to exploit these wardships to his fullest possible advantage. He secured possession of stock, chattels and growing corn as well as fortresses like Barnard Castle of the Beauchamp inheritance. He received the back issues of the Audley lands. In a move to consolidate his position he secured a renewal of the letters patent relating to the custody of

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 511.

2 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 20; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 22. For the marriages, G.E.C., viii, pp. 433-42. The court was in Worcestershire in June 1328, E.101/383/20. The King made a gift of £1,000 to Mortimer at the time of the Norfolk marriage, C.81/169/3371. The grant of the marriage of the Countess of Pembroke to Roger, son of Roger Mortimer, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 166.

Audley and an exemplification of those relating to Hastings.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, in February 1329 he was ordered to hand over the Beauchamp lands with their issues since 1 January, since on that day the King had knighted the young Thomas even though he was still under age. In May, Mortimer received similar orders not to meddle further with the Audley inheritance since the King had granted James Audley his lands even though he was also still under age. These losses may well have been partly compensated for by the enlargement of grants relating to the Hastings wardship. Mortimer was to hold this without rent and with all reversions of dower. He was pardoned the extent which was due from the date of the original grant and he gained control of knights' fees and advowsons and was made Keeper of the County of Pembroke.<sup>2</sup> This all followed an earlier deal with the Exchequer which had been ordered to make provision for a grant which Edward II had made to Mortimer and which was 6,000 marks in arrears. This sum was simply assigned against the amounts due from Mortimer in connection with the three great wardships which he held.<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt that while Mortimer held these wardships for a short time only, they represented a useful augmentation to his wealth and were extremely useful in making valuable provision for his daughters.

Further advantages accrued to Mortimer by reason of the fact that his control of Wales and the March was officially secured by his appointment to a variety of offices. On 20 February 1327, he had been

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1 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 45; C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 108, 311, 326; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 145.

2 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 429, 494. The Hastings grants are dated 16 March 1329, 29 July 1330 and 8 October 1329, C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 377, 547, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 158.

3 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 261-62.

appointed Justice of Wales on the same terms that his uncle, Mortimer of Chirk, had held the office under Edward II with full powers to remove men from office and replace them, excepting only in the case of the King's two chamberlains. At the same time he was appointed to another office which Mortimer of Chirk had held, that of Justice in the Bishopric of Llandaff. These grants were further extended. In November it was ordered that Mortimer should receive the fee as Justice of Wales until further notice and this appointment was extended for life in June 1328. In May 1330 the usual fee was increased by 500 marks a year. The Llandaff appointment was similarly renewed during pleasure.<sup>1</sup> To this during the Salisbury Parliament of November 1328 was added the position of Justice in the Diocese of St. David's. The same power to dismiss officers went with it.<sup>2</sup> When these powers are coupled with the Custodianship of Glamorgan<sup>3</sup> and account is taken of the fact that Mortimer was appointed Chief Keeper of the Peace in Herefordshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire, and that as chief keeper of the peace in Hereford, Shropshire and Worcestershire he could appoint his own deputies, it is clear that Mortimer's powers on the March and in Wales were viceregal. The title, Earl of March, which he assumed at the Salisbury Parliament in October 1328, was no outward honour.<sup>4</sup> It reflected a massive concentration of power and it is not surprising to find the chroniclers commenting that he assumed royal power to the discredit of the King and the dismay of the nobility.<sup>5</sup>

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1 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 19; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 181; C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 299, 528, 311.

2 Op. cit., p. 327.

3 Granted 12 June 1327, above, p. 106

4 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 152, 214.

5 Walsingham, p. 192; Knighton, pp. 447-48; The Brut, p. 260.

With the territorial base of his power secured on the March, Mortimer was now in a position to take the dominant role in his relationship with Isabella. It may well have been the situation anyway, even from the earliest days of the regime.

Much of Mortimer's involvement in his early years had, however, been with affairs in Ireland. Here his interests were centred upon the lands which his wife had brought him as her inheritance. These interests did not go unchallenged. The land of Meath had been granted by Henry III to Hugh de Lacy with all kinds of jurisdiction and the cognisance of all pleas, a chancery and exchequer and all things pertaining to these offices with their own seals. On the death of his heir, Walter de Lacy, the liberty and the land were divided between his kinswomen and coheirs, Maud the wife of Geoffrey de Joinville and Margery the wife of John de Verdon. Maud had received Trim and half the inheritance while Margery took Loughsewdy and the other half. Edward I had withdrawn the rights of the liberty from John and Margery's son, Theobald de Verdon and brought that half of the inheritance under common law. When his son, another Theobald, died in 1316 the inheritance was left to his four daughters.

In contrast to this division of the Verdon lands, the Mortimers had maintained the liberty of Trim undivided with its rights intact. Their interests were bedevilled by the hostility of the remaining members of the Lacy family which for the time-being was eliminated when it became involved in Edward Bruce's invasion. But it was the Mortimers' turn to lose all when Roger's lands were forfeited after his arrest in 1322. Amongst those who benefitted were the Justiciar, John Darcy, Miles Verdon, a younger brother of Theobald and Thomas

FitzJohn, the earl of Kildare.<sup>1</sup>

After the successful invasion of England in 1326, Mortimer experienced some delay in securing restoration of his Irish lands. This may have been due to both political and personal considerations since Darcy was still acting as Justiciar. But there are indications of a possible reluctance on the part of the Dublin government to accept the deposition of Edward II.<sup>2</sup> The original order for the restoration of confiscated lands had been made on 17 February 1327, but Darcy was in no hurry to restore them or to relinquish the Constableness of Trim Castle which he held. In the event the lands were not released until July by which time Darcy had been replaced as Justiciar by the Earl of Kildare. A further instruction was sent from London on 17 August to facilitate the return to Mortimer of the records of the liberty of Trim which were in the King's treasury or in the custody of the Justiciar. Attempts were also made to speed up the return of the wardships which had been confiscated five years before. The restoration of Trim was finalised in a grant dated 23 August whereby Mortimer and Joan his wife regained Trim on the terms which had existed at the time of the forfeiture.<sup>3</sup> Mortimer's determination to gain the maximum benefit from these lands is shown some six months later when the tenants of the Liberty were ordered to hand over all the issues which were in their hands.<sup>4</sup>

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- 1 C.Ch.R. 1327-41, pp. 176-77. Mortimer's position in Ireland is fully examined in its political context by R. Frame, English Lordship in Ireland, 1318-1361, pp. 131-42, 158-95.
  - 2 See R. Nicholson, A Sequel to Edward Bruce's Invasion of Ireland, Scottish Historical Review, xlii (1963), pp. 30-40, and below, pp. 203-04.
  - 3 Frame, op. cit., pp. 175-76; Foedera, II, ii, pp. 690-91; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 159; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 159.
  - 4 Op. cit., p. 238.



How far Mortimer intended at this time to build a lasting power base in Ireland parallel to that which he was establishing in England is difficult to say. That he was proceeding more cautiously with regard to Ireland is suggested by the fact that in August 1328 Joan's inheritance was granted to their son John with the right to grant dower to the value of £1,000 to his wife when he married. The grant was in fee tail with reversion to Roger and Joan Mortimer and this became operative when John was subsequently killed in a tournament at Shrewsbury.<sup>1</sup>

But just as Mortimer's acquisitions in England increased with the passage of time, so in Ireland. This may have been triggered off by the murder in June 1329 of John Bermingham, Earl of Louth.<sup>2</sup> On 28 January 1330 Mortimer was given wardship of the castle of Kildare and other lands of the earldom of Kildare together with the marriage of Thomas FitzJohn's heir, Richard. This grant was repeated on 31 May to include the Liberty of Kildare.<sup>3</sup> Shortly before this on 25 April, Mortimer and his wife had been given the rights to exercise jurisdiction in that half of Meath which the Verdons had held and this was confirmed on 23 June when the grant was extended to include Bermingham's lands in Louth.<sup>4</sup> To this was added in August the custody of the manor of Gormanston in east Meath. Though this was to be held only during the minority of the heir of John St. Amand, the grant helped to consolidate Mortimer's holdings in central Ireland. The Constable-

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 317-18.

2 See below, p. 326.

3 Frame, English Lordship in Ireland, 1318-1361, pp. 190-91; C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 484, 527.

4 C.Ch.R. 1327-41, p. 176.

ship of Athlone Castle which had been granted for life by Edward II had been confiscated in 1322. It was restored in 1327. In April 1330 it was enlarged to a grant in fee and Mortimer thereby secured an important defensive centre on the western boundaries of his huge franchise.<sup>1</sup> Such a large area of independent jurisdiction in central Ireland so close to Dublin must have seemed threatening to smaller Irish land holders and with only the earls of Ulster and Ormonde with any comparable holdings, Mortimer dominance could have become real if he had lived to exploit it.

Thus by the autumn of 1330 in both England and Ireland, Mortimer had succeeded in building for himself a formidable empire which exceeded in extent the acquisitions of the Despencers in the 1320s. That he should have built his power on both sides of the Irish Sea must have raised serious concern in the minds of other English landed magnates. No one individual, save perhaps Henry of Lancaster in England, could rival the extent of his holdings; certainly when one takes into account the combination of lands held in England, Wales and Ireland then Mortimer's position must be seen as unique. The hatred aroused by the Despencers was clear to see; any recital of Mortimer's acquisitiveness amply bears out the strictures of the chroniclers. When one sees how Queen Isabella similarly assembled a vast landholding then it is not difficult to understand how the greed and rapacity of both Isabella and Mortimer quickly aroused envy and anger.

Yet at first Isabella received much sympathy. She had suffered insult and deprivation at her husband's hands during the last years

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 551, 515.

of his reign and it was felt right that she should receive some kind of compensation for this. In the end she alienated sympathetic understanding because nothing can excuse the shameless way in which she amassed manors and castles in many different parts of the country so that royal finances suffered, and her son, Edward III, was left with only limited resources from which to reward his own household followers.<sup>1</sup>

The original arrangements for Isabella's marriage had been made at the time of the marriage of her aunt, Margaret of France, to Edward I and were included in the Treaty of Montreuil of June 1299 which sealed that match. Isabella's wedding to the Prince Edward did not take place until after his accession as Edward II; but once it had taken place at Boulogne in January 1308 payment of dower, amounting to £4,500 should have been made. However, many of the lands normally used for this purpose were in the hands of Queen Margaret. Grants to Isabella, therefore, were only made at intervals and even then they did not produce the desired income so that the Exchequer had to make payment of an annual cash sum to bridge the gap. On 25 July 1317, however, Isabella was granted the shrievalty of Cornwall together with the King's castles, towns and manors in the county as a means of meeting her household expenses. Her personal expenses had already been catered for by assignment of the issues of the counties of Ponthieu and Montreuil at the time of her marriage in 1308.<sup>2</sup>

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1 For the financial policies of the regime between 1327 and 1330, see below, pp. 270-96.

2 Information concerning the financial arrangements of both Margaret of France and Isabella are to be found in Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, V, pp. 272-274; for the grants to Isabella, C.P.R. 1317-21, p. 8; C.P.R. 1307-13, p. 74.

On Margaret's death in 1318, Edward moved quickly to grant Isabella her proper dower. In accordance with the arrangements made between Philip the Fair and Edward I under the supervision of Pope Boniface VIII, she received assignment as dower to the value of £4,500 manors, castles and towns in eighteen counties, including the manors of Woodstock and Macclesfield, the honours of Wallingford, High Peak, Berkhamsted and Marlborough, together with their castles, the towns of Southampton and Alton and £200 of the issues of the castle and town of Bristol. The following day, to cover the expenses of her chamber, there was a regrant of Ponthieu and Montreuil. A month later the forest of Savernake was added as part of the grant of the castle and town of Marlborough because the castle needed repairs and the King had originally intended to include it anyway.<sup>1</sup> Over the next two years a whole series of changes and exchanges followed, including a regrant of the Duchy of Cornwall, but this time as dower in recompence for surrendering part of the original grant for the maintenance of her children, John of Eltham and Eleanor. As these were returned to her in 1320 this must have been a net gain.<sup>2</sup>

Four years later the chroniclers report that the King had resumed the lands granted to Isabella on the grounds that at a time when the French were threatening hostilities there was a potential

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1 C.P.R. 1317-21, pp. 112, 115-16. Most of the places included in the grant had been held for her life by Queen Margaret.

2 C.P.R. 1317-21, pp. 222-23, 400-01, 453. These exchanges included the temporary loss of the honour of High Peak, the issues of Bristol and the manor of Macclesfield. A more permanent exchange involved the manors of Basingstoke, Andover and Alton in Hampshire being surrendered to the King. Part of the return included the castle and manor of Eye, but the King may well have got the better of the bargain here.

danger in allowing the Queen to retain them.<sup>1</sup> This insult must have been one of the reasons which persuaded the Queen to stay in France once she had arrived there, nominally as her husband's ambassador, in March 1325. Like so many others opposed to the Despensers, Isabella was anxious to regain the lands of which she had been deprived and parts of which the Despensers were exploiting. They withheld moneys due as farmers year after year.

Once the Despensers had fallen, we find that as early as 6 December 1326 instructions were issued to secure for Isabella the goods and chattels of the Honour of Wallingford which had been forfeited by the Elder Despenser since the honour was part of her dower.<sup>2</sup> A month later she obtained restoration of the lands of the county of Cornwall and the other castles, manors and lands which comprised her dower and which the King had resumed.<sup>3</sup> This was only the prelude to parliament granting Isabella a reward for her services in bringing about the treaty with France in 1325 and suppressing the Despensers' rebellion of the previous months. This reward was lavish. The value of her dower lands was increased from £4,500 to 20,000 marks. This entailed additional grants to the value of £8,700. The lands were located in practically every English county and ranged from the castle and honour of Knaresborough valued at £533 6s. 8d. and the manor of

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1 Lanercost, p. 249. Tout however points out that the chroniclers' claim that Isabella was merely allowed a daily allowance of 20s. is not substantiated by the Exchequer records which show payments of 8 marks a day, Tout, op. cit. Annales Paulini, p. 307; Chronica Monasterii S. Albani, Johannis de Trokelowe et Henrici de Blaneford, p. 151. See also above, p. 95, n. 1.

2 C.F.R. 1319-27, p. 427.

3 Instructions to ensure full restoration were sent to the keepers of land in fifteen counties on 10 January 1327, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 346.

Burstwich in the same county of Yorkshire valued at £800 to the manor of Brodeton in Wiltshire valued at a mere £10. To make sure that there were no doubts, lands which had been surrendered for the maintenance of Isabella's children but which had been restored during pleasure were now included in this parliamentary grant for life.<sup>1</sup> There was one exception to this, namely the Gloucestershire manor of Lechlade which had been forfeited by the Elder Despenser but which was included in the grant valued at £1,401 14s. 3d. made to the Earl of Kent on 27 February 1327.<sup>2</sup>

Amongst the property Isabella acquired as augmentation of her dower was the Lancastrian castle and borough of Pontefract which had been a Lacy property, the castles and towns of Hertford, Sandwich, Rockingham and Guildford, manors at King's Langley, Eltham, Byfleet and Sheen as well as castles at Montgomery, Builth, Tickhill, Clitheroe, Porchester, Odiham and Leeds. This last was the scene in 1321 of the incident when Margaret Badlesmere on behalf of her husband, Bartholomew, had refused Isabella entry thereby leading to the opening moves of the Boroughbridge campaign. It must therefore have given Isabella particular satisfaction to have had Leeds, the reversion of

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- 1 The castle and honour of High Peak, £291 13s. 4d.; the castle, town and barton of Bristol, £210; £31 of the manor of Chesterton paid by the canons of Barnwell in Cambridgeshire; the manor of Macclesfield with its park and forest, £174 8s.; manor of Overton, £126; manors of Rhosfeir, Dolfenmayn, Pennehan and commote of Menai, £170.
  - 2 Above, p. 79 . On Kent's forfeiture in 1330, Lechlade was granted to Geoffrey de Mortimer with remainder to Roger Mortimer, C.Ch. R. 1327-41, p. 176. It reverted to the King with their other property on the Mortimers' fall; but it does not seem to have been included in lands granted as dower to Kent's widow in December 1330 although she subsequently obtained the chattels and stock. C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 205.

which she had long been promised, included in the grant.<sup>1</sup>

It might have been thought that Isabella would have been satisfied with this massive gift. Before the month was out she had secured the stock, goods and chattels on all her new properties while the King, to show his mother especial favour, granted her the issues of her lands for the time they had been in the hands of Edward II. There was a further enlargement of the grant in July involving advowsons, wardships, forfeited issues, assarts and the like. At the same time arrangements were made for Isabella to receive the fermes for the whole of the previous term despite the fact that the grant had only been made on 1 February, as also for all proffers of issues to be made at her exchequer twice yearly, as was done in the case of the King's own officers.<sup>2</sup> It would seem that the system did not work too well for two years later her bailiffs and receivers were refusing to pay their fermes and issues into her exchequer and the King's Exchequer set in motion a process to oblige them to render their accounts as the King had ordered.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to this initial build up of wealth which far surpassed anything she had received before, Isabella, from time to time, secured

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1 Leeds had been held by both the Queens of Edward I and its reversion had been promised to Isabella as long ago as 1314. But on Queen Margaret's death it had passed to Badlesmere as part of an exchange agreement, Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, V, p. 275. For the Leeds incident in 1321, Maddicott, Thomas of Lancaster, pp. 292-93; Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, pp. 50-51. For full details of the parliamentary grant to Isabella together with the value of each individual holding, C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 66-69.

2 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 24; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 82; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 135; C.C.R. op. cit., p. 143. There was yet another enlargement relating to the grants of 1327 made on 28 December 1329, C.P.R. op. cit., p. 471.

3 C.C.R. op. cit., p. 474.

other grants. Thus the King assigned to her for life the City of Winchester and its yearly farm of 100 marks;<sup>1</sup> while she also gained the Arundel manors of Trafford and Stony Dunham in Cheshire which had been granted to Roger de Swynnerton. Six months later she granted them for life to Bishop Hothum of Ely with remainder to one of the Bishop's kinsmen before finally they were to revert to the King. When it was found that she was in arrears on her original grant, the manor of Brigstock in Northamptonshire, valued at £41 10s., was added.<sup>2</sup> It was not always easy to keep rents up to date and it was no doubt to facilitate this that a regard of her forest holdings was made and that specific instructions had to be sent the following year to ensure that she received the rents due to her from the forests including those at Rockingham and Knaresborough and from the Forest of Dean.<sup>3</sup>

Several smaller grants and minor adjustments in Isabella's holdings can be traced. She obtained from Geoffrey le Scrope, chief Justice of the King's Bench, the manor of Eltham Maundeville in fee; she benefitted from the Earl of Kent's fall to the extent that she obtained houses in Westminster which had belonged to him and also his forfeited Gloucestershire manor of Barnsley. She also obtained two hundred acres of waste land in the High Peak Forest.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the lands which Isabella had received had been included in the so-called chamber lands of Edward II. These were manors where

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1 5 May 1327, C.Ch.R. 1327-41, p. 12.

2 C.P.R. op. cit., pp. 137, 195, 145.

3 8 July 1328, C.C.R. op. cit., p. 407; 17 June 1329, E.159/105, m.79.

4 C.P.R. op. cit., pp. 368, 506, 521, 399.



the issues were not paid to the Exchequer but were reserved for the use of the King's chamber. Property in this category had been much swollen by the confiscations from the rebels of 1322. However, this allocation had merely been temporary and most of these lands went to the Exchequer. The restorations of 1327 and the large parliamentary grant to Isabella wrecked any final vestiges of the system.<sup>1</sup> What that grant did do was to concentrate in Isabella's hands practically all the land resources of the Crown and so give to her a vast potential patronage. But the regime distributed patronage very reluctantly, even to members of the royal family<sup>2</sup> and when the time came for Isabella's daughter-in-law, Philippa of Hainault, to receive an endowment proper to her position as Queen of England there were no resources available. Isabella held firmly to what she had and it was the King who had to meet his wife's expenses. It was not until the time of Queen Philippa's coronation in February 1330 that Isabella surrendered the castle and honour of Pontefract in return for a compensatory grant of 1,000 marks, which was instantly paid to her in the form of the grant of the manor of Tewkesbury and the manor of Hanley and Malvern Chase which had been surrendered to the Crown by

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1 A full discussion on the role of the chamber manors and the collapse of the system is to be found in Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, II, pp. 337-43, 349-60; iv, pp. 230-35. His views however have been modified by Fryde, Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, pp. 80-82 and by Buck, Politics, Finance and the Church in the Reign of Edward II, pp. 163-65 who points out that the government had no firm policy with regard to the confiscated lands of 1322 and suggests that the transfer to the chamber was merely temporary so that the chamber was never Tout's 'formidable instrument of prerogative'. The system was thus never as prominent as Tout suggests and the grant to Isabella quietly finished it off.

2 Above, p. 79

Eleanor Despenser as a fine for having removed jewels and goods of great value from the Tower of London.<sup>1</sup>

Isabella was also obliged to surrender the Badlesmere manors of Leighton, Chatham and Brockenfield in Kent, which were granted to the Bishop of Lincoln who had the wardship of Giles de Badlesmere, as well as the town of Winchelsea and the manor of Rye which went to the bishop's brother, Bartholomew Burghersh. No doubt Isabella was more pleased to grant Mortimer the castles of Builth and Montgomery, grants which were to remain in Mortimer's hands even in the event of Isabella's death.<sup>2</sup> These last grants are dated to the early days of September 1329 and it has been pointed out that at this time Mortimer was nominated as heir to several of Isabella's properties in the event of her death. At the same time Isabella's executors were granted the right to execute her will without royal interference and also to retain control of the issues of Cornwall and Ponthieu for three years after her death.

This obsession with death has led to the suggestion that at this time Isabella was either ill or pregnant. The conditions contained in these grants had only been made before in the period preceding the birth of Edward III in 1312. Moreover, Froissart reports that Isabella was pregnant in October 1330, although such reports could easily have sprung from rumours circulating at an

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1 The grant to Philippa, which also included the former Despenser lands in Glamorgan is dated 12 February 1330. Isabella had received Tewkesbury valued at £232 12s. 0 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. and Hanley, £42. 14s. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. on 10 February. C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 500-01. These former Despenser properties were to be restored to Eleanor and her husband William la Zouche on payment of the huge sum of £50,000. C.P.R. op. cit., p. 492. Hanley and Malvern passed to Roger Mortimer, above, p.

2 C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 30; C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 183, 147-48.

earlier date.<sup>1</sup> But the King paid a visit to Wigmore in September 1329, and this was no doubt an occasion for great celebration. It was certainly an occasion when gifts were made, so there may well be no greater significance in the timing of Isabella's grants than a desire to show favour. It would, however, be interesting to know if Mortimer was at this time one of Isabella's executors.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps, however, the most flagrant example of Isabella's readiness to seize and exploit every opportunity to build her own estate is to be found in her dealings with Robert de Mohaut, lord of Mold and Hawarden and his wife Emma who were childless. On 8 April 1327, Robert de Mohaut was licenced to enfeoff the King's clerk Henry de Clyf of the castle and manor of Hawarden, the stewardship of Chester, the manors of Lea, Bosley and Neston, of Walton-on-Trent in Derbyshire, Cheylesmore in Warwickshire, the castle and manor of Rising in Norfolk together with the manors of Snettisham and Kenninghall and the manors of Kessingland and Framsdon in Suffolk. Clyf was then to regrant the premises to Mohaut and his wife with remainder to Queen Isabella for life and then to John of Eltham and ultimately to the King.<sup>3</sup> A week later (14 April) at the request of the King and Isabella, the bishops of Ely and Lincoln entered into a recognisance with the Mohauts in the sum of 10,000

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- 1 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 437-38. For this discussion about a possible pregnancy and anticipation of death as a possible motive for the nomination of Mortimer as heir to Builth and Montgomery and for the testamentary grants, see, P.C. Doherty, Isabella, Queen of England, 1296-1330, p. 287. Froissart, p. 88.
  - 2 Gifts were exchanged between the King and Mortimer at Wigmore, 5-6 September 1329, E.101/384/1, m.16, m.18.
  - 3 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 96.

marks. This was as security for a like sum which the King and Isabella had agreed to pay the Mohauts as compensation for the reversion of their lands. A final agreement was reached in the King's presence between the Mohauts and Henry de Clyf on 27 April.<sup>1</sup>

The formal feoffment of Robert de Mohaut by Henry de Clyf was made at Nottingham on 8 May in the presence of the Chancellor, the bishop of Ely and a number of other witnesses.<sup>2</sup> An order to the Exchequer for the first instalment of 3,000 marks to be paid to the Mohauts was issued by the King on 18 May.<sup>3</sup> A further £200 was paid at a later date but in March 1328 the Exchequer was ordered to pay the outstanding 6,700 marks. Mohaut had complained to the King that despite having been given an assignment on the 1/20 granted to the King by the Lincoln parliament, ostensibly to pay for the Scots War, he had been unable to obtain payment from the collectors in Bedford and Buckinghamshire.<sup>4</sup> Payment therefore now had to be made directly and the Issue Rolls between 20 January and 22 July 1329 contain records of a number of further payments.<sup>5</sup>

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1 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 113.

2 Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds in the P.R.O., v, (London 1906), A.10947, p. 68.

3 C.62/104, m.6. Rex thesauro et camerariis suis salutem. Liberate de thesauro nostro dilecto et fideli nostro Roberto de Monte Alto tria milia marcarum in parte solutionis illarum decem milium marcarum in quibus eidem Roberto tenebamur pro concessione quam nobis fecit de omnibus terris et tenementis suis in Anglie et Wallie post mortem suam et Emme uxoris eius si sine herede masculo de corpore suo exeunte obierit Isabelle Regine Anglie matri nostre carissime Johanni de Eltham fratri nostro et nobis sub certa forma imperpetuum remanendis. Teste rex apud Nottingham, xviiij die Maii.

4 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 267.

5 20 January 1329, £156 13s. 4d.; 4 March, £233 6s. 8d.; 5 May, £333 6s. 8d. and £233 6s. 8d.; 9 May, £933 6s. 8d.; 13 May, £166 13s. 4d.; 30 May, £2,000; 22 July 1329, £136. E.403/240, m.6, m.12. E.403/243, mm.1,2,3, 7, 13. Robert de Mohaut died on 26 December 1329, G.E.C., ix, p. 17. By that time he seems to have received all but £275 of the 10,000 marks due. The escheator on 1 January 1330 was ordered not to interfere with Emma's lands.

The evidence of the liberate roll and the issue rolls seems to contradict B.P. Wolffe's statement, in The Royal Demesne in English History, that in May 1327, '10,000 marks of a parliamentary grant was spent on purchasing the Mohaut inheritance'.<sup>1</sup> Wolffe does not make clear which grant he is referring to, but since the Lincoln parliament was the only parliament to make a grant to the King in 1327 and this did not occur until September, this must be a reference to the gift of £20,000 made to Isabella by the February parliament at Westminster. This is recorded on the Liberate Roll where on 19 February 1327 there is an order for that sum to be paid to John de Oxenden, keeper of Isabella's wardrobe, to meet debts incurred overseas and at home.<sup>2</sup> Payment was soon in arrears and a grant in part satisfaction of those arrears was made on 6 May 1328.<sup>3</sup> From the beginning of 1329 a steady stream of assignments are made in Isabella's name against expected revenues. That these payments are distinct from those made in connection with the Mohaut inheritance is clear both from the fact that payments to Mohaut and Isabella are recorded on the Issue Roll consecutively<sup>4</sup> but also from the wording of the orders themselves.<sup>5</sup> By October 1329, £10,000 was still out-

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1 B.P. Wolffe, The Royal Demesne in English History, pp. 55, 235.

2 C.62/104, m.1; Foedera, II, ii, p. 691.

3 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 272.

4 5 May 1329, E.403/243, m.1; 9 May 1329, E.403/243, m.2.

5 Die Jovis xix die Januarii. Isabella Regine Anglie matri regis carissimo super illis xx<sup>m</sup> li. quas dominus rex ei dono suo concessit in recompensatione missarum et sumptionum quas eadem regina misit per expeditonem arduorum negotiorum regis per divisas vices. E.403/240, m.6. Amongst other payments the Abbot of Reading is to assign £638 17s. 2d., the Prior and Chapter of Rochester, £200, and the abbey of Oseney, £753 in January 1329 from the clergy 1/10 granted at Leicester in November 1327 as recorded in Knighton, I, p. 447 and Annales Paulini, p. 338. Payment was due in two halves on 12 May and 1 November 1328. See below, p. 276. For these payments to Isabella and further sums amounting to £570, E.403/240, m.6. Payments from February 1329 onwards are shown later on the same roll and on E.403/243.

standing and assignments continued to be made. The most significant of these was the grant to Isabella of the 10,000 marks payable to the King at Michaelmas 1329 by the Scots in accordance with the Treaty of Northampton. Thomas de Garton, Keeper of the King's Wardrobe was ordered to pay Isabella 5,000 marks of this on 3 April 1330. Other assignments seem to have become a trickle; the last is dated 23 October 1330 and brings the total paid since the previous October to £893 0s. 6d.<sup>1</sup> If the full 10,000 marks of the Scots indemnity is taken into account this leaves some £2,500 outstanding. These payments however do make clear, which Wolffe does not, that the £20,000 grant to Isabella was a separate transaction from that involving the Mohaut inheritance.

But the story of the Mohaut lands was not completed by the time of Mortimer's fall. There is an indenture dated 3 December 1331 by which Emma, Robert de Mohaut's widow, released to Isabella the lands which had been remaindered to the Queen for Isabella to hold with all the regalities, knights' fees and advowsons in return for an annuity of £400 per annum to be paid by Isabella quarterly to Emma.<sup>2</sup> As always, the gain was Isabella's. Emma died on 26 January 1332.<sup>3</sup>

Thus in addition to a dower increased to the annual value of £13,333 13s. 4d. per annum and the remainder of the Mohaut lands for a payment of 10,000 marks, Isabella also received in accordance with parliament's wishes the sum of £20,000, making a total of grants to the value of £40,000 between February 1327 and October 1330.

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 470; C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 41; E.403/246; E.403/249; E.403/253. See also below, p.229, n.1 .

2 Catalogue of Ancient Deeds, v, A.10948, p. 68.

3 G.E.C., ix, p. 17.

It is hardly surprising when one views this vast accumulation of wealth on Isabella's part and places beside it Mortimer's large territorial acquisitions on the March and in Ireland, to find demands being made, apparently as early as October 1328, for Isabella to disgorge the Crown lands and for Mortimer to live on his own estates, many of which he had acquired through the disinheritance of others, an allusion perhaps to his seizure of the Chirk estates. It might have been legitimate for Isabella to amass these lands if she had used them for the benefit of the Crown and not for her own pleasure. It is clear that she did not make proper use of them and the Crown and the King's supporters must therefore have suffered. The chroniclers refer to Isabella and Mortimer seizing the kingdom's treasure and in the articles of accusation drawn up against Mortimer in November 1330 there is a very clear reference to the fact that he had received lands to the disinheritance of the King and his Crown.<sup>1</sup> What was true of Mortimer was equally true of Isabella. Between them in the years of their power, they accumulated lands and wealth which far surpassed anything which the Despensers had held during the years of the so-called tyranny of Edward II.<sup>2</sup>

It is hardly surprising that between 1327 and 1330 opposition to Isabella and Mortimer remained a constant and ever-present factor.

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- 1 The Brut, p. 258; Knighton, I, p. 447; Chronicle of Melsa, p. 358; Rot. Parl. II, p. 52.
  - 2 Natalie Fryde estimates that the lands, goods and cash held by the Despensers in the autumn of 1326 amounted to £22,810 13s. 1½d., the elder Despenser being worth £9,849 10s. 5½d. and Hugh the Younger, £12,961 2s. 8½d. Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, Appendix 1, pp. 231-32.

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The Opposition to the Regime of Isabella and Mortimer



The seizure of Edward II,<sup>1</sup> apparently near Llantrisant Castle in the middle of November 1326, had not brought resistance on his behalf to an end. The last personal records of Edward's reign are dated at Caerphilly Castle on 31 October. Two days later pardons were granted to any men who were prepared to join the castle's garrison. It was well supplied and not only from a strategic point of view it was a valuable place to defend.<sup>2</sup> The King's clerk, John de Langton, had passed £29,000 to the King before 20 October. When he left Caerphilly at the beginning of November, Edward left behind a proportion of that treasure.<sup>3</sup> The defence of the castle was left to Hugh, the teenage son of the Younger Despenser and to Sir John Felton who, the previous summer, had been involved in an attack on Normandy.<sup>4</sup> Felton had been ordered to take his instructions only from the King and he had taken a solemn oath not to surrender the castle to Isabella or the Prince. In an effort to circumvent this, specific instructions were sent to Felton at the end of December to hand the castle over to Roger de Chaundos, who had been appointed its keeper, on pain of forfeiture. It would seem that the appropriate countersign, presumably known only to the King and Felton, was not included in the message.<sup>5</sup>

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1 See above, p. 26

2 C.P.R. 1324-27, p. 336. Merchants were ordered to bring supplies of corn, bread, ale, fish and meat for the garrison on 29 October 1326.

3 John de Langton showed the Court of the Exchequer a receipt under the privy seal dated 20 October testifying that the £29,000 had been handed over. Memoranda Roll, 1326-27, No. 212, p. 36.

4 Walsingham, pp. 178-79.

5 C.F.R. 1319-27, p. 430.

Accordingly, Felton failed to obey. Perhaps in an effort at persuasion he and all those in the castle, with the exception of Hugh Despenser were granted pardons; a pardon which in Felton's case was extended to cover his exploits in Normandy against Prince Edward the previous summer. In anticipation of the expected surrender William la Zouche of Mortimer was granted custody of the castle jointly with Roger de Northburgh, the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield. They were instructed to hand over the treasure found in the castle to John de Langton. The reality of the situation was also faced, for when La Zouche of Mortimer was appointed keeper of Glamorgan he received a grant of wages for himself and thirty men-at-arms besieging the castle.<sup>1</sup> But by the beginning of March the situation was clearly worrying the authorities and the royal forces around the castle were increased so that they outnumbered the defenders by about four to one. A further grant of pardon to the defenders was issued, this time it was extended to young Hugh Despenser, although unlike the others he was not to receive restitution of his lands.<sup>2</sup> But the castle still held out and was not finally surrendered until 11 April after five months defence.<sup>3</sup>

Treasure amounting to £13,295 0s. 0d. was received by John de Langton at Caerphilly and paid by him into the Wardrobe at York on 26 June 1327. He had been appointed Chamberlain of the Exchequer

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1 C.P.R. 1324-27, p. 344; C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 10, 12; C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 12-13; C.P.R. op. cit., p. 18.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 37, 39; the pardon covers 122 names, including Felton.

3 E.372/181, m.38. William la Zouche's force consisted of 3 bannerets, 4 knights, 21 squires, 4 centenars, 20 vintenars and 400 men-at-arms, whose wages totalled £197 15s. 4d. for the thirty four days between 7 March and 11 April 1327.

six days before.<sup>1</sup> Felton and Hugh Despenser seem to have passed into Mortimer's custody. Although the former is found fighting in defence of the March the following October, he is also recorded as owing Mortimer £500, which sounds distinctly like a recognisance. Young Hugh remained a prisoner and was transferred from Mortimer's own custody to that of Thomas Gurney at Bristol Castle in December 1328 at a time when the government was under extreme pressure from Henry of Lancaster.<sup>2</sup>

But by the time the castle fell new developments were taking place with regard to the deposed King. The author of the Historia Roffensis, referring to a local riot at Canterbury towards the end of March, comments that this merely echoed events in other parts of the country. At much the same time a group of men who included Stephen Dunheved, the brother of Thomas Dunheved, former confessor of Edward II, were accused of raids on the parson of Duntresbourn in Gloucestershire.<sup>3</sup> The Lancastrian chronicler Knighton reports that it was rumoured that certain unnamed followers of the former King were planning to abduct him from Lancaster's custody at Kenilworth and that Lancaster was no longer willing to be responsible for his safe-keeping.<sup>4</sup> There may be some substance to this since an order was made on 24 April for the arrest of John de Stoke, a friar preacher from Warwick, who had apparently been involved in an

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1 E.101/383/8, m.5v.; Memoranda Roll, 1326-1327, No. 778, p. 101.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 215; C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 366, 352. Hugh Despenser remained in custody at Bristol until July 1331 when he secured twelve sureties, who included Ebulo Lestrangle, Richard Talbot and John Darcy, to guarantee that he would appear before the King at Michaelmas. C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 326.

3 Historia Roffensis, p. 368; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 80.

4 Knighton, I, p. 444.

attempt on Kenilworth castle.<sup>1</sup> However, the accusations against Mortimer in 1330 hold him responsible for the fact that Edward was removed from that comfortable state befitting his rank, in which he lived at Kenilworth, to a more disagreeable captivity at Berkeley Castle.<sup>2</sup>

On 3 April 1327, Thomas Berkeley, John Mautravers and Thomas Gurney, a Berkeley retainer, received custody of Edward II at Kenilworth by indenture.<sup>3</sup> Two days later on Palm Sunday the party was at the Augustinian priory of Lantony near Gloucester before moving on that same day to Berkeley where they arrived at supper time.<sup>4</sup> Edward was now in charge of two men closely connected with each other and with Mortimer. Berkeley was Mortimer's son-in-law and Mautravers was married to Berkeley's sister Milicent. Equally significantly the removal from Kenilworth had taken the former King away from that area between Kenilworth and Rugby where the Dunheved interests were strong.<sup>5</sup>

There is no reason to suppose that at first at any rate Edward was not well treated at Berkeley. £5 per day was allocated for his maintenance and this money seems regularly to have been paid, £500

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1 SC.1/29/64.

2 Rot. Parl. II, p. 52.

3 Documents relating to the death and burial of Edward II, ed. S.A. Moore, Archaeologia, Vol. L., (London 1887), pp. 215-26, referring to Pipe Roll I Edward III, E.372/172, m.21; Smyth, Lives of the Berkeleys, I, p. 291.

4 Annales Paulini, p. 333; Smyth, Lives of the Berkeleys, I, p. 293.

5 For the plots aimed at securing Edward II's release during the summer of 1327 see, Captivity and Death of Edward of Caernarvon, Collected Papers of T.F. Tout, III, pp. 145-90; F.J. Tanqueray, The Conspiracy of Thomas Dunheved, 1327, E.H.R., xxxi, (1916).

of it by John de Langton from the funds he had received at the capture of Caerphilly Castle.<sup>1</sup> But Thomas Berkeley and John Mautravers cannot have remained long at Berkeley. Writs of summons had been sent out on 5 April in connection with the proposed Scottish campaign. Berkeley and Mautravers were ordered to be at Newcastle upon Tyne on 17 May while a further instruction dated 30 April ordered them to take arms from Bristol Castle for use in the north. Despite Smyth's assertion to the contrary there is no reason to suppose they disobeyed the royal summons.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless unease about the former king's security continued. Early in May steps were taken to arrest Stephen Dunheved and place him in Miles Beauchamp's custody at Wallingford. It was a move which clearly failed since a month later Dunheved was involved in a larger outbreak at Chester in which his brother the Dominican friar, Thomas Dunheved took some part.<sup>3</sup> Once again the brothers eluded arrest.

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- 1 S.A. Moore, Documents relating to the death and burial of King Edward II, *Archaeologia*, 1, pp. 215-26. £66 13s. 4d. was paid on 16 July. The roll (E.372/172, m.21) accounts for payment of £700, a figure confirmed by the accounts of William Asside, Thomas Berkeley's receiver for the period Michaelmas 20 Edward II to Michaelmas 1 Edward III, cited by J. Smyth, *The Berkeley Manuscripts*, I, p. 293. The order for Langton's payment was made on 15 May, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 86. A previous order had been made three weeks earlier for the 100s. a day allowance to be paid out of the issues of Glamorgan by the receiver Matthew de Crauthorn, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 77. A further order for £200 was issued on 5 July, C.62/104, m.8. Capons and eggs are reported as having been sent from the Berkeley manor of Ham to the castle kitchens for the use of the King's father. I.H. Jeayes, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Charters and Muniments in possession of the Rt. Hon. the Lord Fitzhardinge at Berkeley Castle*, p. 277.
  - 2 *Foedera*, II, ii, p. 702; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 95; Smyth, *The Berkeley Manuscripts*, I, p. 309.
  - 3 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 99, 153. Stephen and Thomas Dunheved, William Beaumard and John Sabant who had committed murder at Chester were to be arrested so that they might be questioned about possible accomplices.

Everywhere rumours were rife. The activities of Thomas Dunheved were known to the chroniclers but the exact extent of his involvement was not clear and reports were confused. Edward II was reported to be distressed that he was not permitted to see Isabella or his son since it was feared that if he were allowed to do so he would kill them. Isabella would not see him or allow their children to visit him because she feared the Church would compel her to return to the marriage relationship which she had repudiated. However, Isabella was believed to have sent him reassuring letters saying that it was the community of the realm which forbade their meeting.<sup>1</sup> Dunheved and other Dominicans were thought to be determined to rescue him and so stirred people up to that end. Reports that Edward would be rescued were everywhere.<sup>2</sup>

But Dunheved was not the only man on whom the authorities had their eye. At the end of June, James Turmyn and other associates of the Earl of Mar, Edward's old friend, were heading for the march of Wales to stir up trouble against the regime,<sup>3</sup> while July brought indications of a much more serious and temporarily successful attempt to rescue the deposed King from Berkeley. On 1 July a commission was appointed to inquire into breaches of the peace in Gloucestershire. The names of those arrested were to be forwarded to the regime. Two days later Thomas Berkeley's obligation to serve with the King in Scotland was remitted because he had special business to attend to elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> The nature of that business is clear since Berkeley and

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1 The Brut, pp. 248-9, 252; Le Baker, p. 29; Murimuth, p. 52; Walsingham, p. 188.

2 Murimuth, op. cit.; Knighton, p. 444; Chronicle of Meaux, p. 355; The Brut, p. 249; Lanercost, p. 258; Chroniques de London, p. 58; Annales Paulini, p. 337; Walsingham, p. 189.

3 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 212.

4 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 155, 130.

Mautravers were made commissioners of the peace in the wide area covered by the counties of Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Hereford, Oxford and Berkshire on terms which referred specifically to the Statute of Winchester.<sup>1</sup> The commission does not, however, seem to have empowered them to arrest suspects and a remedy for this is sought in a letter written from Berkeley to John Hothum, the bishop of Ely and Chancellor on 27 July.<sup>2</sup> In the letter reference is made to an assault on Berkeley Castle and to the deposed king having been carried off by a group of men who included the Dunheved brothers, Stephen and Thomas, William Aylmer, father and son, Robert de Shulton a monk of Hailes Abbey and Michael atte Hull, a canon of Lantony Priory. Both these religious houses were in Gloucestershire. Others involved came from Shropshire and Warwickshire and some were Friars Preacher. Confused reports of this rescue reached some of the chroniclers but it is impossible to be absolutely clear as to what had happened.

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- 1 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 154. Although this entry is calendared under the date 11 July, the original entry, C.66/167, m.11d, is dated at York, 'primo die Iulii', the same day on which the commission to inquire into breaches of the peace in Gloucestershire had been issued to Robert de Aston and Robert de Prestbury and two days before Berkeley and Mautravers were relieved of their obligations with regard to the Scots campaign. The commission to Berkeley is referred to by B.H. Putnam, The English Government at Work, 1327-1336, III, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1950), p. 205, n. 104. She states that the Calendar is in error in describing this as a Commission of the Peace. However Berkeley and Mautravers are specifically appointed, 'ad dictam pacem nostram necnon ad statutum dudum apud Wynton custodiendam pro conservatione pacis eiusdem editum et ad supervidendum ...' C.66/167, m.11d. The right of commissions of the peace to arrest suspects seems to have been established early in the reign of Edward II but was omitted in commissions assigned to the counties in March 1327. For a discussion on the powers of these commissions, B.H. Putnam, The Transformation of the Keepers of the Peace into the Justices of the Peace, 1327-1380, T.R.H.S. 1929, Fourth Series, iv, pp. 19-48.
  - 2 For this letter, F.J. Tanqueray, The Conspiracy of Thomas Dunheved, 1327, E.H.R., xxxi (1916), pp. 119-24.

Murimuth, who ought by reason of his closeness to the regime to have had accurate information, refers to Edward being taken secretly at night to Corfe Castle and to other secret spots to avoid his being freed, presumably after he had been recaptured. Le Baker also has a garbled account in which he tells how Edward was taken to Corfe and subsequently to Bristol from whence he was removed to Berkeley when the citizens of Bristol planned to free him and spirit him to safety abroad.<sup>1</sup> A consideration of the letter printed by Tanqueray and the evidence of the chroniclers suggests that at some time towards the end of June, Edward II was rescued by his friends and taken perhaps to Corfe in Dorset. Since his rescuers were merely men of humble origin they were unable to secure sufficient support to protect him and he was soon recaptured, possibly by Thomas Gurney who is associated by the chroniclers with Mautravers, but who does not appear in official records, perhaps because he was a Berkeley retainer.<sup>2</sup> Berkeley and Mautravers were immediately appointed to get the situation under control and to hunt down those who had breached the peace. The powers given them however were insufficient and they secured a new commission dated 1 August 1327 to indict those who had broken into the castle.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 Murimuth, p. 52. Le Baker, pp. 29-30, reports how more than twenty years later he was told by one William Bishop that Edward's keepers had prevented him from sleeping, fed him unpleasant food and on the journey from Bristol to Berkeley obliged him to shave his head and beard using cold ditch water. The final humiliation had been to make a straw crown and make out that he was mad. Yet he had survived this inhuman treatment.
  - 2 For references to Gurney in the Berkeley retinue, J.R.S. Phillips, Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, 1307-1324, pp. 265-67, 305; Nigel Saul, Knights and Esquires, The Gloucestershire Gentry in the 14th Century, pp. 69-71.
  - 3 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 156-57.



The letter requesting these increased powers is accredited by Tanqueray to John Walwayn, a former treasurer and escheator. Tout, without citing a reference, states that Walwayn had been sent to Berkeley though there is no evidence to connect him with Gloucestershire at this time. Doherty proposes, more plausibly, that this letter was written, not by Walwayn, but by Thomas Berkeley. It was after all Berkeley who found the powers granted him inadequate for dealing with the situation and it was Berkeley who had been empowered to arrest those conspirators who had come to plunder Berkeley Castle and who had refused to join the King in his expedition against the Scots.<sup>1</sup> More strenuous efforts now followed to arrest those involved, suggesting that the authorities recognised the seriousness of the situation. Stephen Dunheved seems to have been in the custody of the sheriffs of London as early as 1 July.<sup>2</sup> August brought further activity over a wider area. Brother John de Redmere, keeper of Edward II's stud and a companion, John de Norton, were arrested at Dunstaple and transferred to the safety of Wallingford Castle. In October with two companions, they were transferred to Newgate and the

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- 1 Tanqueray, op. cit.; Tout, Captivity and Death of Edward of Caernarvon, op. cit.; P.C. Doherty, Isabella, Queen of England, 1296-1330.
  - 2 Annales Paulini, p. 337, states that Dunheved was arrested in London on suspicion at much the same time, 11 June, as his brother Thomas was captured at Bidebrook near Dunmore and committed to prison at Pontefract. He escaped from there, killing his gaoler, only to be recaptured and imprisoned under conditions which caused his death. The sheriffs of London were ordered to keep Stephen safely in prison and not to release him without the King's instructions. C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 146. On the other hand, Stephen Dunheved's name occurs amongst the names on the list of those indicted before Thomas Berkeley a month later. He seems a slippery figure for in June 1329 orders were issued for the arrest of Stephen Dunheved recently imprisoned in Newgate and now at large. C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 549. He also appears amongst those involved in the Kent conspiracy in 1330, C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 169-70. See below, p. 145.

care of the sheriff of London. There they were to remain.<sup>1</sup> William Aylmer had been arrested and imprisoned at Oxford but was to be released if he could find sureties.<sup>2</sup> At much the same time the sheriff of Stafford had intercepted letters of a suspicious nature sent to the earl of Mar by John Rothwell of Lichfield and John de Burnham and his brother. They were to be arrested and sent to the King.<sup>3</sup>

But even while the authorities were active a new plot was under way, based this time on Wales. It was a plot which was to exhaust Mortimer's patience and lead to Edward II's murder. The instigator was Sir Rhys ap Gruffyd who had been active in Wales at the time of the invasion in the previous autumn<sup>4</sup> and who was now spurred on by unnamed English magnates. News that something was afoot had reached the court at Nottingham early in September. Instructions were issued to Mortimer as Justiciar in Wales to hunt down all those actively plotting against the government. They were to be arrested and their goods seized.<sup>5</sup> At much the same time, news of a plot reached William Shaldeford, Mortimer's lieutenant in North Wales. His involvement

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1 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 156, 179.

2 Aylmer had been indicted before Thomas Berkeley for consenting to and abetting the robbery of Berkeley Castle and the taking of Edward of Caernarvon and the levying of the King's people in war against him. C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 158.

3 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 157. Mar was involved in the Scots invasion in the summer of 1327 and the northern chroniclers associate him directly with Edward of Caernarvon. They suggest that Mar wished to use the invasion as a means of restoring Edward to the throne. Bridlington, p. 96; Lanercost, pp. 256-57.

4 C.F.R. 1319-27, p. 421; above, p. 13

5 Order dated, Nottingham 4 September 1327. C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 217-18.

came to light only after Mortimer's fall.<sup>1</sup> According to Shaldeford he wrote from Anglesea to Mortimer, then at Abergavenny, on 14 September 1327, warning him that Rhys ap Gruffyd and others, both in North and South Wales were planning to free Edward II.<sup>2</sup> He advised Mortimer to take steps to prevent Sir Rhys from achieving this purpose. Further confirmation that something had been afoot may be found in the fact that on 26 October instructions were issued ordering the release of Gruffyd Llwyd, Madoc Loithe and Griffin ap Hywel and ten others from imprisonment in Caernarvon Castle, by mainprise or in return for the taking of hostages.<sup>3</sup> How long these men had been in prison is not clear. Gruffyd Llwyd was petitioning for release from eighteen months imprisonment in conditions which were causing him financial loss. It seems that at least in his case bail had been fixed at a very high level and that Mortimer was doing his best to keep Llwyd and his companions out of the way either as a result of the conspiracy or to prevent them from becoming involved.<sup>4</sup>

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- 1 The story comes to light in the Coram Rege Roll, 5 Edward III, Trinity Term, No. 285, m.188. It is described by Tout, Captivity and Death of Edward of Caernarvon, who transcribes the passage from, P.R.O. K.B. 27/285, m.188.
  - 2 That men from South Wales were actively involved is clear not only from the instructions issued to Mortimer on 4 September, but also from the fact that seven of them were pardoned in April 1328 for fleeing to Scotland with Rhys ap Gruffyd. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 273. Rhys ap Gruffyd himself had been granted a pardon in February 1328 but he was later involved in the Kent conspiracy of 1330. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 238.
  - 3 J. Beverley Smith, 'Edward II and the Allegiance of Wales', Welsh History Review, 8, (1976), p. 167; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 182.
  - 4 J.G. Edwards, 'Sir Gruffyd Llwyd', E.H.R., xxx, (1915), pp. 589-601. Llwyd was petitioning for release from the eighteen months imprisonment, puis detenu en la prisone nostre seigneur le roi par un an et demy a son gref damage de mile livres et de plus ... Ancient Petitions, 319,E/388; *ibid*, p. 600.

The steps taken by Mortimer were perhaps not those Shaldeford had expected or intended. Mortimer informed William Ocle of the contents of the letter and then sent Ocle with the letter from Abergavenny to those who had charge of Edward at Berkeley. They were instructed to take steps speedily to avert the danger which threatened. The hint as to the obvious remedy was quite clear.<sup>1</sup>

Contemporary accounts agree that Edward II died at Berkeley on 21 September 1327. The enrolled accounts of Thomas Berkeley and Mautravers and the chroniclers all point to St. Matthew's Day.<sup>2</sup> The chroniclers' well known account of how Edward actually died dates from a later time. The contemporary Murimuth is reticent in the account he gives. It is Le Baker, writing some twenty years later,

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- 1 As a result of this letter, Shaldeford on 8 March 1331 was accused by Howell ap Gruffyd before John Wysham, then Justice of North Wales, of complicity in Edward II's death. The case was referred by Wysham to the King's Chancery where the record appears, K.B. 27/285, m.188. Geoffrey le Scrope was appointed to hear the case. On 18 and 19 April Shaldeford alone appeared. When Howell came on 20 April he explained that he had been delayed by illness at Worcester. This could have been a diplomatic illness. The case was postponed until June and then again until October 1331. When both Howell and Shaldeford appeared then the case was postponed sine die. Howell's absence would thus seem to have caused him to lose the case by malfeasance. Although he ultimately appeared, it was argued that he was too late.
  - 2 E.372/172, m.21. This account of Thomas Berkeley and John Mautravers for their expenses makes a distinction between the period before and after 21 September. '... pro expensis domini Edwardi nuper Regis Anglie patris Regis huius liberatis de tempore quo iidem Thome et Johannes in comitive dicti patris extiterunt dum vixit ac etiam de tempore quo custodiam corporis sui post mortem suum habuerunt a tercio die Aprilis anno primo quo die iidem Thome et Johannes assignati fuerunt esse in comitiva dicti Regis patris apud Kenilworth usque xxj diem Septembris proximo sequentem quo die idem Rex Edwardus pater obiit apud Berkele et ab eodem xxj die Septembris usque xxj diem Octobris proximo sequentem quo die liveraverunt corpus dicti defuncti Abbati Sancti Petri Gloucestrie ...'; Murimuth, p. 53; Walsingham, p. 189. Le Baker, p. 33 has 22 September as the date of the King's death.

who gives the agonising details of the red hot iron and the cries of the dying man alerting the villagers of Berkeley to the murder. The other chroniclers echo this story.<sup>1</sup>

But present day attention has tended to focus on a letter discovered amongst the departmental archives of Hérault at Montpellier in a cartulary of Gaucelin de Deaux, Bishop of Maguelonne, treasurer to Pope Urban V, which casts doubt on the traditional story that Edward died in Berkeley Castle at the hands of Mautravers and Gurney.<sup>2</sup> The writer of the letter was Manuele Fieschi, papal notary and member of a family remotely related to Edward II, another member of which, Cardinal Luca Fieschi, had been nuncio to England in 1317-18.<sup>3</sup> Manuele held positions in the English church, though it is uncertain whether he ever resided, and became Bishop of Vercelli in July 1343. This provides a terminus ad quem for the letter.

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- 1 Le Baker, pp. 33-34. Smyth, Lives of the Berkeleys, I, p. 293, cites the Chronicle of Walter Frocester, a monk of Gloucester, deduced down by him to 20 Edward II, 'Edward II about the feast of St. Matthew the Evangelist was with a fiery hot spit thrust into his fundament most wickedly murdered and buried in the church of St. Peter here with us at Gloucester'. Meaux, p. 355; Knighton, p. 446; The Brut, pp. 252-53. Scalacronica, p. 152 says only God knows the manner of his death. Le Baker's incrimination of Bishop Orleton of Hereford by reference to the ambiguous letter he is reputed to have sent, 'Edwardum occidere nolite timere bonum est', has been discredited since it is clear that Orleton was at Avignon in September 1327. Orleton's itinerary, Haines, Church and Politics in Fourteenth Century England, p. 228.
  - 2 The text of this letter is printed together with a full discussion of its possible authenticity, G.P. Cuttino and Thomas W. Lyman, 'Where is Edward II?', Speculum, July 1978, pp. 522-43. See also, Natalie Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, pp. 203-06.
  - 3 J.S. Wright, The Church and the English Crown, 1305-1334, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, (Toronto, 1980), Appendix 3, No. 11, pp. 290-91, Appendix 5, No. 27, p. 315. Wright refers to a legendary tale made slightly less incredible in view of the possibility that Manuele was a kinsman of Edward II. Ibid., p. 170 and n.11.

The letter contains an account of a confession said to have been made by Edward II then living as a hermit in the diocese of Pavia in Lombardy. After a brief description of his capture and imprisonment, there is an account of his escape from Berkeley which took place at the time when Thomas Gurney and Simon Bereford, an associate of Mortimer appointed escheator for the south, came to murder him. The sleeping porter having been killed in the course of the escape, his body was substituted for that of the king and the heart presented to Isabella as her husband's. Edward meanwhile, so the story goes, was at Corfe protected for a year and a half by the castellan Thomas, unbeknown to Mautravers, the castle's lord. After Kent's death, Edward fled to Ireland for eight months and then as a hermit crossed to France where he was received by Pope John XXII at Avignon and spent a fortnight in discussions at the Papal court. He subsequently visited Paris, Brabant, Cologne and Milan before settling for periods of two and a half years and two years respectively in hermitages at the castles of Milaschi and Cecinia in Lombardy.

Neither Stubbs nor Tout gave great credence to this story, although Stubbs argued that it 'must have been the work of someone sufficiently well acquainted with the circumstances of the King's imprisonment to draw up the details without giving an opening for ready refutation'.<sup>1</sup> It is certainly true that there is nothing inherently impossible in the tale: Corfe has appeared in Edward's story before, Ireland was in crisis in the summer of 1330 when MacGeorghegan of western Meath was associated with Mortimer's Lacy rivals in raids in Meath. Ireland could therefore

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1 Stubbs, Introduction to the Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, II, pp. ciii-cviii. Tout, Captivity and Death of Edward of Caernarvon, refers to the letter as a specious document.

have been a useful place of concealment. John XXII was a friend and sympathiser of the King.<sup>1</sup> The details cannot easily be refuted and yet there are causes of unease.

Simon Bereford was the only man executed with Mortimer after the collapse of the regime in 1330 but the judgement against him calls him Mortimer's aider and abettor: he is nowhere spoken of as principally involved in Edward's death and none of the chroniclers seems to have held him responsible. The dead porter recurs in the story of Thomas Dunheved's escape from Pontefract, while a year and a half's stay at Corfe would only bring one to March 1329.<sup>2</sup> What was Edward doing during Lancaster's uprising of 1328-29 and between March 1329 and Kent's death a year later? The castellan at Corfe was not named Thomas. He was John Deverell who disappeared after Mortimer's fall, as apparently did Gurney and Ocle when his arrest was ordered and his goods seized because he had been involved in the deception whereby Kent had been persuaded by Mautravers that Edward II was alive. The unreliable chronicler Le Baker actually has him executed for implication in Edward II's murder.<sup>3</sup> Finally we might note that if Edward

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1 For Corfe, above, p. 137 .; Ireland, Frame, English Lordship in Ireland, 1318-1361, p. 193; John XXII, Wright, op. cit., p. 170.

2 Cuttino and Lyman, op. cit. date Edward's arrival at Corfe to September 1328 so as to create eighteen months before Kent's death. But what then happened between September 1327 and September 1328? Surely Edward was not still at Berkeley? Thomas Berkeley was repairing and enlarging the castle that year preparatory to a visit by Isabella and Mortimer. Smyth, Lives of the Berkeleys, I, p. 299.

3 Rot. Parl. II, p. 53 for Bereford; above, p. 138 n. 2 . for Dunheved. The naming of the castellan at Corfe as Thomas, could possibly be a confusion with Thomas Berkeley. For Deverell, C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 165. The ports are to be watched to prevent the escape of Mautravers, Gurney, Deverell and Ocle. Rot. Parl. II, p. 53; C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 207; Le Baker, p. 48.

was in Ireland for the eight months following Kent's execution in March 1330, his journey to the continent by way of English ports would have been made in the weeks following Mortimer's fall when the ports were closely watched for his escaping supporters. Would Edward have ignored his supplanter's downfall? The hypotheses which can be built against the letter are as numerous as the implications raised by it. Perhaps the most conclusive evidence against the letter's authenticity lies in the events which followed the murder of Edward of Caernarvon at Berkeley in September 1327. Those events would suggest that all the principals involved believed that Edward III's father was dead and that it would be wise not to inquire too closely into the circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

The news of his father's death reached Edward III at Lincoln during the night of 23 September.<sup>2</sup> Mortimer would seem to have still been absent from the court<sup>3</sup> which now moved by way of Newark to Nottingham where it arrived on 29 September and where it remained

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- 1 If Edward II had escaped, the principals who would have known about it must have been few in number; Mautravers, Gurney, Ocle. The case of Berkeley discussed below is certainly strange and does not fit in with the other three. But if they knew Edward was alive why then did they flee in 1330? It surely could not have been merely because they had compassed Kent's death by telling him the truth - that his brother was alive.
  - 2 D.L. 10/253. Edward gives the news in a letter under the Privy Seal sent to his cousin the Earl of Hereford requesting him to array forces in the face of a further threatened invasion by the Scots. *Trescher cosin nouvelles nous vyndront y ce merkedy le xxiiij iour de Septembre de denz la nuyt que nostre tres cher seigneur et piere est a dieu camaundez ...*
  - 3 According to the Charter Roll, C.53/114, he had last witnessed at Doncaster on 26 August. His name only reappears at Nottingham on 20 October. This does not mean that he was absent for the whole of that period.



until the middle of November.<sup>1</sup> Gurney was sent from Berkeley to inform the King and Isabella of Edward's death and in the weeks which followed plans were made for his funeral. As early as 10 October the King's clerk, Hugh de Glaunvill, was placed in charge of the arrangements and an instruction issued to Henry Burghersh, bishop of Lincoln, the treasurer, on 22 October calls for every assistance to be given in the making of those arrangements.<sup>2</sup> The body of the dead King was to be carried from Berkeley to the abbey of St. Peter in Gloucester where it was to remain properly attended until the burial.<sup>3</sup>

Glaunvill left York on 23 October, but the body of Edward had already left Berkeley on its last journey on 21 October on a hearse covered in black canvas and escorted by members of the Berkeley family, John Eclesclif the Dominican bishop of Llandaff, Sir Robert Hastings, Sir Edmund Wasteneys, the King's chaplains Bernard Burgh of Kirklee

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1 E.101/382/9.

2 Thomas Berkeley paid Gurney 3ls. 1d. for his expenses. Smyth, Lives of the Berkeleys, I, p. 293. The account apparently reports Gurney being sent by Berkeley to Isabella and the King. This may be taken to confirm Mortimer's absence although in a later passage Smyth speculates on the secret intelligence which might have passed between Gurney and Mortimer at this time. op. cit., pp. 296-97. This must throw doubt on Berkeley's extraordinary protestations at the time of Mortimer's fall that he had only learned of Edward II's death at that parliament for at the time Edward was reputed to have been murdered he, Berkeley, was seriously ill and had lost his memory. Rot. Parl. II, p. 57. Smyth acidly comments that he was not too sick to send Gurney to Nottingham so was hardly sick enough to lose his memory. More tellingly the Berkeley household accounts show that Thomas Berkeley did not arrive at his manor of Bradley until 28 September. Smyth, op. cit., pp. 295-96. See also below, p. 338. E.403/240, m.8; E.368/100, m.8.

3 There is no evidence in the records to suggest as Walter Frocester the Gloucester monk, claimed that the abbey of St. Augustine's Bristol, St. Mary's Kingswood, and St. Aldhelm Malmesbury refused to receive the body out of fear of Mortimer and Isabella, Smyth, op. cit., p. 292.

and Richard de Byflete with Bertrand de la More, John Enfield and William Beauhaire, royal sergeants at arms, and the king's chandler Andrew.<sup>1</sup> Proper provision had to be made for the embalming of the body which had been disembowelled and the heart removed.<sup>2</sup> In November John Darcy set out from Pontefract for London where he stayed to purchase the necessary materials for the funeral before journeying on to Gloucester.<sup>3</sup> The court remained in the vicinity of Nottingham until the beginning of December, then it took its slow progress through the Midlands to arrive at Gloucester on 19 December for the funeral the following day.<sup>4</sup>

There is little doubt that the funeral of Edward II was carried out with all the dignity and splendour appropriate for the burial of an English king. His body was kept at a distance from the pressing crowd by four wooden barriers;<sup>5</sup> the hearse, outside which stood eight angels with gold censers, had been especially constructed in London. Images of the four evangelists stood at the corners while the sides

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- 1 E.372/177 for Glaunvill's departure. He was to receive 3s. 4d. a day for his wages. E.101/383/1 for the removal of Edward's body to Gloucester. For wages the bishop was to receive 13s. 4d. a day; Hastings, 6s. 8d.; Wasteney, 5s.; the chaplains, 3s. each; the sergeants 12d. each. Beauhaire alone seems to have been at Berkeley the day the King died and to have remained with the body until its burial. Andrew also received 12d. a day.
  - 2 E.101/383/1 ... ad alias expansas faciendas que pro conservatione dicti corporis fieri operteret. E.372/177 ... mulierem quae exviceravit regem. The Berkeley accounts contain a charge of 37s. 8d. for the cup for the King's heart. Smyth, op. cit., p. 293.
  - 3 E.372/181, m.30. The Wardrobe paid £20 for making 'divisorum apparatus apud Londoniense pro sepultura dicti regis patris'.
  - 4 E.101/382/9.
  - 5 Local knights and burgesses had been summoned to view the dead King, but there was no close inspection. Murimuth, p. 53; Walsingham, p. 189. Perhaps close enough to detect a substitute but not so close as to detect signs of violence.

were decorated with four gilt lions bearing mantles of the royal arms. On the hearse lay a wooden image of the King wearing a copper gilt crown. Edward's body was covered with cloth of gold and he was buried in specially prepared robes together with a German made coverchief, presumably resting on his face. Pieces of gilt armour were provided and gold was used in profusion on harness, standards, pennants and the horses' coverlets. Robes were provided for those attending. Alms offered by the royal household amounted to £98 7s. 11d. The next day the court had moved on to Tewkesbury and so to Worcester for Christmas.<sup>1</sup>

To Isabella at Worcester on the orders of her son, Hugh de Glaunvill brought the woman who had disembowelled her husband. What story had she to tell? Or did she merely bring in that specially made silver cup the heart of Edward II which was to be buried with Isabella thirty years later? This episode has been made more mysterious by the fact that Glaunvill's original account contains no reference to it, whereas the enrolled account which was not passed until May 1334 contains the apparent correction.<sup>2</sup> S.A. Moore comments that the alter-

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1 The information for Edward's funeral is to be found in E.101/383/1; E.101/383/19; E.372/181/m.30. There is a printed summary in S.A. Moore, 'Documents relating to the death and burial of Edward II', *Archaeologia*, 1 (1887), pp. 215-26. The Wardrobe accounts are E.101/382/9.

2 Glaunvill's original account, E.101/383/1, reads, *Et eidem moranti apud Gloucestrie ad computandum cum ministris regis per iiij dies post sepulturam corporis dicti regis et redeundo de ibidem usque Eboracum per vij dies capit ut supra xxxv.s ix.d.* But the account enrolled on 25 May 1334, E.372/177, reads, *Et eidem moranti apud Gloucestrie ad computandum cum ministris regis per iiij dies post sepulturam corporis dicti regis et redeundo de ibidem usque Wygorn ducendo quamdam mulierem que exviceravit Regem ad Reginam precepto Regis per duos dies morando ibid per unum diem et abinde redeundo usque Eboracum per iiij dies capienti ut supra xxxvj.s. viiij.d, sicut continetur ibidem.* Nevertheless it does not appear on the roll of particulars.

ation is suspicious and the motive for it more so.<sup>1</sup> The woman is seemingly not referred to again, but she, if anyone, would know if the former King had died violently. Maybe Edward III was inquiring into rumours that his father had died a violent death; but would Isabella need to send for the woman to learn the truth when Mortimer was at her side? In any case there were others who had seen the body, men like the sergeants Bertrand de la More and John Enfield who had escorted it to Gloucester. They remained about the royal household.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps, as S.A. Moore suggests, the woman deceived the King out of fear of Mautravers and Gurney.<sup>3</sup> In that case maybe Isabella knew of the truth from the sinister figure of Mortimer lurking behind the scenes.

On the other hand, perhaps too much of a mystery is made of all this. Is it really possible that Edward II could have survived? It is unfortunate that when his tomb in Gloucester Cathedral was opened in 1855 the inner leaden coffin was not examined. Only by such an examination could there be any possibility of the argument being resolved. When Mortimer fell in 1330 there is no hint that people did not believe that the king's father had been murdered while the Kent episode was admitted to being a deceit. There are good reasons for querying the possibly genuine beliefs of Manuele Fieschi as set out in his letter,<sup>4</sup> though in 1337, with Edward III making claims on the French crown, a papal notary at the Avignonese court could have

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1 S.A. Moore, op. cit.

2 Memoranda Roll, 1326-27, Nos. 2270, 2271, *servientes ad arma*.

3 S.A. Moore, op. cit.

4 Above, p. 143

had motives for undermining the security of Edward III's position by claiming that his father was still alive. No English chronicler reports, other than the Kent episode, any persistent rumours that Edward II had survived and while clearly it was to the advantage of Isabella and her son to accept the fact of his death, there was no need to go to the lengths of respect which they did, merely to establish that he was dead when in fact he had escaped. It is far more plausible to suggest that Edward and his mother were anxious to dissociate themselves from any accusations that they had been responsible for the death. It seems most likely of all that Mortimer alone was guilty and that Edward and Isabella, confronted with a 'fait accompli' which was in their interests, chose to ask no questions until the instigator of the murder became too powerful and had in his turn to be removed. Even then the young King skilfully kept the questioning of those involved in his father's death to a minimum.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime King Edward II was buried with the appropriate rites, the proper masses were said for his soul, the city of Gloucester was rewarded for showing honour to the body of the King's dear father by having its charters confirmed and the court returned to Gloucester on the anniversary of the king's funeral. Masses were said on the anniversary of his death and a splendid tomb was erected over his body, while in what some may regard as the ultimate hypocrisy, Isabella went to her own grave with her husband's heart and

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1 Below, pp. 336-38.

wearing her wedding dress.<sup>1</sup>

With Edward II dead and buried, the regime no doubt hoped that the focus of opposition had been removed and that the unrest of the previous summer which had centred on him would not be repeated. But the regime soon found itself faced with more powerful opponents than the countrymen who had been the first to challenge it. Already by the end of 1327 that coalition of interests which had established Edward III on the throne was beginning to break up. Orleton of Hereford had defied Isabella's wishes in securing the see of Worcester for himself,<sup>2</sup> and despite a successful justification of his position on his return from Avignon early in 1328, he did not return to that central position in the court which his initial appointment as treasurer had suggested he might hold. For the future the greater part

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1 The abbot of Crokesden agreed to commemorate the soul of Edward II on St. Matthew's Day in return for a grant of land, Foedera, II, ii, p. 718; the abbey of St. Peter's Gloucester, bound to offer masses for Edward's soul, felt that they were being put to some expense for which they deserved compensation, Foedera, II, ii, p. 729; for the confirmation of Gloucester's charters, C.81/158/2287; for the King at Gloucester on 20 December 1328, E.101/383/14, In oblationibus participum ad missam celebratam in presencia domini regis in ecclesia conventuali Gloucestrie pro anima domini Edwardi nuper regis Anglie patris sui; for 21 September 1328, E.101/383/14, In oblationibus participum ad missam celebratam in capella Regis infra manerium de Elmham in presentia sua pro animo domini Edwardi nuper Regis Anglie patris sui die anniversarii sui ibidem eodem die viij. li. ii.d. The court was at Gloucester on 21 September 1329, E.101/384/1, m.9r. For Isabella see Natalie Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, p. 202 and n.28, p. 269 and the references cited there.

2 For an assessment of Orleton at this time, Haines, The Church and Politics in Fourteenth Century England, pp. 204-05. The motives behind Orleton's withdrawal from the court at this time must be conjectural; a desire to return to diplomacy, a disinclination to be involved in a developing power struggle, or purely ambition for ecclesiastical advancement. The opposition of Isabella and Mortimer probably stems from anxiety to preserve the Crown's regalian rights in the case of the first bishopric to fall vacant after their accession to power. Haines, op. cit., pp. 27, 31.

of his time was spent in the Worcester diocese at one remove from the Mortimer marcher influence.<sup>1</sup> Orleton's disappearance from prominence is matched by the case of other bishops. Archbishop Reynolds of Canterbury died in November 1327. His role had always been conciliatory with the result that he appears in the events of 1326-27 to be timid and uncertain. He was certainly not the man to question the authority of Isabella and Mortimer.<sup>2</sup> Archbishop Melton of York might have done but he tended to remain in the northern province. Bishops Airmyn of Norwich and Stratford of Winchester who with Orleton had been most prominent at the time of Edward II's fall seldom appear at the centre of affairs, the former being employed on diplomatic missions to the Scots and French, the latter clearly unable to exert that influence which had been so telling in the last weeks of Edward's reign. Thomas Charlton of Hereford appointed to replace Orleton at the end of 1327 and Roger Northburgh of Coventry and Lichfield do appear on the political stage as treasurer and on diplomatic missions, but they must be regarded as political light weights. Bishop Hothum of Ely ceased to be Chancellor on 1 March 1328, although he still remained about the court. Only Henry Burghersh of Lincoln remained

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- 1 Orleton was present at the Northampton and Salisbury parliaments in 1328, in London in February 1329 and in the vicinity of Nottingham in October 1330. He was also engaged on diplomatic missions to France in May 1328 and February and May 1330. He was certainly away from his diocese more in 1330 than during the preceding years. Haines, op. cit., Orleton's itinerary, pp. 228-34.
  - 2 J.R. Wright, The Church and the English Crown, 1305-1334, pp. 243-74, takes a more generous view of Reynolds than previous historians. He does not examine Reynolds' part in the deposition of Edward II in any detail merely commenting that Thomas Cobham of Worcester was as dismayed as Reynolds, so that perhaps Reynolds' attitude was not so reprehensible, op. cit., p. 273. In view of the fact that Cobham was already seriously ill, he died in August 1327, this seems a rather facile comment. Reynolds' death, Murimuth, p. 57.

close to Isabella at the centre of power and sharing prominently in government. The massive support of the Church for the deposition of Edward II was not transferred to the new regime and its leaders did not long remain active in the administration of Isabella and Mortimer.<sup>1</sup> There is no immediately obvious reason for this; but lack of advancement, the death of Edward II and the increasing rapacity of Isabella and Mortimer were no doubt contributory factors.

More significantly and perhaps more easily understandable is the fact that Mortimer's control of the City of London was not maintained.<sup>2</sup> As mayor his adherent Richard Bethune had helped to orchestrate the calls for Edward II's removal. His position had seemed assured when the re-establishment of London's liberties were part of the new regime's settlement of affairs. A new and comprehensive charter of liberties granted on 6 March 1327 had been read three days later at Guildhall by the chamberlain, Andrew Horn. It had confirmed the liberties granted in Magna Carta and reiterated the independent position of the mayor as justice and escheator. At the same time it reversed the restrictions on the City's freedom which had been imposed by Edward II. This charter had been preceded by a pardon for the murders and riots of the previous autumn and the pardoning of all debts still outstanding to the former King.<sup>3</sup> The pro-Mortimer faction seemed to be riding high and more of his supporters like the pepperer

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- 1 The declining influence of the bishops may perhaps be seen in the falling number of occasions on which they witnessed royal charters. See, Appendix 1. Charlton's appointment, Le Baker, p. 42; Hothum's surrender of the Great Seal, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 289.
  - 2 For London at this time, G.A. Williams, Medieval London, From Commune to Capital, pp. 297ff.
  - 3 C.Ch.R. 1327-41, p. 7; Annales Paulini, pp. 325-32.



Benedict de Fulsham and the draper Simon de Swanland, reached the council.<sup>1</sup> However, they found themselves pushed on to the defensive when the Exchequer and the Court of Common Pleas were removed to York.

The order for the removal was issued on 18 August 1327. The sheriffs of London and Middlesex were ordered to provide barrels and chests for the transportation of documents and records.<sup>2</sup> Instant steps were taken by the Londoners to get the decision reversed. Benedict de Fulsham and Robert de Kelsey, who had been appointed London's representatives at the colloquium to be held at Lincoln in September, were accompanied by Bethune, the mayor. They urgently requested that the King's Bench and the Exchequer might remain in London. Isabella's aid was invoked. But all was in vain, the reply was firm. Affairs in the north made it too dangerous to permit a return to Westminster. The presence of the Bench and Exchequer at York would bring large numbers of people to that city and that would be a help in defending the northern marches. Further pleas were sent to the bishops of Lincoln and Ely, to the earls of Norfolk, Kent, Lancaster and Surrey and to Mortimer, thus indicating those whose influence might be effective. But the Exchequer and the courts remained at York.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Williams, op. cit., p. 300.

2 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 161.

3 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, pp. 25, 29-30. The Exchequer returned to London in the autumn of 1328, E.403/240. The Court of common pleas returned for the Trinity Term, 1329. The orders for the return were issued as a result of a decision at the Salisbury parliament on 20 October 1328, C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 324-25.

The result of all this was that Mortimer's opponent, Hamo de Chigwell returned to the mayoralty. This was an obvious blow to Mortimer's control of the City. Nor was the situation improved by the regime's policy of holding parliaments and councils away from London. Between the Westminster parliament of February 1327 and the parliament which met there in November 1330 following Mortimer's fall, there was only one meeting at Westminster, that of February 1329 which had been adjourned from Salisbury the previous October and which met in the aftermath of the Lancastrian rebellion.<sup>1</sup> These absences clearly meant a loss of political influences but almost certainly the Londoners felt even more keenly the financial losses resulting from the inevitable slackening of trade due to the absence of the magnates and their retinues. The travel and lodging expenses which their representatives incurred was a further source of complaint. It is not surprising to find them pressing for the return of parliaments to London.<sup>2</sup>

The Londoners were not the only ones who found it inconvenient and expensive to travel about the country. When the bishop of Rochester was summoned to the council at Windsor in the summer of 1329, he excused himself on the grounds that travelling all over the country would impoverish the see. London was quite far enough to go.<sup>3</sup> It is

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1 There were meetings at Lincoln in September 1327; York, February 1328; Northampton, April 1328; York, July 1328; Salisbury, October 1328; Westminster, February 1329; Windsor, July 1329; Winchester, March 1330; Oseney, July 1330; Nottingham, October 1330. Knights and burgesses were not summoned to Windsor, Oseney or Nottingham. T.F.T. Plucknett, Parliament, The English Government at Work, I, p. 86.

2 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 67. A request in September 1328 that parliament might sit at Westminster rather than at Salisbury.

3 Historia Roffensis, p. 369.

clear that there were others who felt the same for it has been observed that prelates and peers caused considerable difficulty through their reluctance to appear punctually, or indeed at all.<sup>1</sup> Individual summonses were meant to be obeyed. The failure to do so was especially noticeable in the assembly summoned to meet at York in February 1328 to discuss terms for a treaty with the Scots. One of the reasons cited when writs of summons were issued on 5 March for a parliament to be held at Northampton towards the end of April was that business had not been dealt with at York because of absentees. Nor could a prelate or magnate excuse himself from attending personally on the grounds that he would send proctors. It was made quite clear that neither at Northampton or later the same year at Salisbury would proctors be admitted.<sup>2</sup>

It is almost impossible to know whether these absences were due to widening hostility to the regime or whether other influences were at work. The need that Isabella and Mortimer clearly felt for regular consultation with a broadly based assembly suggests two important points. Firstly, they wished to maintain the support of the country knights and burgesses at the very least by taking note of their opinions but also by providing the opportunity for discussion and redress of grievances. In that way they could appear to be protectors of the people against the oppressive magnate or cleric or outlaw. Secondly, it suggests that they did not feel that the provisions made by the parliament of February 1327 for a standing council of magnates and

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1 T.F.T. Plucknett, *Parliament, English Government at Work*, I, p. 106.

2 *C.C.R. 1327-30*, pp. 375-76. J.S. Roskell, 'The Problems of the Attendance of the Lords in Medieval Parliaments', *B.I.H.R.*, xxix (1956), pp. 153-204, especially p. 156.

bishops to be about the King was from their point of view working satisfactorily. Indeed the council could hardly have been working satisfactorily from anyone's point of view, for we may detect a growing unease on the part of Lancaster and his supporters at the role he was allowed to play, a role which left him with no real influence.<sup>1</sup>

Signs that Isabella and Mortimer felt no need to conciliate Lancaster were emerging by December 1327 when Sir Robert Holland had his lands restored to him despite objections from Lancaster. Holland had never been forgiven by Lancaster for his desertion of Thomas of Lancaster in March 1322, an event which sealed the fate of the Lancastrians at Boroughbridge. It is significant that Holland's wife, Maud, a daughter of Alan la Zouche, who had brought him lands worth nearly £720 a year, had already been provided for at Isabella's request in March 1327. She was granted lands at a time when Holland's own estates still remained in the King's hands even though he had been pardoned at Kent's request for his part in the rebellion against Edward II in 1321-22.<sup>2</sup> The Brut, referring to Holland's restoration to favour, comments that he was 'wonder pryve' with Isabella and Mortimer,<sup>3</sup> which would have given Lancaster some cause for unease. His doubts concerning the Scottish peace renewed that unease when news of the terms being discussed at York

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1 For a discussion on the royal council as a centre of impasse, above, pp.66-70

2 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 192. For Holland in 1322 see Maddicott, Thomas of Lancaster, 1307-22, pp. 309-10. Holland's career is discussed, J.R. Maddicott, 'Thomas of Lancaster and Sir Robert Holland: a study in noble patronage', E.H.R., lxxxvi (1971), pp. 449-72; C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 59, 22.

3 The Brut, p. 257.

in February 1328 leaked out.<sup>1</sup> It seems, however, that it was at the Northampton parliament in May when these terms were confirmed that a real rift opened between Lancaster and Mortimer.

It is possible to trace the course of events between May 1328 and February 1329 with a reasonable amount of certainty: it is not so easy to identify clearly the motives and arguments behind those events. The emphasis laid upon them by the government clearly differs from that laid by Lancaster's supporters. Much of our information comes from two government documents, one a letter from the King to the City of London read at Guildhall on 20 December 1328;<sup>2</sup> the other a royal manifesto issued after the collapse of the Lancastrian rebels but before their submission in January 1329.<sup>3</sup> Against these records of the government's case must be allowed to stand the evidence of the chroniclers, reflecting a more populist attitude. A conflation of the varying accounts allows one to make a reasonably balanced assessment of this confused time.

Lancaster was present at the Northampton parliament of May 1328. Here the unpopular peace with Scotland was confirmed. The chroniclers emphasise its unpopularity and the fears that the treaty contained secret clauses which would prove to be even more detrimental to the English Crown.<sup>4</sup> Significantly this issue is not referred to in the

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1 E.L.G. Stones, 'The English Mission to Edinburgh in 1328', Scottish Historical Review, xxviii (1949), pp. 121-32.

2 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, pp. 78-83.

3 C.49/6/13. The document is printed, G.A. Holmes, 'The Rebellion of the Earl of Lancaster, 1328-29', B.I.H.R., xxviii (1955), pp. 84-89.

4 Murimuth, pp. 56-7; Walsingham, p. 190; Le Baker, pp. 40-41; The Brut, pp. 255-56. For a fuller discussion of this treaty see below, pp. 226-30.

government's account of events. There the emphasis is laid on decisions that the crown of France should be claimed on Edward III's behalf, that measures should be taken to stabilise the government's finances.<sup>1</sup>

During the parliament there was a government reshuffle. Bishop Burghersh of Lincoln was transferred from the post of Treasurer to that of Chancellor, while Bishop Charlton of Hereford became treasurer and John Wysham was appointed steward of the household in place of John Mautravers who had only held the post for two months. It was later alleged that at this time Lancaster had promised loyalty to remain near the King so that he could take his proper share in government.<sup>2</sup> But this sounds too much like glib government propaganda and it may well be that these government changes which do seem to have worked in Lancaster's favour, were not achieved without some pressure on his part.

Two months earlier Roger Northburgh, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield had been appointed treasurer,<sup>3</sup> but according to the Calendar of the Patent Rolls,<sup>4</sup> Northburgh was ordered to surrender the keys of his office to Bishop Charlton of Hereford on 20 May. Tout, however, observes<sup>5</sup> that it is highly probable that Northburgh never acted, quoting an entry in the Close Rolls suggesting that Burghersh was still treasurer on 28 April. It is clear that Northburgh did

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1 These issues are discussed below, pp. 239, 282.

2 C.P.M.R., op. cit.

3 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 249.

4 Op. cit., p. 303.

5 Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, III, p. 17, n. 4.

not act. The handover at Northampton on 20 May was between Burghersh and Charlton, and it was Burghersh's clerk, Nicholas de Salle, who on 2 June 1328 handed over the keys and rolls of the treasury on his master's behalf.<sup>1</sup> Bishop Hothum of Ely had surrendered the Great Seal on 1 March, in Isabella's room at York in the presence of a strong pro-Mortimer group, Burghersh, Ingham, Gilbert Talbot and John Cromwell. It had been committed to the charge of Henry Clyf, keeper of the chancery rolls, and William Herlaston, clerk of chancery. We are specifically told that Clyf used the seal and he and Herlaston are described as keepers of the seal when at St. Andrew's Priory, Northampton they returned it to the King on 12 May. That same day Burghersh was appointed Chancellor.<sup>2</sup> It looks, therefore, as if Burghersh filled the role of Treasurer and Chancellor simultaneously for at least eight days between 12 and 20 May. If this was the case it was a highly irregular situation and hardly one that Lancaster and the magnates would tolerate.<sup>3</sup> It must certainly have been a cause for protest and may well have led to the appointment as Treasurer of Bishop Charlton whom Tout refers to as an ambitious curialist, possibly sympathetic to reform.<sup>4</sup>

Lancaster now seems to have been increasingly absent from the court. The official account makes the government's policies towards

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1 E.101/332/28.

2 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 371, 387.

3 It is possible that Wysham's appointment which brought a pro-Lancastrian to the post of Steward of the Household was designed in some measure to alleviate unease. Tout, op. cit., p. 18 shows that Wysham probably came from near Monmouth, a Lancastrian lordship. He was removed from office in February 1329 in the wake of the Lancastrian debacle and replaced by Mortimer's ally Mautravers.

4 Tout, op. cit., p. 17.

France the cause of the disagreements and at a council held at Worcester in June, Lancaster apparently refused to agree to the sending of men to Gascony before the matter had been discussed at a larger assembly.<sup>1</sup> From the middle of July, Lancaster's name no longer appears amongst the list of witnesses on the Charter Rolls and he excused himself from appearing at the assembly summoned to meet at York on 31 July 1328. The result was that the Gascon problem and other important matters could not be discussed. He was not, however, the only absentee and the meeting at York was very poorly attended. It was a problem which sorely tried the patience of the government.<sup>2</sup>

As the summer advanced Lancaster's actions also began to try the government's patience as the realisation grew that he was not prepared to allow the unsatisfactory state of affairs to continue.<sup>3</sup> So, as the King journeyed south from the abortive York meeting, having summoned yet another meeting to be held at Salisbury in mid-October, he encountered Lancaster with armed men at Barlings Abbey near Lincoln. Edward personally ordered the Earl to be present at the Salisbury meeting for which the writs of summons were issued on 28 August, messengers bearing

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- 1 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 79. Lancaster met the King at Warwick and gave his word he would appear at the Worcester Council. The Court was at Warwick, 24 May and at Worcester between 10 and 20 June. E.101/383/20.
  - 2 C.53/115 for Lancaster's presence at court. He last witnesses on 22 July at Nottingham. Haines, Church and Politics in Fourteenth Century England, p. 184, states that Bishop Orleton was absent from the assembly at York where contention was averted by Lancaster's absence.
  - 3 The Brut, pp. 257-58; Knighton, pp. 447-48, a pro-Lancastrian supporter who gives three reasons for the increasing discontents: the arrogant assumption of royal power by Isabella and Mortimer; the exclusion of Lancaster and a peace treaty drawn up without the support of the magnates or the community of the realm. The Court, of course, blamed Lancaster for withdrawing.



the writs being sent out on the following day.<sup>1</sup> The encounter between Lancaster and the King made little headway in closing the gap between them and we find that between 27 August and 2 September Thomas de Garton, the controller of the King's wardrobe, was employed on a confidential mission on behalf of the King and Council to Lancaster then in the area of Leicester. The nature of the business is not specified but it looks as if the court was seeking some sort of understanding which might bridge the gap and avoid open conflict.<sup>2</sup> Lancaster too had his own feelers out, for at much the same time the mayor of London, Hamo de Chigwell was in touch with the Lancastrians, a preliminary to more dangerous contacts between Lancaster and the City in the course of September.<sup>3</sup>

While the court lingered in Lincolnshire and then moved on to the shrines of East Anglia,<sup>4</sup> Lancaster was strengthening his contacts with the City of London. Stratford, the bishop of Winchester and Lancaster's

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1 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 79; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 412. The writs specified the need to discuss properly matters which had arisen since the Northampton parliament and commented on the poor attendance at York.

2 E.101/383/14. It is reasonably clear that Mortimer was with the court at this time. He is shown as witnessing a charter at Clipstone in Nottinghamshire on 30 August and three days later his name is included with those of the bishops of Hereford, Worcester, St. David's and Llandaff, Ralph Bassett of Drayton, Oliver Ingham and the sheriffs of Warwick and Leicester, Hereford and Worcester as receiving a writ of summons at the hands of one Robert Blakeley. It would seem that these were all in the vicinity of the court since Blakeley only received 2s. 6d. for his expenses. Ibid.

3 G.A. Williams, Medieval London, from Commune to Capital, p. 301. The mayor had also been in touch with the earls of Kent and Lancaster, the bishop of Winchester and Thomas Wake, a predominantly Lancastrian group, on 12 August requesting a continuance of their favour. C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 66.

4 E.101/383/14; Walsingham, 20 September, Bury St. Edmunds, 25 September.

son-in-law, Thomas Wake, were at Guildhall on 16 September. Reports of this meeting soon reached the King to whom it was reported that the City was involved in a confederacy against the Crown. Oliver Ingham and Bartholomew Burghersh were sent off to London on 22 September to make the King's reactions clear and to inquire exactly what was going on. Wake and Stratford had put forward a political programme: the King should live of his own, saving sufficient reserves to avoid impositions when enemies threatened; steps should be taken to maintain law and order properly and the instructions of the Westminster parliament of February 1327 relating to the King's council should be implemented properly.<sup>1</sup> The City in their report to the King claimed that their reply had been cautious. If things were as bad as the Lancastrians claimed, they ought to be amended in parliament and parliament ought to be held at Westminster.<sup>2</sup>

The Lancastrians certainly thought things were bad. The chroniclers are more particular than the records of the City. Isabella and Mortimer had usurped not only royal power but the wealth of the Kingdom. This must be reversed. The King should live in proper state, free from the suppression of his mother and her lover whose relationship was notorious. Isabella should surrender the lands she held till her dower was no greater than that of previous Queens-consort while Mortimer should live on his own lands. Inquiries should be made into

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- 1 The government account of this meeting, C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 79, largely concurs on the topics raised, omitting the question of law and order. It is, however, critical of the fact that foreigners heard the Lancastrians' complaints relating to bad advisers and financial maladministration as this had made for difficulties in the government's foreign relations.
  - 2 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, pp. 68-9 for the City's version of what happened.

the disasters of the previous eighteen months, the fiasco of the Scottish campaign of 1327, the death of Edward II, the Scottish peace and the financial waste. What was essential was that the King should once again be surrounded by proper counsellors and normality restored. There is a close resemblance between these demands put forward in the summer of 1328 and the indictment issued against Mortimer in the November parliament of 1330. If we substitute the later complaints relating to Gascon policy for those put forward about Scotland, then it is clear that the feelings about Mortimer and the Queen underwent little change during the ensuing two years. The dislike of the regime merely grew in intensity until it rivalled the hatred felt for the Despensers.<sup>1</sup>

The City's conciliatory reply was sent to the King on 27 September. By that time he had arrived at Babwell near Cambridge. Precautionary measures were already being taken. Isabella and Queen Philippa were apparently no longer with the King who had received letters from his mother to which replies had been sent from Thetford on 24 September. Between 23 and 27 September letters were also sent to various knights of the royal household including John Cromwell, John Darcy, John de Grey, Maurice de Berkeley, William Montagu, John Mautravers, John de St. John, Robert Clifford and Henry Percy.<sup>2</sup> Both Edward and his mother had promised the City authorities that they would come in person in London; but the King now received information

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1 The Brut, pp. 257-59; Knighton, pp. 447-48; French Chronicle, pp. 61-2. For the Mortimer indictment, Rot. Parl. II, pp. 52-3.

2 Amongst others to whom letters were sent at this time were John Clavering, Hugh Courtenay, John de Beauchamp, James Butler, Edward de Bohun, Thomas de Vere, Ralph de Camoys, John de Cobham and Richard de Ferrers. E.101/383/14.

that Lancaster with an armed force was now at Higham Ferrers in Northamptonshire. Accordingly he moved west to join his mother journeying by way of Newport Pagnell and Banbury to Gloucester.<sup>1</sup>

It now began to look as if the meeting of the Salisbury parliament would become a centre of strife as Lancaster continued to gather forces and Mortimer was given permission to appear there with an armed retinue, although all others were forbidden to do so. The government was clearly apprehensive but such action served merely to increase the suspicions of the regime's opponents. The movement of Lancaster towards Winchester with a force strengthened by a party of Londoners could have done nothing to lessen the tension.<sup>2</sup> It may have been for this reason that the time of the King's arrival at parliament was uncertain. The Chancellor, Bishop Burghersh of Lincoln and Walter Herve, Archdeacon of Salisbury, were empowered to open parliament in the King's name although he apparently still hoped to arrive by the appointed day, Sunday 16 October 1328. In the event charters are

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1 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, pp. 68-70. The promise to return to London is probably a reference to an undertaking to return the centre of government to London. E.101/383/14. It is unfortunate that this counter-roll of the keeper of the Wardrobe has a gap between 27 September and 9 December 1328 making it difficult to follow the court's itinerary. Information can be gleaned from E.101/384/1 m.9r. and C.53/115, no. 33. For Lancaster at Higham Ferrers, C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 80. If Lancaster's intentions towards the King were militarily hostile, then Edward's move westwards left the royal party dangerously exposed on their flank for the first part of the journey.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 322. Reports in The Brut, p. 260, that London had supplied Lancaster with 600 armed men are grossly exaggerated though they may reflect popular rumour. The forces which joined Lancaster were those led by the London skinner and mercenary, John de Bedford, who had supplied a troop during the Scottish campaign of 1327. It is unlikely that the numbers serving at this time exceeded 100. V.B. Redstone, 'Some Mercenaries of Henry of Lancaster, 1327-1330', T.R.H.S., Third series, vii (1913), pp. 151-166. A list of the names of those involved can be found, E.163/4/27.

dated at Salisbury on 16 October and household expenses are recorded there for the following day.<sup>1</sup>

The Salisbury parliament met in an atmosphere of considerable tension, which must have been heightened by the reports of violence which came in from around the country. The most notable episode was the murder of Sir Robert Holland. There is a clear Lancastrian involvement in this crime. Holland was killed on 15 October in Borehamwood, near Elstree, in Hertfordshire. He was beheaded by a gang of men who then made off towards High Wycombe. Local jurors were not forthcoming about the murder and though two men were arrested and tried they were acquitted. The chroniclers, however, have no hesitation in identifying Sir Thomas Wyther and others of Lancaster's household as the killers. They add the detail that Holland's head was carried to Henry of Lancaster who was then at the bishop of Winchester's manor of Bishop's Waltham, a few miles south east of the city of Winchester. Thus Lancaster not only avenged his brother's betrayal but was also implicitly attacking Isabella, who had shown favour to Holland, and who was soon to press hard for action to be taken against Wyther who was not amongst those who were reconciled to the regime early the following year. Wyther fled abroad where he died before the following September. The Holland family however continued as recipients of royal favour and Maud, Holland's widow, was granted the marriage of her eldest son Robert who succeeded his father.<sup>2</sup>

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 323; Foedera, II, ii, p. 752; C.53/115, no. 31; E.101/384/1, m.9r.

2 J.R. Maddicott, 'Thomas of Lancaster and Sir Robert Holland: a study in noble patronage', E.H.R., lxxxvi (1971), pp. 449-72; Annales Paulini, p. 342; Knighton, p. 449; The Brut, p. 257. Agnes the widow of Sir Thomas Wyther obtained possession of the manor of Kimbolton on 1 September 1329, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 490; C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 117.

Two days<sup>1</sup> after Holland's murder, Bury St. Edmunds, which had been the scene of considerable unrest, witnessed a curious kidnapping. There is nothing to suggest a political motive in the abduction of Richard de Draughton, the abbot of Bury, yet the involvement of the Londoners and in particular the followers of John de Bedford,<sup>2</sup> the mercenary Lancastrian supporter, must raise suspicions which are heightened when one has to consider that the mayor, Hamo de Chigwell, was also involved. On the other hand men of Bury also took part and the whole saga may therefore be nothing more than a continuation of the events of the previous year when the monks of the abbey and the townsmen of Bury supported by Londoners had been involved in a series of running fights.<sup>3</sup> John de Berton, an aldermanic supporter of the Bury rioters led the attack on the abbot's manor of Chevington in which horses, plate and other valuables were carried off as well as the abbot himself. Draughton was taken to the house of John Coterel, like Bedford a skinner, in London but he was then moved from place to place until for greater security he was smuggled away to Brabant. Chigwell received two silver bowls and two palfreys in return for his assistance. His reward was to prove rather costly! Nothing was heard of the unfortunate abbot for some weeks, although by 20 October orders had been issued for the arrest of those responsible for the kidnapping. Steps were being taken at the same time to find both the

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1 G.E.C. vi, pp. 528-31, in its entry on Holland gives the date of his death as 7 October. The fact that the escheators were ordered to take Holland's lands into the King's hands on 20 October, C.F.R. 1327-30, p. 105, suggests 15 October, as given by Maddicott, op. cit. as being more likely.

2 Above, p. 166, n. 2.

3 Below, p. 254.

abbot and the plunder.<sup>1</sup>

How far the mayoral election in London a week later was affected by these events it is difficult to say. Perhaps the news from the Salisbury parliament that the Exchequer and the Law courts were to return from York in the Spring of 1329 was a more significant influence; while probably most significant of all was political manipulation on the part of the pro-Mortimer faction in the City. When the City recorder announced at Guildhall that Hamo de Chigwell had been re-elected, a popular result amongst the commonalty, other voices were raised in support of Mortimer's supporter, the pepperer Benedict de Fulsham. This noisy clique caused the meeting to break up in confusion and it was only after an all night discussion that a compromise was reached and John de Grantham, another pepperer, was elected. It was not a very satisfactory compromise for Grantham had been associated with Richard Bethune, another pepperer, in support of Mortimer and in opposition to the Dispensers. Chigwell's fall must therefore have been a blow to Lancaster's interests in the City particularly as at the same time, 28-29 October, investigations were set on foot into reports that a group of citizens had left London under arms.<sup>2</sup>

The third violent episode took place much closer to the meeting

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- 1 Depraedatio Abbatiae Sancti Edmundi, Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey, II, ed. T. Arnold, R.S., (London, 1892), p. 351. J.G. Bellamy, 'The Coterel Gang, an anatomy of a Band of 14th Century Criminals', E.H.R., lxxix (1964), pp. 698-717; G.A. Williams, Medieval London, From Commune to Capital, p. 302; Annales Londonienses, Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, II R.S., (London, 1882), p. 243; C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 73.
  - 2 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, pp. 72-73; Annales Paulini, p. 342; C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 324-25, 418; G.A. Williams, op. cit., p. 144.

of parliament and must be considered in that context.<sup>1</sup> The chroniclers are quite clear that Lancaster did not appear at Salisbury as he had been commanded to do by the King<sup>2</sup> but that he and his men were in the neighbourhood.<sup>3</sup> According to the government's own account he sent an explanation of his absence, but although these excuses were discussed, there was reluctance among the bishops to send a reply until there had been further discussion in full Council with bishop Stratford of Winchester present. When Stratford appeared he explained that Lancaster's absence was due to his hostility to Mortimer who had made peace with Scotland so that he would be free to concentrate on breaking the Earl. Mortimer vigorously denied this, swearing on the Archiepiscopal Cross of Canterbury that he had no such intentions. Accordingly Stratford, accompanied by bishop Gravesend of London was sent to try to persuade Lancaster to come to parliament with members of his party. The King himself would go surety for Lancaster's safety.<sup>4</sup> The Earl's reply was not reassuring for it contained renewed demands for political reform reiterating the abuses which needed remedy. Finances should be stabilised and proper reserves maintained so that the people were not burdened by pressing demands; the Queen should only hold her proper

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- 1 For what follows, C.P.M.R. 1323-64, pp. 80-82; Historia de Archiepiscopis Cantuariensibus a prima Sedis fundatione ad Annum 1369 Stephani Birchington, Anglia Sacra, I, pp. 1-48.
  - 2 Above, p. 161
  - 3 Murimuth, p. 58; Chronicle of Meaux, p. 358; The Brut, p. 260; Le Baker, p. 42.
  - 4 Lancaster's supporter Henry Beaumont was specifically excluded from this invitation and the guarantee was to Lancaster alone. Beaumont is particularly mentioned by Le Baker as being absent from the parliament together with Lancaster, Wake and the King's uncle Norfolk. Beaumont's opposition was due to the Scottish peace by which he had lost his Scottish inheritance despite there being terms made to safeguard it. R. Nicholson, Edward III and the Scots, pp. 58, 61; C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 80.



dowry; the peace of the realm must be maintained and those peers appointed to advise the King should be allowed their proper role. More alarmingly Lancaster would only enter Salisbury to discuss these issues if he was permitted to bring armed retainers with him and all of them should be covered by the King's safe conduct. In view of the fact that some ten days earlier Mortimer had been specifically permitted to be protected by an armed retinue despite a general prohibition relating to armed retainers, Lancaster's request was hardly unreasonable.<sup>1</sup> The potential danger to Lancaster and his supporters was further emphasised by an attack on Bishop Stratford's life.

Birchington<sup>2</sup> is the only source for this violent episode. He relates how Stratford was staying outside Salisbury at the nearby nunnery of Wilton where Mortimer planned to murder him. The bishop was forewarned and escaped by night across the fields accompanied by some of his clerks. Pursued to his manor of Honiton in Devon, he then tried to take refuge in the city of Winchester where his household were too frightened to receive him. He therefore had eventually to find sanctuary at Bishop's Waltham where Lancaster was presumably still staying. The overly-dramatic story is somewhat strange, not least that Stratford did not head directly for Lancaster. Birchington's account may well be grossly exaggerated but it serves to show that Lancaster would have been foolish to enter Salisbury unprotected in the face of Mortimer's power. It also emphasises that there was now a real gap between Mortimer and Church

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1 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 81; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 322.

2 Anglia Sacra, op. cit.

leaders who had been active in the deposition of Edward II. It is another indication of the collapse of the coalition which brought Mortimer and Isabella to power.

Whether this episode preceded or followed the King's reply to Lancaster's demands cannot be known. Edward's reply was in no way specific. The realm's finances could not possibly be stabilised when they were further impoverished by costly disturbances; the Queen's dowry was a matter for the King and his wife to arrange. As to the point about royal advisers, Lancaster had been frequently summoned to play his part and had just as frequently refused to come. However, at the request of Isabella and the magnates the safe conduct would be granted provided that Lancaster and his party would answer at law with regard to his complaints. A blanket safe conduct would be an infringement of Magna Carta by which the King was bound to see justice done to all men without delay. The implication is clear. Mortimer and his friends had their legal rights too. Confronted with these conditions Lancaster refused the safe conduct and did not come.<sup>1</sup>

Nor is this surprising for the most widely reported action of the Salisbury parliament would have done nothing to conciliate the opposition or calm the atmosphere of violence. Mortimer was advanced to the rank of Earl with the grandiose title, Earl of March.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, perhaps to cushion the impact of this advancement, the

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1 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 82.

2 The provenance of this title is not entirely clear. The obvious allusion to the Lordship of the March of Wales would be a pointer to Mortimer's ambitions and an example of his arrogance. On the other hand it is just possible that there is a looking back to his wife's grandfather, Hugh XII, Count of La Marche and Angoulême, above, p. 99. This however seems unlikely.

King's brother, John of Eltham, was created Earl of Cornwall, while in an effort to buttress support for the government amongst the Irish, James Butler was created Earl of Ormond.<sup>1</sup> Frame comments<sup>2</sup> that the Leicester chronicle in reporting these events strikes a 'sour note'. But Knighton does not stand alone in this. The chroniclers are agreed that the Salisbury parliament achieved little and unite in reporting that there was hardly anyone present in the city. They report that Lancaster was actually ready to take action and had to be restrained by his associates. Certainly skirmishes were reported<sup>3</sup> but clearly there was no decisive action. By the end of October writs ordering the payment of expenses to those who had been present were issued and the parliament was adjourned to meet again in London on the Octave of the Purification, 9 February 1329.<sup>4</sup>

Lancaster's version of the Salisbury parliament does not exactly coincide with that of the court. Writing from Hungerford to the new Mayor of London, John de Grantham, in the first week of November, Lancaster claimed that parliament had been adjourned not because of the absence of attenders, but because he was on the point of going to the King and it seemed that his presence would not have been welcomed.

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- 1 John of Eltham was only twelve years old so Isabella did not surrender any of her land holdings in the county of Cornwall. On the other hand, Ormond secured both lands and a wife. He received the liberty of Tipperary on 9 November, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 336, and married Eleanor de Bohun, a grand-daughter of Edward I and therefore a cousin of the King. On 21 November he received remission of the amount outstanding on the fine of 2,000 marks he had entered into with Edward II for the right to marry whom he wished. E.159/105, m.29.
  - 2 R. Frame, English Lordship in Ireland, 1318-1361, p. 185.
  - 3 Knighton, p. 448; Annales Paulini, pp. 342-43; Murimuth, p. 58; The Brut, p. 260; Chronicle of Meaux, p. 358.
  - 4 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 419-20; C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 82.

Furthermore, he adds, that he had received information from the Earl of Kent which he was not prepared to put in writing but which the bearer of the letter would communicate verbally. The letter ends with assurances of Lancaster's loyalty to the King.<sup>1</sup> While the nature of Kent's information is not forthcoming, there was need to reassure London that Lancaster was loyal to the King following a passage of arms at Winchester earlier in the week. The Earl had apparently entered Winchester in arms, thus interposing himself between the Court and London and hindering the King's intended return to the capital at the end of the Salisbury parliament. Despite orders to disperse since they were infringing the Statute of Northampton, the Lancastrians stood their ground until on Thursday, 3 November with the King's party approaching they rode out. Clearly there was a confrontation and an exchange of blows, but on the advice of his supporters Lancaster withdrew northwards to his midlands base around Kenilworth and Leicester.<sup>2</sup>

While the King did not pursue the matter the court moved first to Wallingford and then by way of Reading to Windsor. Orders were sent to the sheriffs to enforce the Statute of Northampton and to inform the King of any gatherings of armed men. Bishop Stratford was summoned to appear before the King in mid-January to explain his withdrawal from Salisbury without royal permission, while the mayor of London with twelve fellow citizens was ordered to appear at Windsor on Tuesday, 15 November. At this meeting Grantham was instructed to make an investigation into the state of the City's affairs. Only when

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1 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 72.

2 Op. cit., p. 83; C.49/6/13; G.A. Holmes, 'The Rebellion of the Earl of Lancaster, 1328-9', B.I.H.R., xxviii (1955), pp. 84-89.

he reported back by a letter dated 18 November that the City was peaceful and that those who had been in arms against the King at Winchester had acted contrary to the wishes of the authorities did the Court return to Westminster where it remained until the first week of December.<sup>1</sup>

By the time the King's party moved westwards again steps had been taken to make London secure. The carrying of arms in the City was forbidden and attempts were made to limit drunkenness and muggings. Furthermore, investigations were made into all the unrest which had taken place since 1327.<sup>2</sup> But the King's withdrawal, probably dictated by the urge to be within reach of Mortimer's marcher estates at a time of Lancastrian threat, left London exposed and it once again became a focus for those opposed to the regime. Simon Meopham, the newly elected Archbishop of Canterbury, who according to the Annales Paulini had been amongst those who had withdrawn from Salisbury, preached at St. Paul's on Sunday, 18 December. The next day he was joined by the bishops of London and Winchester, the Earls of Kent and Norfolk, Hugh Audley, Thomas Wake, William Trussel and Thomas Roscelyn to discuss the political situation. The following day a long message from the King, setting out the Court's view of Lancaster's behaviour was read out at Guildhall in the presence of Wake, Trussel and Roscelyn, who explained that Lancaster could not answer it in detail until he had consulted with his friends.<sup>3</sup>

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 420-21; C.P.M.R. 1323-64, pp. 73-4; G.A. Holmes, op. cit.

2 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 72.

3 Annales Paulini, pp. 342-43; C.P.M.R. 1323-64, pp. 77-84.

While Lancaster had apparently assured the King that his hostility was directed not at the King but at those around him, nevertheless his supporters felt that Magna Carta and the Coronation oath had been broken. In a letter sent to the King at Worcester on 23 December and carried by John Elham, Archdeacon of Essex, these points were drawn to the King's attention. He was reminded that he had undertaken not to take any action against individual magnates before the coming meeting at Westminster, yet it was known that he was being strongly advised to use force against his opponents.<sup>1</sup> That these now included the King's uncles, several bishops, independent minded men like Audley<sup>2</sup> as well as Lancaster's supporters, shows how widespread the opposition had become and explains the City of London's anxiety expressed in an independent letter warning the King of danger if he persisted in his present course.<sup>3</sup>

The government, however, did not remain inactive<sup>4</sup> although until the end of December it avoided an active recourse to arms. Mortimer had had armed retainers at Salisbury, amongst them Mautravers whose force of men-at-arms remained in his pay until early 1329. But others now at the court had brought soldiers with them and Mortimer himself,

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1 Ibid. Historia Roffensis, pp. 368-69. A letter sent to the bishop of Rochester by Kent and Norfolk inviting him to join talks about the dangers threatening the Crown because of infringements of Magna Carta and the oath. The Bishop, preferring a quiet life, refused the summons as he did a later one from Archbishop Meopham.

2 Audley's opposition to Mortimer is explained by Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, p. 220, as being due to dissatisfaction at not receiving a larger share of the Clare estates in 1327.

3 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 85.

4 Thomas de Garton was sent north to William de Ros of Hamelake between 12 and 19 December and royal messengers were sent to Leicester on Christmas Day, E.101/383/14.

Warene, Henry Percy and Hugh Turpington subsequently received payments for themselves and their companies.<sup>1</sup> These payments begin at the end of December and coincide with the moment when the King who had been at Gloucester for the anniversary of his father's funeral and spent Christmas at Worcester, took decisive action. A letter was sent to London informing the City that the King intended to march into Lancastrian territory, moving by way of Warwick to Leicester. Those who submitted to him before 7 January 1329 with the exception of Beaumont, Roscelyn, Wyther and Trussel would be pardoned. This letter together with an order for it to be proclaimed throughout the City was received by Grantham on 29 December by which time the King was already at Warwick. He heard High Mass there on that day and remained in Warwick until New Year's Day.<sup>2</sup>

On that same 1 January 1329, Lancaster having spent Christmas at Waltham arrived in London where after a meeting at St. Paul's he went on to Blackfriars for a reconciliation with Norfolk.<sup>3</sup> The royal proclamation was read in Lancaster's presence, presumably at the meeting held at St. Paul's the following day when he met Norfolk, Kent, Wake, Archbishop Meopham, the bishop of Winchester and other

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1 For Mautravers, see Fryde, op. cit., citing E.404/2/9. Payments to the others are recorded in E.403/240. Mortimer received £1,260 6s. 6d. for the period 28 December 1328 to 17 January 1329. Percy received £414 6s. for a force which at one time contained 24 knights and 74 men-at-arms and which was paid until 3 February. Percy also lost 4 horses for which he received some compensation. Warene received £333 6s. 8d. for a period which extended until 30 March 1329. Turpington had been sent to Leicester and Northampton on royal business earlier in December, E.101/383/14. He received £11 19s. 8d. as wages for himself and his men at Worcester, Leicester, Bedford and St. Albans. As this was not paid until May 1330 it may well have been part of a larger sum. E.403/249.

2 E.101/383/14; C.P.M.R. 1323-64, pp. 85-6.

3 Annales Paulini, p. 343 states that they were estranged because of Holland's murder.

magnates to discuss their next moves. At this meeting Lancaster, Wake and their supporters took an oath on the Gospels that they had never done anything against the estate of the King nor dishonoured or damaged him, his mother or anyone else. Subsequently Meopham, Bishop Gravesend and the earls of Norfolk and Kent were sent to the King in the hope of finding a means of bringing about a peaceful settlement.<sup>1</sup>

In the first days of the New Year the Court moved on to Coventry and subsequently on 4 January to Leicester<sup>2</sup> where they remained for at least five days. On the way the constable of Lancaster's castle at Kenilworth refused to respond to a demand from the King's marshal that the King should lodge there. This must have led to the devastation of the surrounding countryside which Knighton so bitterly describes. The rebuff at Kenilworth was regarded as a confirmation of the hollowness of the St. Paul's oath, 'que est sa notorielement com nient veritable'.<sup>3</sup> This was also felt to be borne out by Lancastrian propaganda which was being spread by his supporters disguised as

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1 C.49/6/13; Annales Paulini, pp. 343-44.

2 Knighton, p. 450 is very precise about the date, perhaps quoting from the records of his house, the Abbey of St. Mary of the Meadows at Leicester. The army's stay was costly for the Abbey and they subsequently received payment from the Crown in compensation for their losses. C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 126.

3 C.49/6/13. See also Knighton, op. cit. '... et spoliaverunt undique patriam, et boscos, parcos, vineas, stagna, piscinas et secum abduxerunt quicquid preciosum aut vile manus eorum invenire potuerunt, aurum, argentum, blada, utensilia, lectualia, mensualia, arma, vestimenta, bestias ferarum et domesticas, oves et boves, aucas, gallinas et ornamenta ecclesiastica, nihil in ecclesiis inventum vel alibi relinquendo, ac si esset in tempore guerrae inter regna. Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, p. 222, states that Knighton's claim that this began on 4 January cannot be reconciled with the royal proclamation that the time for submission lasted until 7 January. This is true and Fryde concedes that Knighton's account is probably true. She does not directly refer to the episode at Kenilworth which makes it virtually certain that Knighton is accurate.



friars. Meanwhile the Archbishop's delegation had not been successful. Despite warnings the inexperienced Meopham had gone on ahead and revealed the reason for his coming. The result was that he was easily deflected from his purpose. He was deflected so effectively that he changed sides binding himself so it was commonly reported by oath. His defection seems to have dismayed some of the King's supporters for they had been looking to Meopham to bring about peace. It did Meopham's reputation little good. He was then sent back to reiterate to the earls the conditions for submission which had already been put to them.<sup>1</sup>

Lancaster now moved out of London, seemingly accompanied by John de Bedford's mercenaries who had previously been with him at Winchester.<sup>2</sup> He pitched his camp at Bedford where his men attacked and looted the property of the townsmen.<sup>3</sup> Here the magnates decided that Mortimer could only be brought down by the use of force. But this proved too much for the King's uncles and Norfolk and Kent left Bedford and went over to the King's side, vehemently accusing Lancaster of sedition.<sup>4</sup> The government now moved. By 13 January the King with Isabella had taken up residence at St. Andrew's Priory in Northampton, a mere twenty miles from Bedford. At some point during the next few days Lancaster

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1 C.49/6/13; B.L. Faustina, B.V, fo.52r. Et factum est quod omnes qui de adventu Archiepiscopi spem habuerunt de pace facienda. Et de eius adventu plurimi guadebant. Postea in ridiculum habentes et in fabulum prothdolor ei maledicebant.

2 E.163/4/27; E.163/4/28.

3 The Sheriff of Bedford was subsequently given acquittance of £52 belonging to the Crown which had been stolen from his house. He was not the only citizen whose goods and chattels were taken. C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 56.

4 Knighton, p. 450.

made his submission. It is not clear exactly when this occurred. The Brut describes an overnight ride from Northampton to Bedford, with Isabella, who had persuaded her son that Lancaster wished to bring about his fall, riding in armour beside the King. According to Knighton the submission took place in the field in the presence of Lancaster's men; while the Historia Roffensis describes a dramatic scene with Lancaster and his leading adherents on their knees in the mud before the King who sat mounted on a horse. The reconciliation was arranged by Archbishop Meopham on the understanding that all complaints would be remedied in the coming parliament at Westminster.<sup>1</sup> It was the best Lancaster could hope for. In the face of the loss of his leading supporters his will to fight seems to have collapsed, if indeed he had ever really intended to carry his initiative to the point of an actual battle. If he was not prepared to go to that extreme then Mortimer had called his bluff and won. From the time of Lancaster's collapse the conduct of Mortimer and Isabella became increasingly arrogant and insufferable.<sup>2</sup>

It seems likely that the surrender took place on Monday, 16 January 1329. The previous day the King with Mortimer, Henry Percy, Oliver Ingham, John Darcy and Wareene at his side, had taken charge of the Great Seal in Isabella's chamber at Northampton Priory. On Monday, following an agreement between the King and the magnates, orders were issued to the sheriffs for the confiscation of Lancaster's

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1 E.101/383/14; The Brut, p. 260; Knighton, p. 451; B.L. Faustina B.V. f.52v. Meopham withdrew from the scene with considerable haste leaving behind a sadly tarnished reputation. His vacillating conduct had caused great scandal. He was enthroned at Canterbury on 29 January. A good excuse for his departure.  
Ibid.

2 Ibid.

lands, castles and goods. His leading supporters, David Earl of Athol, Wake, Audley, Beaumont, Roscelyn, Trussel, Wyther and Henry de Ferrars were associated with him.<sup>1</sup> The next day the King was relaxing in his rooms at Castle Ashby.<sup>2</sup> Orders were sent to London for the arrest of Beaumont, Trussel, Roscelyn and Wyther who had been exempt from the royal pardon as well as the mercenary leaders John de Bedford and Thomas de Chigwell. In London an inquest was held before the mayor, sheriffs and aldermen to determine the names of those who had been with them at Bedford.<sup>3</sup>

But Mortimer was determined to strike at his opponents in London to prevent any recurrence of the City giving support to his enemies. The Great Seal had been returned to Burghersh in the garden of the Prior of Newmenham near Bedford on 19 January and two days later from Woburn writs were issued in the King's name summoning the Mayor of London and twenty four leading citizens to appear at St. Albans on the following Tuesday. On that day they met the King who with Queen Philippa had arrived by way of Dunstaple to take up residence at the Abbey. Their consultation with the King and his council lasted until Thursday. When they returned to London on Friday, 27 January they had received firm instructions to sort out the opponents of the regime and punish them: failure to do so would suggest that London harboured traitors and would lead to direct royal intervention. That was something which Grantham and his colleagues would wish to avoid at all costs since it would undermine their authority and could lead to an

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1 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 425; C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 116-17.

2 E.101/383/14. Money was paid ... Domino regi ad ludendam in camera sua per manus domini Ricardi de Bury apud Assheley Daux.

3 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 425; E.163/4/28.

erosion of the City's liberties. Accordingly an inquiry began at Guildhall the day after their return.<sup>1</sup>

It does not seem to have been conducted as Mortimer wanted. In accordance with the instructions which they had received at St. Albans Grantham and his associates reappeared before the King at Windsor on 1 February. Two further days of consultation took place. Ominously the previous day Isabella's close supporter John Cromwell had been appointed Keeper of the Tower of London. Now a commission of Oyer and Terminer was appointed to investigate the outbreak of crime in London. As the writ for this was dated 2 February, Grantham must have been aware of the regime's plans even though on his return to London on 4 February he reported that the King would be making his intentions known by writ.<sup>2</sup> There was obvious concern that the City's liberties could be under threat but the Crown gave a specific assurance that the commission would in no way be prejudicial to London's jealously guarded privileges and on Monday, 6 February Oliver Ingham, John Mautravers, John Stonor and Robert Mabelthorpe, sitting with John de Grantham, began their investigations.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 Annales Londonienses, pp. 241-42; E.101/383/14, which refers to offerings of cloths of gold made at the High altar of the Abbey by the King and Queen during their stay at St. Albans.
  - 2 Annales Londonienses, pp. 242-43; C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 118; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 423.
  - 3 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 359. Stonor and Mabelthorpe had both sat on the commissions appointed in the winter of 1327 to investigate the troubles at Bury, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 217. This would clearly be helpful to them since their present investigations included the involvement of Londoners in the recent kidnapping of Abbot Draughton. Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey, ii, p. 253, however names Willoughby in place of Mabelthorpe in the commission.

This was certainly to be a far-reaching inquiry. Its investigations extended far beyond those who had joined Lancaster at Winchester and Bedford. It was Mortimer's aim to discredit and destroy his opponents amongst London's leaders and the full power of the regime was brought to bear to ensure that this happened. While the justices with the aldermen and sheriffs were organising themselves, the King with Isabella and the court rode through the City to the Tower. No doubt this show of strength was designed to help produce the desired results. They were obtained.

A fishmonger and a barber were found guilty of two murders and numerous cases of extortion were dealt with. The case of John Coterel, a leather merchant, who had been involved in the kidnapping at Bury attracted particular attention. With Mortimer supporters like Bethune and Gisors amongst the inquisitors, it is hardly surprising that all were convicted. While Coterel was hanged for stealing the Abbot of Bury's goods, Hamo de Chigwell was convicted of receiving two silver basins from him and despite claiming benefit of clergy Chigwell was sent to the Tower. However, his support in the City remained strong enough to ensure that he was reprieved. He was handed over to Bishop Gravesend of London who kept him in custody at his manor of Orsett in Essex. For the rest, Bedford and his men were condemned while the high number of fishmongers amongst those sentenced brought charges of unfair treatment from the London chroniclers.<sup>1</sup>

But Mortimer had merely curtailed the opposition. His failure to secure the elimination of Chigwell was a constant reminder that his

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1 For accounts of these trials see, Annales Londonienses, pp. 243-45; Annales Paulini, p. 346; Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey, op. cit.; G.A. Williams, Medieval London, From Commune to Capital, pp. 304-05.

enemies had not been totally destroyed and that his influence in London was still not secure. A year later this fact was emphasised when Chigwell, having made purgation for his felony before Bishop Gravesend, returned to the City. He was triumphantly escorted to his home by many Londoners, including aldermen, to the great annoyance of Isabella. Almost immediately a writ was issued for Chigwell's arrest on the grounds that he had not been acquitted by royal law in the case of John Coterel and that for him to be at liberty was a contempt of royal justice. In the face of this renewed attack Chigwell fled.<sup>1</sup>

If Mortimer was not entirely successful in winning London he had been wholly successful in neutralising Lancaster and his supporters. Although the order for the arrest of Beaumont, Trussel, Roscelyn and Wyther<sup>2</sup> produced no results, for they succeeded in escaping abroad,<sup>3</sup> Lancaster and his leading adherents were obliged to make a humiliating submission. Perhaps wisely the government did not demand too much, just sufficient to prevent an immediate recurrence of the threat of civil war. The Parliament adjourned from Salisbury met at Westminster on 9 February 1329. By that time orders had been issued for the restoration of their lands to Lancaster, Athol and Hugh Audley and grants from the confiscated lands of Wyther and Beaumont had been made.<sup>4</sup> Amongst those who benefitted from the confiscation were Darcy and Bartholomew Burghersh.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Annales Londonienses, pp. 246-47. The return of Chigwell took place early in February 1330. He received a pardon two months later, 1 April. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 509.

2 Above, p. 180

3 Knighton, p. 451; Chronicle of Meaux, p. 359.

4 Foedera, II, ii, p. 756; C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 522, 433-35, 37; C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 118, 119.

5 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 364, 361; C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 122.

However, the first business of Parliament on 9 February seems to have been to extract an oath from Lancaster and to bind him and his supporters by the taking of recognisances. The oath pledged loyalty not only to the King and Queen, presumably this was Isabella rather than Philippa, but also to other members of the King's council. In Lancaster's case the sum demanded was £30,000, while Audley was bound in the sum of £10,000 although this was reduced by 3,000 marks within a couple of months. Lancaster's son-in-law, Thomas Wake, was also assessed at £10,000 and Athol at £5,000. Altogether twenty seven names appear on the Close Rolls under this date and a further seven are traceable.<sup>1</sup> Before Parliament broke up on 22 February, orders had been issued for much of the property confiscated at the height of the crisis to be returned. Engayne, Pecche, Henry de Ferrars, Thomas de Appleby, John Geryn, William Lovel, Robert de Farnham, William Frannock and, more significantly, Thomas Wake all received back lands and revenues.<sup>2</sup>

The immediate crisis was past, although occasional echoes were still heard,<sup>3</sup> as when Pope John XXII belatedly wrote to Isabella,

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- 1 The fines range from Lancaster's £30,000 to the 100s. of Nicholas Whittyng. The fact that Wake's name appears here also amongst those to whom lands were to be restored shows that Natalie Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, p. 223, is wrong to include him with the four who fled. Several of those involved whose names appear, C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 529-30, were former Contrariants from 1322 or were members of the retinue of Thomas of Lancaster: John de Twyford, John Engayne, Roger Cuilly, Gilbert Pecche, John Botetourt, Geoffrey de Walcote, William le Blount. For Lancaster's retinue, Maddicott, Thomas of Lancaster, 1307-1322, pp. 40-66. Thomas de Montheimer, a brother-in-law of the Younger Despenser was fined at 1,000 marks.
  - 2 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 527-28, 437, 439.
  - 3 Simon and Thomas Beltoft and Roland Dameys, followers of Thomas Roscelyn were detected hiding in Nottinghamshire at the end of March, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 127.

Meopham, Stratford and the earls of Kent, Norfolk and Lancaster urging an investigation into the underlying causes of the dissension.<sup>1</sup> Lancaster himself remained largely absent from Court until he was issued with letters of protection for a journey overseas in the middle of the following September.<sup>2</sup> Government remained firmly in the hands of Mortimer, Isabella and their supporters.

Lancaster had tried to re-create the coalition of magnates, Church and London which had led to the downfall of Edward II. He had failed because none of the constituent parts were fully united in their resolve to bring Mortimer down. Lancaster himself was not sufficiently firm of purpose to carry the others with him to the point of a military confrontation as had happened in the civil war of 1322. Despite the initial adherence of the royal uncles, Norfolk and Kent, and the support of Archbishop Meopham of Canterbury and Bishop Stratford of Winchester and the involvement of Hamo de Chigwell, Lancaster could not hold his supporters together. Maddicott's assessment of his brother Thomas may equally be applied to Henry: 'Though Lancaster had the material resources for opposition, he lacked the application and political talent which were equally essential'.<sup>3</sup> Consequently Mortimer was able to outmanoeuvre him, first by detaching the political novice Meopham and then by persuading the King's uncles not to resort to arms.<sup>4</sup> With influential

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- 1 Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland. Papal Letters, ii, 1305-42, ed. W.H. Bliss, (London, 1895), p. 491.
  - 2 His name appears as a Charter witness at Wallingford on 12 April, Eltham on 15 May and Windsor at the end of July. C.53/116, Nos. 46, 38, 31. For the letter of protection, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 442.
  - 3 Maddicott, Thomas of Lancaster, p. 333.
  - 4 Above, p.178



figures like Bishop Burghersh of Lincoln, the earl of Surrey and Henry Percy opposing Lancaster and with Mortimer's supporters on the ascendant in London, Lancaster himself, cut off from his power base in the midlands and the north, had little option together with his friends but to submit. They were fortunate that Mortimer did not take a bloodier revenge.

That Mortimer did not so act is a clear reflection of the insecurity of his own position. It is no coincidence that he took increasingly decisive steps to buttress his own position after the spring of 1329 and that Doherty sees the last two years of the regime as revealing Mortimer as the real power in the land.<sup>1</sup> It has already been shown how Mortimer had built up his power on the March of Wales by accumulation of land holdings, keeperships of the peace and wardships.<sup>2</sup> By the summer of 1329 his arrogance was the subject of much comment, the richness of his clothes and the extravagance of his way of life seemed unendurable;<sup>3</sup> even his son Geoffrey was reported as referring to him as the 'King of Folly'. When he held a Round Table in Wales in imitation of King Arthur and his knights, he was compared disparagingly with Arthur. It seems probable that this Round Table coincided with a visit of the King to Wigmore in September 1329 when lavish gifts were exchanged by the King and Mortimer.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless the outward show did not wholly conceal the political uncertainty and

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1 Doherty, Isabella, Queen of England, 1296-1330, p. 322.

2 Above, pp. 104-116.

3 An inventory of the clothes belonging to Mortimer found at Wigmore in November 1330 bears out the justice of this comment. See below, p. 354, and Appendix III.

4 The Brut, pp. 261-62; E.101/384/1, m.16v., 18r.

it seems that Mortimer merely bided his time before striking again at his opponents. Early in 1330 he destroyed the King's uncle, Edmund of Kent.

Kent has been described by Tout as 'foolish'.<sup>1</sup> His career does not entirely merit this judgement. He was the youngest of Edward I's sons by his second wife Margaret of France and while still in his early twenties he had been involved in the negotiations which had led to Mortimer's surrender at Shrewsbury during the Lancastrian civil war of 1321-22. Subsequently he was present when judgement was passed on Lancaster at Pontefract and some ten days after Lancaster's execution he was granted Mortimer's castles of Cefnlllys and Dynevor and the cantred of Maelienydd. Shortly afterwards he was summoned to serve on the Scots borders with 300 footsoldiers from Maelienydd. It seems not unlikely that these events rankled in Mortimer's mind; they certainly provide a possible basis for Mortimer's role in the fall of Kent.<sup>2</sup>

Kent had served on the Scots march in 1322 and in 1323 had been the King's viceroy there. His time as Lieutenant in Aquitaine and the Agenais in 1324 had not been entirely successful either diplomatically or militarily but he received no support from home and it may well have been this failure which caused him to join Isabella in Paris and to return with her to England to help remove the Despensers.<sup>3</sup> He married

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1 Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, iii, p. 24.

2 For Kent's presence at Shrewsbury, Phillips, Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, p. 221. At Pontefract, Rot. Parl., ii, p. 3. For the Mortimer lands, C.Ch.R. 1300-26, p. 442; Parl. Writs, II, i, p. 293.

3 Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, p. 144. C.P.R. 1321-24, p. 240.

probably about Christmas 1325, Margaret the sister of Thomas Wake and this brought him within the circle of Lancaster's supporters. It is not therefore surprising to find him involved with Lancaster against Mortimer in the events of 1328-29. His change of sides though can hardly have done his reputation any good either with Lancaster or with Mortimer.<sup>1</sup>

Towards the end of March 1329 letters were issued for Kent to go overseas. He is absent from the list of charter witnesses from 2 March until 3 December 1329.<sup>2</sup> During this time he would seem to have visited Gascony, Avignon and Paris, while it is to this period that we may ascribe the first references to the possibility of Edward II being alive. It is quite impossible to date these rumours or to locate their origin. It seems likely that they were originally circulated by Dominican friars or they may have originated with the regime. Mortimer certainly exploited them to the fullest advantage. Nevertheless some sense must be made of the confused evidence.

Two possible reasons for the earl's overseas journey may be suggested. Firstly, he seems to have visited Avignon perhaps with the intention of lending his support to the campaign for the canonisation of Thomas of Lancaster at whose trial he had been present. The Brut reports that Pope John XXII was not prepared to take action on that but that Kent then raised the question of the rumours relating to Edward II and was encouraged by the Pope to do all in his power to secure the release of his half-brother if these rumours should prove true.<sup>3</sup> The Pope's interest in the matter is confirmed by Kent's

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1 Kent's career is outlined, G.E.C. vii, pp. 142-48.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 379; C.53/116.

3 The Brut, p. 263.

confession printed as an appendix to Murimuth's chronicle where in addition it is suggested that the Pope was prepared to finance any attempt to release Edward II.<sup>1</sup> A second possible reason for Kent's journey is that he planned a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James of Compostella. An entry in the Papal letters refers to the commutation of the earl's vow to make such a pilgrimage in view of the fact that the Earl, in Gascony at the end of September 1329, had been warned that he would be in danger if he went to Spain.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever may have been the original reason for Kent's journey, there seems little doubt that new plans to remove Mortimer originated at this time and that the Pope knew of them. Lancaster was in France in September and during a visit to Paris, Kent saw the exiled Henry Beaumont and Thomas Roscelyn in the chamber of the Duke of Brabant. There the exiles stated their willingness to return, landing somewhere in the north of England so that they could all join forces with Edward II's former supporter Donald, Earl of Mar.<sup>3</sup>

On Kent's return to England, if the chroniclers are to be believed, rumours were being circulated by the Friars Preachers that Edward II was alive in Corfe Castle. These rumours may have been given credence by the fact that in September John Mautravers had been appointed keeper of Corfe Castle while the Constable, Sir John Devereux, is subsequently identified with other close supporters of Mortimer

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- 1 Kent's confession is printed as an Appendix in Murimuth, pp. 253-56. It is based on B.L. Cotton MS. Claudius E viii, f.224, a MS. written for Henry Despenser, Bishop of Norwich about the year 1400. The Brut account may simply be based on some public knowledge of this confession.
  - 2 Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland. Papal Letters, ii, 1305-42, p. 308.
  - 3 Murimuth, Appendix, pp. 255-56.

like Gurney and Ocle. It would seem likely that at this point Kent had further consultations with his friends. His confession, the accounts of the chroniclers and the subsequent actions of the government suggest that he had widespread contacts involving the Archbishop of York, Bishop Gravesend of London, the former Despenser supporter Ingelram Berenger, William la Zouche of Mortimer the husband of Despenser's widow, Fulk FitzWarin and William de Clif supporters of Lancaster and Lady de Vesci the sister of the exiled Henry Beaumont. These are the names of exactly the sort of people that Mortimer would gladly have seen removed from the scene and at this point doubts about the official account of events and the chroniclers' account which seem to be based on them are bound to arise.<sup>1</sup>

Yet there is no reason to suppose that Kent did not have contact during 1329 and early 1330 with all the associates who have been named. It is thus highly likely that on his return from abroad he may have sounded these friends about the possibility of removing Mortimer and so opening the way for the return of the exiles in Paris. It may have been fears that this was precisely what was happening which led Mortimer and his friends, inspired by the rumours which were circulating about the former King, to set a trap for Kent. That Kent had gained Mortimer property after 1322 would have made Mortimer no less eager to set such a trap. That Kent fell into it and so gave Mortimer the opportunity of destroying him and then moving against other possible enemies supports the view that Kent was politically naive rather than obviously stupid. Naivety can be dangerous; stupidity rarely.

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1 The Brut, pp. 262-63; C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 149. The order for the confiscation of Devereux's lands on Mortimer's fall is dated 15 December 1330, C.F.R. 1327-30, p. 207. Murimuth, Appendix, pp. 253-56.

The nature of the deception practised upon Kent however suggests that he was also easily gullible or that he believed what he wanted to think was true. On the other hand, the ease with which Kent seems to have accepted that his brother was alive may to some extent be due not to him but to the wishful thinking of the Dominican friars whose loyalty to Edward II remained strong and who therefore created an atmosphere in which it seemed not so improbable a thing to believe.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly the official accounts credit Kent's initial belief to a friar described as having gained his information from a demon which he had conjured up. The unreliable Geoffrey le Baker has a tale of country folk at Corfe seeing torches and dancing on the castle walls which led Kent to send a friar to investigate. He brought back a report that he had been admitted to the castle and seen Edward II dining in state. It may be that the Scalacronica has it right when it speaks of a confidante of Isabella persuading Kent that Edward was alive and testing his loyalty by suggesting that Kent should undertake to restore his brother. His reactions were reported to the Queen.<sup>2</sup>

Once convinced that his brother was alive, Kent took steps to contact him. John Deverell was bribed in an attempt to gain access to the former King; when Deverell pleaded that anything of this kind was strictly forbidden by Isabella and Mortimer, Kent handed over a letter under his seal with the request that it be passed on to his brother. Once Kent had withdrawn to his estates the letter was passed

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1 For the rumours, Annales Paulini, p. 349; The Brut, p. 262.

2 Murimuth, Appendix, p. 253; Foedera, II, ii, p. 783; Le Baker, pp. 43-44; Scalacronica, p. 157. What better disguise for the Queen's confidante than a friar's garb! Lanercost, p. 265, however, names the friar as Thomas Dunheved, an unlikely identification.

to Mortimer and with the incriminating evidence in his hands all was ready for Kent's denunciation.<sup>1</sup>

Writs had been issued on 25 January 1330 for a parliament to be held at Winchester on Sunday, 11 March and steps were taken to prepare Winchester Castle for the King's stay. All the accounts of Kent's fall describe it as taking place at the Winchester parliament.<sup>2</sup> Kent was assuredly present so no written order for his arrest has been found. He must, however, have been apprehended soon after parliament met and this is confirmed by a writ under the Privy Seal dated 14 March ordering the escheators north and south of Trent to seize all the earl's possessions within their jurisdiction. The writ also refers to the letters sealed with the King's seal which were in the King's hands and which showed his treason and so makes positive mention of his arrest.<sup>3</sup>

Robert Hammond, coroner of the King's household and an associate of Mortimer, carried out a preliminary examination of the earl at which it seems likely that Kent without any coercion accepted the seal on the letter as his. At a further examination before a group of magnates who included men near in rank and blood to the earl, more

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- 1 The Brut, pp. 263-64. The King subsequently reported to Pope John XXII that seditious letters signed with the earl of Kent's seal had been found and that Kent could not deny the seal was his.
  - 2 C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 123, 125. For Kent's fall, Murimuth, pp. 59-60; Avesbury, pp. 284-85; Annales Paulini, p. 349; Walsingham, pp. 192-93; Meaux, p. 359; Le Baker, p. 44; Lanercost, pp. 264-66; Knighton, p. 452; Scalacronica, p. 157; The Brut, pp. 263-67.
  - 3 C.81/169/3341. ... qil contre sa ligeance et son serment ad compasse et machine la desesance de notre roiale dignite pour quoi nous avons fait arrester son corps ...

probing questions were asked which convinced the questioners of Kent's guilt.<sup>1</sup> He had plotted with the exiles abroad for an armed force to invade England by way of Scotland and to use this force to reinstate on the throne the brother whom he asserted was still alive even though he had actually attended the funeral at Gloucester. When this was reported to the King, Edward ordered parliament to pass judgement and Kent who had already offered to submit himself to the King's will coming before him barefoot with a rope around his neck, was condemned to death.<sup>2</sup>

The King agreed to this reluctantly. The Brut says that Mortimer feared a reprieve and persuaded Isabella to send immediate orders to the bailiffs of Winchester for Kent's execution. This took place on 19 March 1330 but there must be some doubt about the Brut's comment in view of the fact that the execution was not immediate. Many of the chroniclers state that apparently no-one could be found to carry out the task of beheading the earl. According to Knighton, he stood outside the castle gate throughout the day until the time of vespers waiting, since no-one could be found to carry out the sentence because Kent was well respected and had been sentenced without general consent. Eventually, in return for his own life, a condemned criminal from the Marshalsea carried out the task.<sup>3</sup> Murimuth gives the official line on Kent's death, stating that he was little regretted since he had an

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1 References to the examinations are in The Brut, pp. 263-67; Scalacronica, p. 157, and in a letter from Edward III to Pope John XXII sent from Reading on 24 March 1330, Foedera, II, ii, p. 783. The Charter Rolls, C.53/117, nos. 97, 89, 85 reveal the presence of Mortimer, Surrey, Henry Percy, Mautravers, Bishop Burghersh and the King's young brother, John of Eltham, but not apparently of Kent's brother, the earl marshal, the Earl of Norfolk.

2 Foedera, op. cit.; Murimuth, Appendix, p. 256.

3 The Brut, p. 267; Walsingham, p. 193; Meaux, p. 359; Knighton, p. 452.



unruly household which took unauthorised prises to the distress of many folk. But other chroniclers are not so dismissive. Le Baker, while echoing Murimuth's condemnation of the earl's household, suggests that the evidence of Kent's letters was insufficient to warrant the death penalty. Robert of Avesbury says the same and suggests a widespread unease amongst other magnates. The Brut refers to the King's distress and states that the arrangements for Kent's funeral at the church of the Friars Minor were made by him. Kent's body was subsequently transferred to Westminster Abbey at the request of his widow under a mandate issued by Pope John XXII in April 1331.<sup>1</sup>

Orders for the arrest of the Countess of Kent had been issued on 14 March, probably at the same time or immediately after the apprehension of her husband. She was to be taken with her children and attended by two maids to Salisbury Castle. At the same time the King's clerk, William de Holyns, was ordered to take charge of her jewels and any other valuables found in Arundel Castle where she was living. Two days later Arundel Castle was placed in the custody of Roger-atte-Ashe who was subsequently ordered to pay the Countess 13s. 4d. a day as long as she and her children remained at Arundel.<sup>2</sup> It would seem that the move to Salisbury was postponed probably because the Countess was pregnant.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Murimuth, p. 60; Le Baker, p. 44; Avesbury, p. 285; The Brut, p. 267; G.E.C., vii, p. 148.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 499; Foedera, II, ii, p. 782; C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 14. Roger-atte-Ashe was appointed keeper of all Kent's forfeited property in Sussex on 20 March 1330. C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 168.

3 The Countess gave birth to a son, John, at Arundel on 7 April 1330. He received livery of his lands on 10 April 1351 but died in December 1352. G.E.C., vii, p. 148. The Countess had two other children, a son Edmund about three years old at this time but who died before October 1331 and a daughter, Joan, born in 1328, who was later the wife of the Black Prince.

With Kent out of the way Mortimer proceeded to deal with those who had been implicated by the earl's confession. Orders were sent out the day before Kent's execution for the arrest of William la Zouche of Mortimer, John Pecche, Ingelram Berenger, George Percy, William de Clif, John Cummings, Edward de Monthemmer and Fulk FitzWarin, particular instructions being given that FitzWarin should be brought before the King at Woodstock after Easter. Despite the seizure of their property, several of these men eluded arrest and further orders for the apprehension of Fulk FitzWarin, John Pecche, John Cummings, William de Clif and George Percy were issued on 31 March. This order contained a greatly extended list of names, forty one in all, and included a number of friars as well as Stephen Dunheved and Rhys ap Gruffydd who had been involved in the plots of 1327 to release Edward II. An undated return from the sheriff of London to this order reports the arrest of three London citizens, John Hauteyn, Henry de Cantebrigge and John de Everwyk. Although the order had required that those named should be brought to the King at Woodstock within a month of Easter, the sheriff claimed that Hauteyn and Everwyk were free citizens and that as such they could not be moved out of the City.<sup>1</sup>

While it is clear that Mortimer used the Kent episode as an opportunity of proceeding against his enemies, it is also clear that there was a very real underlying opposition to the regime and that his position was by no means secure. Reaction within the country must have added to that lack of security. Early in April there were

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1 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 169-70; Calendar of Letter Books of the City of London, Letter Book E. c.1314-1337, ed. R.R. Sharpe, p. 246.

reports of armed men at large in many counties while people were clearly expressing open doubt about the way Kent had died. It seems that his execution had merely served to encourage the spread of the rumours that Edward II was still alive.<sup>1</sup> The King also sent his representatives to the ecclesiastical council then in session at Lambeth to explain the dangers which threatened the country both from within and abroad and to draw attention to the measures to defend it which had been discussed in the Winchester Parliament. The King hoped that the clergy would be able to give aid.<sup>2</sup>

At much the same time in early April, the news was published that Thomas Wake had fled overseas. In doing so he broke his recognisance and his lands and goods were confiscated. On the other hand, William la Zouche had his lands restored, having succeeded in finding guarantors of his loyalty. He still suffered damage and after Mortimer's fall he is to be found in association with Archbishop Melton and Bishop Gravesend petitioning for redress. Melton had been summoned to appear before the King at Woodstock and on 3 May he was instructed not to use liberties which were prejudicial to the Crown. The fact that he petitioned for redress six months later suggests that some sanctions were imposed upon him as also on Gravesend. It was probably his clerks who suffered more and one of them, Robert of Taunton, cer-

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1 C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 131, where the sheriffs of Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, Bedford, Buckingham, Shropshire, Stafford, Nottingham, Derbyshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Gloucestershire, Hereford, Cambridge, Northampton, Norfolk and Suffolk are ordered to arrest and inform the King of the names of any riding armed. C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 132 and Foedera, II, ii, p. 787 have instructions to the sheriffs to quell rumours by arresting any querying the manner of Kent's death or spreading rumours that Edward II was still alive.

2 Foedera, II, ii, p. 787. The clergy were not very forthcoming. Historia Roffensis, p. 370. Below, p. 277

tainly had his lands and goods confiscated. They were not restored until after Mortimer's fall.<sup>1</sup>

In mid-May action was still being taken to flush out Kent's adherents<sup>2</sup> while the re-distribution of Kent's lands went on apace. Mortimer did not gain personally, some of his followers did and so did Isabella.<sup>3</sup> But perhaps more significant as an indication of the regime's need for support and security are the terms on which grants were made to Bartholomew Burghersh, Edward Bohun, John Mautravers, the earl of Surrey, Hugh Turpington and Simon Bereford. All pledged themselves to stay with the King and to support him by maintaining with them a number of men-at-arms.<sup>4</sup>

If Mortimer hoped by the removal of Kent to ease the anxieties relating to the regime's security, he failed. The months that

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- 1 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 175; C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 17-18, 286; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 507; C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 31; C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 166, 172; C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 76. Taunton had been implicated in Kent's confession as having acted as a go-between between Melton and the Earl. Murimuth, Appendix, p. 255.
  - 2 A commission was appointed to arrest his followers in Essex and Hertfordshire. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 563.
  - 3 Above, pp. 89, 122. Isabella obtained houses in Westminster, the farm of Gloucester and Tewkesbury together worth £95 and the manor of Bardsley, C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 506, 511, 521; Bishop Burghersh received land in Lincolnshire and Kent, C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 22; C.Ch.R. 1327-41, pp. 177, 178; Geoffrey de Mortimer received manors in the counties of Leicester, Gloucester, Surrey, Lincoln, Derby, Nottingham, Rutland and Wiltshire with remainder to his father, C.Ch.R. 1327-41, p. 176; Bartholomew Burghersh was paid for his expenses, incurred on a mission abroad, by a gift of some of Kent's goods since he could not obtain cash payment, C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 23, 24. Valuations were ordered in many of the manors and in addition to Burghersh, the Bishop of Lincoln, William Montagu and John Mautravers all benefitted. C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 173, 175-76.
  - 4 Burghersh and Bereford twenty each; Bohun seven; Turpington six; C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 516, 517, 523, 524, 529.

followed show an increasing fear that attempts to undermine the regime would end in active intervention,<sup>1</sup> and the chroniclers' comments cited above<sup>2</sup> suggest that far from dampening opposition, the execution of the hapless earl of Kent merely served to harden opinion that Mortimer and Isabella must go and the young King Edward III be allowed to enjoy his rightful authority. Kent's plot has been described as 'one of the most bizarre in the history of Medieval England'.<sup>3</sup> It was not so much the plot which was strange as the way in which it was unmasked and the means used to ensure that Kent should condemn himself. The theatricality of the performance at Corfe was very elaborate. Did it spring from Mortimer's own love of display or from the more subtle imaginings of a woman's mind? It is impossible to know. What can be taken for almost certain is that rumours about the dead Edward II were circulating at a time when those thwarted in their attempts to remove Mortimer in the winter of 1328-29 were once again discussing possible moves against the regime.

When news of Kent's contacts with the Lancastrian exiles and a pro-Edward II Pope reached Mortimer, he would not find any difficulty in guessing at the substance of any discussions. A trap must therefore be laid, Kent must be compromised and parliament could then be persuaded in the face of treason to accept his death. By striking directly at the King's uncle there can be little doubt that Mortimer hoped to deter any other would-be conspirators. That he miscalculated the effects of fear is indicated by the continuing opposition which culminated in his fall. In 1327 he had removed Edward II, in 1328-29

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- 1 For the final months of the regime, below, pp. 297-315.
  - 2 Above, pp. 193-94.
  - 3 Doherty, Isabella, Queen of England, 1296-1330, p. 293.

he neutralised Lancaster and in 1330 he eliminated Kent. Each success was merely a further step towards his ultimate failure for if Mortimer did not fear to strike at the blood royal, might he not be aiming at the Crown itself? That would have meant removing the young Edward III. The King must have realised after March 1330 that he must act decisively and act first.

- 5 -

Foreign and Domestic Policies of the Regime

- (a) Scotland
- (b) France
- (c) Law and Order
- (d) Finance

The Lancastrian rebellion of 1328 was partly caused by Lancaster's sense of outrage at being excluded from that place of influence in the royal council which he believed was rightly his. His opposition to the peace which the regime had negotiated with the Scots at Edinburgh and Northampton during the winter and spring of 1327-28 had also served to widen the rift between himself and Isabella and Mortimer. Other barons with Scottish interests had felt similarly frustrated by a peace policy which ran contrary to their inclinations. They may also have been suspicious of the personal motives of Isabella and Mortimer and at the same time made fearful that there might have been contacts between Isabella and Mortimer and Robert Bruce, the King of the Scots, during the months they spent in France preparing their descent on England.<sup>1</sup> The conduct of the Weardale Campaign in the summer of 1327 would have done little to lessen such fears so it is not surprising to find that although reference to Scotland in the parliamentary indictment of Mortimer in 1330 is only brief, the chroniclers were unanimous in their attack on the 'shameful peace of Northampton' while the barons showed their reluctance to support the peace by avoiding future parliamentary councils.

It was not only Scotland, however, where the regime's foreign policy created disquiet. The problems of Gascony were ever present and there was much unease about the King's readiness to do homage to the

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1 Knighton, p. 444. The nature of these contacts has not been spelt out, but Knighton suggests that Bruce's refusal to negotiate early in 1327 was due to them. They could simply have been a promise on Bruce's part to cause a diversion during the crucial period of the invasion. If this was the case, Bruce quickly departed from any sympathetic support for Isabella and Mortimer and saw the change of government as a welcome opportunity to win formal English recognition of his crown.



new French King, Philip of Valois, in the summer of 1329.<sup>1</sup> The financial implications of these policies cannot be overlooked. The greed of Isabella and Mortimer has already been commented upon; but the accusations against Mortimer not only referred to personal gain but also to the wastage of the King's treasure.<sup>2</sup> These criticisms of foreign and domestic policy must now be examined in the light of events in an attempt to see how justified they may have been. This will involve considering in addition the question of law and order and the cost of administration.

Were the policies of Isabella and Mortimer simply selfish exploitation of their new-won power, or were they in truth in the long term interests of the Crown?

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1 Rot. Parl. II, p. 53. For the chroniclers' comments, Avesbury, p. 283; The Brut, p. 256; Murimuth, p. 56. Baronial absences and hostility to Gascon policies, above, pp. 159-61. For unease over the homage, Meaux, p. 382.

2 Above, pp. 95-129 . Rot. Parl. II, p. 53.

(a) Scotland

The invasion of Isabella and Mortimer in September 1326 created a situation in England which could easily be exploited by the Scots. It created a further and favourable opportunity for Robert Bruce to raid and harry the northern parts of England and so to bring pressure to bear on the English government in the hope that he could thus secure the formal recognition of his kingship which he had so long desired and which England had been so reluctant to grant. He can hardly have needed any encouragement to take action, not even that offered by the fact that his nephew, Donald of Mar, had been active in support of Edward II in the last days of his reign and who after his return to Scotland was to be active again in the summer of 1327 plotting against the new regime.<sup>1</sup> Edward II's own policy towards the Scots had been decidedly ambiguous; despite the truce terms of May 1323, negotiations for a permanent peace had broken down and Robert Bruce had entered into an alliance with the king of France in April 1326.<sup>2</sup> Although the new English regime proposed a meeting of envoys to reopen the peace negotiations<sup>3</sup> the articles of Edward II's deposition accused him of losing the realm of Scotland, as well as other territories and lordships in Gascony and Ireland, through lack of good government.<sup>4</sup> It has been pointed out that this can hardly have been reassuring to the Scots and that Bruce felt this was an opportune time to secure from a new and untried government the formal recognition of his own

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1 Above, p. 135

2 Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, pp. 132-33.

3 Foedera, II, i, p. 649.

4 B. Wilkinson, Constitutional History of Medieval England, II, p. 170.

title and the independence of Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

On the night of Edward III's coronation, 1 February 1327, the Scots gave notice of their intentions by attacking Norham Castle. Although the attack was repulsed by its custodian, Robert de Manners, and although the government was much preoccupied in setting right the Dispenser injustices, such an action could not be ignored. A fortnight later Henry Percy, Ralph Neville and other border barons were ordered to ensure that the truce was kept and Percy himself was appointed keeper of the Marches to serve with one hundred men-at-arms, one hundred hobelars and as many of his own men as he needed until 31 May (next Pentecost) for the fee of 1,000 marks.<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of March the truce of May 1323 was solemnly confirmed and further writs were issued for the Abbot of Rievaulx and Ivo de Aldbrough on behalf of the King to open negotiations for a lasting peace. A meeting with the Scots was planned for the end of May, Sunday after Ascension. While the English may have been genuine in their conduct, it is difficult to believe that these moves were anything more than shadow manoeuvrings on the part of the Scots. Bruce seems to have been exploring all possible openings.<sup>3</sup>

On 6 February 1327, while Edward II's authority still ran in Ireland, a messenger was paid his expenses for a journey from Ireland to Scotland on behalf of the King. The Lanercost Chronicle has a very

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1 R. Nicholson, Edward III and the Scots, 1327-1335, (Oxford 1965), p. 14. This is the most authoritative account of the Weardale Campaign of 1327 and the subsequent events in Anglo-Scottish relations.

2 Lanercost, p. 256; C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 15, 18; Foedera, II, ii, p. 688.

3 Foedera, II, ii, p. 696; C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 20, 25, 33.

positive reference to the possibility of Edward II going by way of Ireland to Scotland from whence with the help of an Irish-Scottish army he could regain his throne. In return for this, rumour had it, he had promised to give up his claims to Scotland and hand over parts of northern England to Robert Bruce.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that at Easter time, 12 April, Bruce appeared in Ireland to co-ordinate, it seems, a three pronged attack on the new English government. Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray and Archibald Douglas would attack across the Scottish border; Bruce with Irish support would land in Wales while Mar would bring about an internal Anglo-Welsh rising on behalf of Edward II.<sup>2</sup> There is nothing improbable in this scenario and indeed the events of the summer to a great extent bear it out. There was a Scottish invasion across the border and Mar's spies were active in England in June. Only Bruce and his Ulster supporters seem to have been deflected from their purpose and the plans for landing in Wales abandoned perhaps due to the fact that while the sympathetic John Darcy, the Justiciar for Ireland, had delayed the relinquishment of his office, Mortimer's appointee the Earl of Kildare, who had been Mortimer's deputy in 1320, finally took over on 13 May 1327.<sup>3</sup>

Fear of Bruce's intentions had already influenced the English government's actions. On 5 April writs of summons were sent to all the leading barons and to the northern magnates ordering them to

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1 E.101/239/5 cited by Frame, English Lordship in Ireland, 1318-1361, p. 140; Lanercost, p. 253; R. Nicholson, 'A Sequel to Edward Bruce's Invasion of Ireland', Scottish Historical Review, No. 133, xlii, (1963), pp. 30-40.

2 R. Nicholson, op. cit.

3 For the Weardale Campaign, below, pp. **210-219** ; Mar's activities, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 212; Darcy, Frame, op. cit., pp. 175-76.

assemble at Newcastle upon Tyne by 18 May since it had been reported that Bruce had no intention of entering into meaningful negotiations and had ordered his forces to gather on the Scottish March in mid-May. At the same time orders were sent for the Cinque Ports to send ships to be at Skinburness on the Solway Firth on the same day.<sup>1</sup> A fortnight later Waresius de Valoignes was appointed to command the western fleet and John Perbroun, drawing particularly on ships from Yarmouth, was sent to command the eastern seaboard north of the Thames. London and other cities were drawn into the general mobilisation with a call for men, mounted and armed, while those who could not provide service were to pay a fine instead. Sheriffs and clergy also received summons not only for men but also for supplies of oats, malt, beans, peas, bacon, salt, wheat, fish and the carcasses of oxen.<sup>2</sup> In Bristol, Berkeley and Mautravers were ordered to collect the armour held in the castle for use in the north.<sup>3</sup> Urgent requests went across the sea to call back John of Hainault and his followers who, tempted by a tournament at Conde sur l'Escaut, had hastened home immediately after the King's coronation in February. Now with the incentive of further financial gain he agreed to recall his men from Flanders and Brabant and Hainault, some five hundred of them according to Le Bel, who was with them when they assembled at Wissant to cross to England.<sup>4</sup>

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1 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 118; Foedera, II, ii, p. 702.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 101; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 118; C.P.M.R. 1323-64, pp. 28, 41; Memoranda Roll, 1326-27, No. 647, p. 86; Foedera, II, ii, p. 702; Memoranda Roll, 1326-27, Nos. 124-25, p. 24. The King's Pavillioner had received his instructions to get the King's tents transferred from the Tower of London to York, Memoranda Roll, 1326-27, No. 126, p. 24, No. 2089, p. 285, No. 1669, p. 227.

3 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 95.

4 Le Bel, pp. 39-42, confirmed by The Brut, p. 249.

As these preparations for war continued so too did the preparations for peace. Safe conducts were to be arranged for the Scots' delegates and as late as 23 May the English admirals were forbidden to take any action which might prove harmful to prospects for peace.<sup>1</sup> Decisions regarding all these differing preparations were probably drawn together at a Council held at Stamford in the middle of April. The King had set out from there about 26 April but remained in the vicinity of Nottingham for the whole of the first part of May while military forces gradually headed north. On 18 May, the day he was due to meet his forces at Newcastle, the King had reached Blyth, just south of Doncaster. He reached York on 23 May.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to believe that Mortimer was absent from the King's side at this time, yet he does not seem to have appeared at Nottingham much before 8 May. Thereafter he remained in the vicinity of the court until the end of August. No-one had any doubt that he exercised close control over the ensuing campaign.<sup>3</sup>

John of Hainault and his followers arrived at York in the last days of May having ridden at speed from Dover while the King hoped further to boost the number of his forces by granting pardon to criminals on condition that they joined the expedition against the Scots. Talks on peace, however, still continued and Scots' envoys were at York after the King's arrival. No progress was made and the Scots left after having pinned on the doors of St. Peter, Stangate a

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 95; E.L.G. Stones, 'The Anglo-Scottish Negotiations of 1327', Scottish Historical Review, xxx (1951), pp. 49-54.

2 Annales Paulini, p. 333; E.101/382/9.

3 C.53/114, where Mortimer's name appears as a witness to charters between 8 May and 26 August by which time the court was at Doncaster again.

provocative bill reading, 'long beard heartless, painted hood witless, gay coat graceless make England thriftless'.<sup>1</sup> The earls of Lancaster and Kent with Wake, Mowbray, Beaumont and 1,000 men-at-arms were now sent ahead to Newcastle to strengthen the northern March where Henry Percy's commission expired on 31 May. In the meantime the Scots sought to probe the English defences and Douglas penetrated close to Newcastle but he got no response from the army there. Lancaster and his men may well have been ordered not to engage. Nevertheless both sides blamed the other for hypocritical negotiation and for escalating the conflict.<sup>2</sup>

The force of the Hainaulters at York was soon swollen by the arrival of the Count of Juliers with two other nobles and a force of forty knights and esquires.<sup>3</sup> But the success of the whole campaign was threatened on 7 June when a violent affray broke out between the foreign mercenaries and native Englishmen. According to Le Bel, to mark Trinity Sunday, the King and Isabella were holding a sumptuous party at the Franciscan priory where Isabella was lodging. In the streets outside a brawl developed over a game of dice between the Hainaulters and some English archers. The fighting quickly spread; the Hainaulters' leaders hastened from the Priory and tried to check

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1 Le Bel says the Hainaulters arrived three days before Pentecost which fell on 31 May. On 29 May the King ordered provision to be made for feeding them, Le Bel, pp. 38-9; Foedera, II, ii, p. 706; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 108; The Brut, p. 249. Payment for the Hainaulters began, however, on 8 May, E.101/18/4.

2 Scalacronica, p. 153; Johannis de Fordun, Chronica Gentis Scottorum, ed. W.F. Skene, Historians of Scotland, I (Edinburgh 1871), p. 351; Meaux, p. 356; Le Bel, p. 36. The charter rolls, C.53/114, list of witnesses leaves room for Lancaster, Kent and Wake to have been absent from York between 4 and 25 June.

3 Le Bel, p. 42.

the riot only to find themselves caught up in it. Before order was restored 316 Lincolnshire archers had been killed. Le Bel gives no figures for those killed on his own side, although one English chronicle gives figures of 241 English dead with 527 Hainaulters killed and a further 136 found drowned in the River Ouse. The Brut is more modest in placing English losses at a mere 80 dead. Norfolk, the earl Marshall, had the responsibility of restoring order and on 14 June an inquiry was set up under the auspices of Henry le Scrope. According to the Brut, the blame for starting the riot rested with the footsoldiers from Lincoln and Northampton.<sup>1</sup> It is ironic that on the day of the riot, Henry of Eastry the prior of Canterbury should have written to Archbishop Reynolds to say that he disagreed with the employment of the Hainaulters because amongst other reasons he could foresee dissension between them and Englishmen, particularly northerners. This could imperil the whole campaign. Certainly the riot left a legacy of suspicion and during the rest of their stay in York the Hainaulters kept well apart in those areas allocated to them; only their leaders entered the city to confer with the English barons. The whole episode was bound to put future co-operation at risk.<sup>2</sup>

In the last days of the army's stay at York, the mayor and bailiffs of the city took steps to protect the traders who feared to come

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1 Le Bel, pp. 43-47; Eulogium Historiarum, pp. 199-200; The Brut, pp. 249-50; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 152. Knighton, p. 445, adds the improbable comment that the Hainaulters acted with Isabella's support.

2 Litterae Cantuarienses, pp. 223-24; Le Bel, op. cit. Other references to the riot may be found in Murimuth, p. 53 where the English are said to have come off worst because they were forbidden to strike back; Walsingham, pp. 188-89; Le Baker, p. 35 who refers to the involvement and death of citizens of York; Scalacronica, p. 154; Meaux, p. 356.



into the city from the surrounding country since their goods were liable to be seized without payment. As a result supplies were getting short and prices rising, although Le Bel says there was no real shortage of supplies and the Hainaulters did not have to go foraging since markets were regularly held near their billets and they received regular pay in sterling. An order was made on 28 June for the treasury to pay John of Hainault £7,000 in part payment of wages due for his men. Since John de Langton, recently admitted as chamberlain of the Exchequer, had on 26 June paid into the wardrobe at York the £13,295 0s. 0d. of Edward II's treasure found in Caerphilly Castle, it is likely that the Hainaulters did indeed receive some ready cash.<sup>1</sup>

During the King's stay at York further news came in of the Scots' intentions and urgent precautions continued to combat them. Although new letters of instruction had been drafted for the English peace envoys on 10 June, they were subsequently cancelled and the gathering of forces became more urgent.<sup>2</sup> All men between the ages of sixteen and sixty in the East and West Ridings of Yorkshire and in Lancashire were ordered to appear at York. London remained slow to respond to the King's request for men. They were worried that by responding they might prejudice their liberties. They pleaded that they had delayed because it had been reported that peace had been made. In

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 132; Le Bel, p. 47; Foedera II, ii, p. 708; for Langton, Memoranda Roll 1326-27, No. 778, p. 101; E.101/383/8, m.5v. See below, p. 272.

2 E.L.G. Stones, 'The Anglo-Scottish Negotiations of 1327', op. cit. Nicholson, Edward III and the Scots, p. 23; Foedera II, ii, p. 708; C.P.M.R. 1323-64, pp. 22-41. A writ from the King assuring the City of London that the furnishing of their contingent should not be regarded as a precedent was enrolled on 20 July. It is enrolled under 10 July, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 135.

the event a letter was sent ahead on 9 July announcing that 100 horsemen and 100 footmen were on the way to Newcastle. By that date the King had also finally made a move.

He left York on 1 July, moving up the rivers Ouse and Ure to Benningborough and Aldward, thence by Myton on Swale to Topcliffe where he arrived on 6 July. John of Hainault seems to have been delayed at York until 4 July by lack of carts to carry his equipment, but these were eventually forthcoming. Presumably the slow moving footsoldiers went on ahead while their leaders remained in the vicinity of Topcliffe. It was not until 13 July that the court reached Northallerton and thence by way of Darlington arrived at Durham on 15 July. Soon after leaving York the King had news of a Scots' plan to attack Carlisle on 14 July. According to Froissart, Carlisle in the west was defended by the earl of Hereford and Lord Mowbray while the earl of Norfolk guarded the Tyne crossing in the east. These dispositions are almost certainly wrong. At the beginning of the month, Kent had been reporting raiders as far south as Appleby in Westmoreland and ten days later it was Antony Lucy who reported from Carlisle.<sup>1</sup>

The English, however, found it difficult to trace the Scots' movements. By 20 July three columns of Scots under the command of the earls of Moray and Mar and Sir James Douglas had crossed the border. The first positive news of their whereabouts came from the smoke of burning villages.<sup>2</sup> The English army was immediately formed

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1 E.101/382/9; Foedera II, ii, p. 708; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 208; Froissart, pp. 50-51; Nicholson, p. 24, n.3; p. 26, n.4. Nicholson points out, p. 26, n.7, that Lancaster had been sent to Newcastle but he seems to have been at Durham on 15 July when the King arrived there. C.53/114.

2 Lanercost, pp. 256-57; Bridlington, p. 96; Le Bel, p. 50.

in battle order of three foot battalions each supported on the flanks by mounted men-at-arms, and it set out in pursuit of the maurauding enemy who being far less in numbers and therefore far more mobile had no difficulty in keeping ahead of the ponderous English.<sup>1</sup> Through the valleys about the River Wear, south of Durham, the armies followed each other, the English taking up defensive positions at night although the King at least once lodged in a nearby abbey. But the useless tactics called for reappraisal. After a council of war it was decided to move north to the Tyne and wait there until the Scots withdrawing had to cross the river. This necessitated a rapid march beginning at night and continuing through the following day to get ahead of the Scots who were already believed to be retreating. Twenty six miles up Annandale and Tynedale were covered before the army crossed the River Tyne and took up position at Haydon on the evening of 21 July.<sup>2</sup>

The weather now changed and the army was subjected to prolonged and torrential rain which caused the level of the river to rise, making it impossible for the army to cross to the other side in search of fodder for the horses and food for themselves. Urgent messages were sent to Newcastle some twenty miles away, but there was some delay before merchants arrived with supplies which, although they were poor in quality, were sold at extortionate prices. The rain prevented

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1 Le Bel, pp. 52-53. The chroniclers' numbers seem as usual to be exaggerated, but there is little reason to doubt that the English outnumbered the Scots by at least two to one, or that the Scots were far more mobile since most of the infantry seem to have been mounted on rough ponies.

2 On 17 July the English were at Tudhoe, on 19 July at Bishop Auckland. E.101/382/9; Le Bel, pp. 54057; Scalacronica, p. 154.

proper fires being made and many of the horses developed back sores. As the days passed and there was no sign of the Scots criticism of the leadership began to be heard. To lift morale it was decided that attempts should be made to re-establish contact with the enemy. So steps were taken to recross the Tyne and a reward of £100 in land and a knighthood was offered by the King to the first person to bring news of the whereabouts of the Scottish army. Some fifteen hopefuls recrossed the dangerous river and set off in search of the enemy.<sup>1</sup>

The army after a week of inactivity now moved up-stream and on 28 July recrossed the Tyne at Haltwhistle. The weather improved, a squire, Thomas Rokeby, located the Scots near Stanhope where they had been all that week wondering what had become of the English. So the English army advanced to the village of Blanchland, some seven or eight miles to the north of the Scots' position. Having heard Mass, the troops confessed and made their wills before advancing on the morning of 30 July to within sight of the enemy. The Scots immediately drew their forces up in three battalions on the south bank of the River Wear and waited the approach of the English from the north.<sup>2</sup>

It seemed as if a battle was imminent, but the Scots' position had been well chosen. The River Wear at this point was deep and rocky and two of the Scots battalions were placed on craggy outcrops

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1 Le Bel, pp. 59-61. Le Bel puts the reward at 100 marks. Scala-cronica, p. 154, has £100 which is correct. A grant was made to Thomas Rokeby on 28 September 1327 of £100 worth of land for bringing the King within sight of his enemies, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 168.

2 Lanercost, p. 257; Le Bel, pp. 62-64; The Brut, p. 250; Scala-cronica, p. 154.

which could not easily be assaulted since they dominated possible crossing points. However, the English formed a battle line and the young King rode among the soldiers giving encouragement. To cross the river would have been suicidal. A thousand English archers sent forward to skirmish fell into a trap laid for them by Archibald Douglas so the English sent heralds to suggest that one or other side should have an unimpeded crossing of the river so that a battle could be fought on level ground. On the English side the meadows sloped more gently to the river so the Scots rejected the implied suggestion that they should come to the English with provocative taunts. After a further conference amongst their leaders, the English withdrew to camp and spend an uncomfortable night on boulder strewn ground nearby, while the Scots disturbed their rest by shouting and blowing horns.<sup>1</sup>

The following day the skirmishing continued. Some Englishmen crossed the river and secretly took up positions behind the Scots, hoping to be able to attack them in the rear when their attention was distracted by a frontal assault across the river. As the English advanced to the river bank, Douglas was about to move into a defensive position on the south bank when his scouts detected the English behind him. John of Hainault, realising that they had been discovered, contrived a withdrawal but there were losses of dead and wounded on both sides and prisoners were taken. That night the Scots, while keeping their camp fires burning, withdrew some little way upstream to an even stronger position. The English on the northern bank of the river

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1 Le Bel, pp. 64-67; The Bruce, compiled by Master John Barbour, ed. W.W. Skeat, II. Scottish Text Society, (Edinburgh, 1894), pp. 151-52.

followed and took up a position opposite them. Knowing that the Scots were short of some supplies, though not meat, and of forage for their horses, the English now determined to try to starve their enemy. But even so the initiative still remained with the Scots, for despite daily inconclusive skirmishing it was Douglas and his men who nearly achieved a real victory.<sup>1</sup>

Probably on the first night in the new positions a party under Douglas' command crossed the river at midnight and penetrated the English camp. Confused by the sudden appearance of the enemy, the English were slow to defend themselves, the Scots fought at close quarters stabbing any who got in their way and cutting the tent ropes. They forced a way to the King's tent before the English defence rallied and the triumphant Scots withdrew.<sup>2</sup> After this success the Earl of Moray urged an all out attack on the English but Douglas demurred, since they were, he said, getting stronger. The decision was probably wise since the English leaders took steps to strengthen their night defences, posting two hundred men-at-arms on each of the three exposed sides of their position. Reports of increasing desperation in the Scots' camp over the food shortages kept the army on the alert; but while the fighting seems to have continued with desultory skirmishing there were no further large scale engagements.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Barbour's Bruce, II, pp. 153ff.; Le Bel, pp. 67-68.

2 Lanercost, p. 258; Scalacronica, p. 154; Meaux, p. 357, who states that one of the King's clerks was killed in his tent; Barbour's Bruce, pp. 159-62; French Chronicle, p. 60; Le Bel, p. 70; The Brut, p. 251; Knighton, p. 445, who speaks of Douglas' chaplain being killed. Walsingham, p. 191.

3 Barbour's Bruce, p. 162; Le Bel, p. 71. The English council ordered two battalions to be drawn up to cover the tents at night. Fires were placed amongst these men so that they could see each other more clearly.

With the royal army to the north of the Wear and the Scots to the south there were still fears that York might be attacked. With Isabella and her children under their protection the local authorities there persuaded Archbishop Melton to take a share in providing for the city's defence.<sup>1</sup> But he was not called upon to fulfil that role for long. At Stanhope on the night of 6-7 August the Scottish trumpeters were particularly noisy and in their camp the fires burned brightly. When morning came two trumpeters were brought into the English camp. They reported that their army had left at midnight and were already four or five miles on their homeward journey. Pursuit with such a start did not seem sensible. While the chronicler Le Bel and some of his companions crossed the river to inspect what the Scots had left behind<sup>2</sup> the royal council met to decide their next moves. A return to Durham was decided upon while writs were sent out to summon a parliament to meet at Lincoln on 15 September where further attention could be given to the Scottish threat in the light of the Stanhope debacle. The young King, the chroniclers said, wept tears of frustration and anger.<sup>3</sup>

And well he might. For the English the campaign had brought no success and no chance of dictating peace terms to the Scots. What had gone wrong? The initial preparation had been thoroughly planned and the requisite orders for assembly issued in plenty of time. The force that assembled was certainly larger than that of the Scots

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- 1 Foedera, II, ii, pp. 711-12. Sir Richard Grey had also been deputed to guard Isabella, below, p. 218, n. 2.
  - 2 They found five hundred slaughtered cattle, copper pots steaming over fires and some prisoners bound to trees. Le Bel, p. 73.
  - 3 Le Bel, op. cit.; Walsingham, p. 189; Lanercost, p. 258; Knigh-ton, p. 445; Scalacronica, p. 155; Meaux, p. 357; The Brut, p. 251.

while ample provision had been made for the dispatch of supplies to the north.<sup>1</sup> The failure lies in the execution of the campaign. It has been pointed out<sup>2</sup> that this campaign is a link between the Boroughbridge campaign of 1322 and that of Dupplin Moor in 1332. The link is to be found in the use of light cavalrymen or 'hobelars' who could be dismounted for battle and turned into foot spearmen but who could also be used in swift pursuit of the enemy. These men however needed the support of archers for warding off an enemy attack and the writs of summons for 1327 laid stress on the need both for archers and men with 'swift strong and hardy rounseys' and also of the need for these men as well as the cavalry to dismount for fighting.<sup>3</sup> These changes, however, meant an increasing emphasis on defensive tactics so that where the enemy was reluctant to take the initiative, as also occurred in Edward III's campaign in the Low Countries in 1339-40, an inconclusive result was almost inevitable.

Sir Andrew Harclay had used the tactic of the dismounted man at Boroughbridge with some success but he had been executed for treason in 1323. Many of those on the Weardale campaign in 1327 had only been involved in Edward II's disastrous campaign of 1322 which had been centred round a large infantry contingent. There was therefore no-one present who had had experience of the best use to which hobelars could be put in the field or of the successful practice of dismounting cavalrymen. Confronted then by an enemy who did not wish to fight in open country and who had taken up a virtually unassailable defensive

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1 Above, p. 205.

2 A.E. Prince, 'The Importance of the Campaign of 1327', E.H.R., 1, (1935), pp. 299-302.

3 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 118; Rot. Scot. I, p. 208.



position, the English leaders do not seem to have known what best to do. The result in the field was stalemate.

Inevitably the lack of action had an effect on the soldiers' morale and this was also undoubtedly affected by three factors: firstly, the appalling weather during the army's week of inactivity at Haydon Bridge and secondly, the failure to ensure that the supplies so laboriously assembled were available when needed. Le Bel continually refers to these problems. The supply waggons had to be abandoned in the initial advance to the Tyne so that the men had only the bread which they could carry; when supplies arrived from Newcastle they were of poor quality and exorbitantly priced. Once at Stanhope there were similar difficulties. The army did not know where to forage and purveyors were selling a gallon of poor wine for £12 when it was worth only £3 a tun. Horses suffered too; not only from the weather and lack of fodder but also from being unshod since there was a shortage of farriers and metal for the shoes.<sup>1</sup>

But there was a third factor. Ever since the brawls at York the relations of the Hainault mercenaries and the English troops had been tense and we find Le Bel complaining that the English archers hated the Hainaulters more than the Scots so that it was necessary for them to mount guard not only against the Scots but also to have a second watch to protect themselves from the English.<sup>2</sup>

Under these circumstances there was need for firm and decisive leadership and this was not forthcoming. It was hardly to be expected that the fourteen year old King on his first campaign would

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1 Le Bel, pp. 55, 58, 60, 69-70.

2 Op. cit., p. 71.

exercise much authority; but he was surrounded by men who collectively had had a very varied military experience. Apart from John of Hainault there were the King's uncles, the earl of Kent who had commanded, somewhat ineffectively it is true, in Gascony, and the earl of Norfolk, marshal of England; Roger Mortimer who had fought in Ireland and in the campaign of 1322 and Henry Percy, experienced in the ways of border warfare.<sup>1</sup> The earls of Lancaster and Surrey were also in the north though it seems likely that for at least part of the time Lancaster was at Newcastle and Surrey may well have remained with the Queen at York although others had been appointed to look after her security there.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps those about the young Edward were too varied in their experience and so could not agree. The failure to carry out a concerted policy was attributed by the chroniclers to treachery and it is quite clear that indecision gave rise to quarrels which contributed to the ineffectiveness of the campaign.

The motives for this treachery are variously ascribed to English jealousy of the Hainaulters, to Henry Beaumont, disinherited of his Scottish earldom of Buchan and Moray after Bannockburn but constantly seeking to regain it; to unnamed Englishmen and to Mortimer in conjunc-

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- 1 For John of Hainault, Barbour's Bruce, p. 154. Mortimer and Norfolk, The Brut, p. 250; Kent, above, p. 187, and at York after the campaign, Froissart, p. 73. He received £1,093 5s. 10d. for his expenses on the Scots campaign at Stanhope and Newcastle. E.101/383/8, m.10; Henry Percy served in July and August 1327 with 149 men-at-arms and 200 hobelars for twenty five days. £330 3s. 4d. was due to him as wages for service. E.159/105, m.26.
  - 2 For Lancaster at Newcastle, above, pp. 210, 207. But see also The Brut, p. 250 which suggests his presence on the Wear. The chroniclers do not mention Surrey as being with the army. He was certainly at York in August when he purchased 21 Hainault horses for £66 16s. E.101/383/8, m.9r. Sir Richard Grey was paid £63 for attendance on Isabella between 27 May and 24 August. He had with him one knight and eight men-at-arms. E.403/232.

tion with Isabella.<sup>1</sup> But there is no direct evidence for any of these charges. That there was serious disagreement on tactics on at least one significant occasion is clear from the account in the Brut, where it is reported that both Lancaster and John of Hainault urged a direct attack across the Wear at Stanhope but were overruled by Mortimer. Mortimer then persuaded Thomas of Norfolk, the earl Marshal whose right was to lead the van, not to advance. Norfolk then ordered Lancaster and the Hainaulters to remain in their positions and interposed his own troops between them and the enemy to frustrate any attempt on their part to advance. The failure to seize an appropriate moment to attack was held to be due to Mortimer's contacts with the Scots. It was further alleged that the Scots' final successful withdrawal was due to Mortimer's treachery, since being in charge of the night watch on the night they left he was unaware of their going until the coming of dawn when it was too late to hinder their departure.<sup>2</sup> Even if these accusations are too precise, there can be no doubt that given the influential position he held, Mortimer has a prime responsibility for the failure of the Weardale campaign. It seems highly unlikely that the failure to give adequate leadership was due to prior agreement with the Scots, some solid evidence of this would surely have emerged; but it is significant that neither Isabella nor Mortimer were eager for war and they returned to peace negotiations as quickly as they could.

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1 French Chronicle, p. 60; Meaux, p. 356; Eulogium Historiarum, p. 201; Le Baker, p. 35; Knighton, p. 445; Walsingham, p. 189; The Brut, p. 250. Scalacronica, p. 155 speaks of Isabella and Mortimer having overall direction of the campaign.

2 The Brut, pp. 250-51.

It was not only in northern England that the Scots were successful. While Robert Bruce had abandoned his plans to land in Wales,<sup>1</sup> he had remained in Ireland for the first part of the summer, a presence which caused some alarm to the Dublin government. Sometime after taking up his appointment in the middle of May, Mortimer's justiciar the earl of Kildare sent John, son of William Jordan to treat with Bruce while Roger Outlaw, the Chancellor, was sent to Ulster to test the resolution of the men there in the face of the Scottish threat. In July, Bruce compelled Henry Manderville, Ulster's seneschal, to accept a year long truce. This Ulster Indenture of 12 July 1327 obliged Manderville to observe the truce for one year from 1 August on pain of forfeiture. There was no such binding clause on Bruce. Having thus asserted his influence in another vulnerable area, Bruce returned to Scotland to keep up the more direct pressure on the English government through the northern borders.

King Edward had lingered but a short time in Durham. The supply waggons abandoned before the march north had been retrieved by the citizens of Durham who had placed a pennant on each waggon as a means of identification. The army then marched back to rejoin Isabella in York. They arrived there on 13 August and dispersal of the troops began immediately. While the Hainaulters enjoyed some relaxation amongst the ladies of the court, arrangements were made for the disposal of their horses and to see that they had enough money to get

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1 Above, p. 204. The abandonment of this enterprise may have been due to the mission of John, son of William Jordan. For these events see, R. Nicholson, 'A Sequel to Edward Bruce's Invasion of Ireland', *Scottish Historical Review*, xlii (1963), pp. 30-40; Frame, English Lordship in Ireland, 1318-1361, pp. 137-42.

them home. The Treasurer was ordered to pay £4,000 for this purpose on 20 August, the same day as John de Lisle was instructed to escort John of Hainault and his men to Dover. There was still fear that the English archers might try to take their revenge for the York riot, but in the event all arrived safely at Dover from where they sailed for Wissant.<sup>1</sup>

Having issued orders on 18 August for the removal of the Exchequer and Court of Common pleas to York on 6 September,<sup>2</sup> a move which suggests that the regime felt the threat to the north was an urgent and on-going one, the King left York on 24 August to head south for the meeting summoned to Lincoln to decide future policy towards Scotland. Spending the first part of September at Nottingham, the King arrived at Lincoln on 15 September. While at Nottingham he had appointed Henry Percy as Chief Keeper of the Marches of Northumberland, an appointment which was to last until Christmas.<sup>3</sup> Since the army had been disbanded the resources at his disposal would have been small; but the appointment suggests that the intention was to defend the March in the face of the further Scottish incursions now threatening. The meeting at Lincoln discussed ways of meeting those attacks. On 22 September Archbishop Melton wrote to the Bishops of Durham and Carlisle pointing out that Bruce had invaded England and besieged

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- 1 Le Bel, pp. 75-77; E.101/382/9; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 160; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 146. Henry of Eastry informed Archbishop Reynolds that he would report by word of mouth how the Hainaulters behaved passing through Canterbury. A letter dated 3 September 1327, Litterae Cantuarienses, p. 238.
  - 2 Above, p. 154, for the opposition this order roused in the City of London.
  - 3 E.101/382/9; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 163; Foedera, II, ii, p. 715.

Norham and was now granting his followers rewards of English land. There was a very real threat to the stability of northern England. The King had called for a subsidy from all the English clergy to help defend the area, but not all the northern dioceses were under Archbishop Melton's jurisdiction. So the King had reluctantly agreed that the grant should be made at a later date. But the northern clergy were summoned to meet at York on 12 October.<sup>1</sup>

When the clergy met at York in October they made a grant of 1/10 for the defence of the realm; but not without conditions. Fearful of unlawful levies on Church property they demanded pledges that the consent of the clergy would be gained before any action was taken; equally fearful of Scottish depredations they begged that property destroyed should not be taxable. They also showed themselves aware of possible double dealing on the part of the Crown and the Papacy when they stipulated that if the Pope ordered them to pay a subsidy to the King what had already been paid would be counted against the new demands. On these conditions the King should have half his 1/10 in February and the rest in June 1328. The clergy of Canterbury made a similar grant when they met in synod at Leicester Abbey in November.<sup>2</sup>

Melton's reference to Bruce's attack on Norham was not harking back to the Scots' attacks of the previous February. Hardly had the English withdrawn in August than Bruce, newly returned from Ireland, led a substantial raid into Northumberland. Once again Norham came

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1 Northern Registers, pp. 344-46. Also, below, p. 276.

2 Northern Registers, pp. 349-50; Knighton, p. 447; Annales Paulini, p. 338.

under attack and while Bruce himself was occupied there, the earl of Moray and James Douglas besieged Percy in Alnwick. Gaining no advantage they attacked Warkworth and then returned to help Bruce at Norham. Failing to take castles the Scots laid waste the Northumbrian villages and countryside. The inhabitants of other northern areas, Westmoreland and Cleveland, Carlisle, Durham and Richmond hurriedly negotiated a truce to last until 23 May 1328. Undecided what to do, the English council continued to take steps to raise troops but they also sent a representative, William Denholm, to Bruce at Norham to make soundings about a possible peace.<sup>1</sup>

While the earl of Kent was preparing to go north the government finally made up its mind. The raids were clearly more than a distressing harassment of the northerners: attacks on castles were not just a threat to baronial property but also to baronial authority. Yet the difficulties of finding money to renew the campaign were increasing. Moreover, Isabella and Mortimer had never been totally committed to the war. So on 9 October Henry Percy and William Denholm were officially appointed to negotiate with the Scots.<sup>2</sup> Within nine days Bruce had drafted a number of proposals which were sent to Isabella and Mortimer at Nottingham as a basis for discussion. Bruce required that his title to the crown of Scotland should be freely and unconditionally recognised and that there should be a marriage between his heir, David, and Edward's sister Joan. Furthermore no lands forfeited by magnates

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1 Scalacronica, p. 155; Bridlington, p. 97; Meaux, p. 357; Lanercost, pp. 258-59; Barbour's Bruce, iii, ed. M.P. McDiarmid, J.A.C. Stevenson, Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh, 1981), p. 239. Fordun, p. . Archbishop Melton was busy raising troops in accordance with royal instructions as late as the middle of October. Northern Registers, pp. 350-51.

2 C.P.R. 1327/30, p. 178; Foedera, II, ii, p. 719.

in Scotland or forfeited by Scots lords in England should be restored. He further suggested an alliance between the two kingdoms based on the giving of aid in the event of attacks from outside on either party. He also demanded English support at the Papal Curia in bringing about an end to his excommunication. The only real gain he was prepared to allow the English was expressed in a willingness to pay the English Crown £20,000. In a reply dated at Nottingham on 30 October, the English government signified a general acceptance of these terms as a basis for agreement. Negotiations should take place at Newcastle but the question of the alliance and the forfeited lands would have to be discussed further before steps could be taken to recognise Bruce's claims and to deal with the excommunication difficulty. Accordingly Percy and Denholm were authorised to continue discussions.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of November a full scale meeting of ambassadors was under way at Newcastle. Safe conducts were issued for 100 Scots on 20 November and authorisation was given on 23 November for Archbishop Melton, Bishop Burghersh of Lincoln, the earl of Surrey, Thomas Wake, Henry Percy, William de Ros, Geoffrey le Scrope, William Denholm and five others to arrange a truce and negotiate peace.<sup>2</sup> While discussions at Newcastle continued into December a parliament was summoned to meet at York on 7 February 1328 to examine the proposed peace terms.<sup>3</sup> Negotiations apparently slowed over the Christmas period when the funeral

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- 1 E.L.G. Stones, 'The Anglo-Scottish Negotiations of 1327', Scottish Historical Review, xxx (1951), pp. 49-54; R. Nicholson, Edward III and the Scots, p. 47.
  - 2 Foedera II, ii, pp. 723-24. A truce was arranged to last until 13 March 1328. Foedera II, ii, p. 728.
  - 3 Burghersh received £135 for his expenses between 22 November and 18 December. E.403/232; C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 240-41.



of Edward II was a preoccupation; but towards the end of January Scottish delegates were expected at York where the King had arrived on 20 January. Ten days later, lest anything should happen to upset the negotiations, Henry Percy, Ralph Neville and seven others were ordered to ensure that the truce was not broken on the Marches.<sup>1</sup>

In the middle of February five of the Scots returned to Edinburgh presumably to report to Bruce, while the royal council sat daily in an effort to bring about agreement amongst the magnates.<sup>2</sup> The absence of many of the magnates from York has already been noted<sup>3</sup> so that it is not surprising to find the agreement hammered out with the Scots branded as being imposed by Isabella and Mortimer without the consent of the nobility.<sup>4</sup> Letters Patent issued by the King on 1 March indicate that terms had been agreed as a preliminary to a final peace. Edward conceded that the Scottish throne should be held by Bruce totally separate from England and within the borders which had obtained at the time of Alexander III. He renounced all claims made by himself and his predecessors and all obligations and agreements made in connection with those claims were cancelled. All English interest in the processes concerning Bruce at Avignon were likewise renounced and the way was opened for detailed arrangements to be made for the marriage

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1 Foedera II, ii, p. 728. The bishop of Durham and the sheriffs of Yorkshire and Northumberland were ordered on 22 January to see that 100 Scottish delegates journeyed safely to York.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 232; C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 57; Foedera II, ii, p. 729.

3 Above, p. 156

4 Knighton, p. 448.

alliance between the two royal families.<sup>1</sup> Discussions at York were then adjourned so that an English delegation could visit Edinburgh for the completion of the Treaty.

The English envoys set off for Edinburgh between 28 February and 2 March 1328. They were led by the bishops of Lincoln and Norwich, Geoffrey le Scrope, Henry Percy and William la Zouche of Ashby.<sup>2</sup> The main delegation was at Edinburgh by 10 March and a series of meetings took place during the following days. There now seems to have been an urgent desire to conclude the business and the terms of the treaty are set out under the date 17 March 1328,<sup>3</sup> a mere week after the envoys' arrival at the Scottish court. The terms are similar to those set out in Edward's Letters Patent of 1 March but there are some additions. Provision was made for the grant of £2,000 worth of land to the Princess Joan as dower, and the bride was to be handed over to the Scots at Berwick on 15 July. So far as the proposed alliance between the two countries was concerned, each would aid the other in the face of external attacks although the Scots would do nothing which might endanger their French alliance. Both countries undertook not to encourage rebellion against the other: the Scots would not encourage the Irish rebels, the English would not support unrest in the Isle of Man. All docu-

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1 Foedera II, ii, p. 730.

2 Advances for expenses were paid to Burghersh, William de Norwich, Geoffrey le Scrope, Henry Percy on 29 February, E.403/236. The minutiae of these negotiations are dealt with in, E.L.G. Stones, 'The English Mission to Edinburgh in 1328', Scottish Historical Review, xxviii (1949), pp. 121-32; E.L.G. Stones, 'An Addition to the Rotuli Scotiae', Scottish Historical Review, xxix (1950), pp. 23-51.

3 Foedera II, ii, pp. 734-35.

ments relating to the English claim to Scotland having been annulled were to be returned to Bruce. In his turn Bruce undertook to pay the English an indemnity of £20,000, to be paid in three instalments over a three year period. Finally both sides undertook to see that the law of the March was observed. The treaty was to be confirmed and sealed copies handed over at Berwick before Ascension Day, 12 May.

Most of the envoys had left Edinburgh by 20 March. When they arrived at Newcastle news of the peace was made known. Writs had already been sent out at the beginning of the month summoning a parliament to meet at Northampton on 24 April. There the terms of the treaty would be ratified. The absenteeism which had affected the York parliament in February had created irritation. It was not to be repeated. With peace arranged Isabella and Mortimer were determined to have the widest measure of agreement for the treaty terms which they had secured. Prelates and magnates were to attend in person, no proctors would be allowed. Every county, city and borough and the Cinque Ports were to be represented; a number of particular individuals were also summoned. All attending parliament were strictly forbidden to bring armed retainers with them.<sup>1</sup>

The envoys from Edinburgh reported to the King, Isabella and Mortimer at Stamford on 11 April by which time knowledge of the peace had reached London for on that day orders were issued in the City that no Scots merchants were to be harmed since peace had now been made. The terms of the treaty were not, however, proclaimed in the

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1 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 375-76.

City until six days later.<sup>1</sup> Confirmation of the Edinburgh agreement was published at Northampton on 4 May but it was accompanied by an indenture in Latin setting out Edward's agreement to the boundaries of Scotland and the annulment of all previous letters and agreements relating to the subjection of Scotland. More significantly it contains an undertaking by Bruce to pay £100,000 by Michaelmas 1338 if the marriage of David and Joan had not taken place by that date. Undoubtedly this was a form of security for the English against a possible repudiation on Bruce's part. If the Scots then refused to pay Edward's renunciation of the Scottish crown would in its turn be nullified.<sup>2</sup> These confirmations completed the long process of negotiations with the Scots and as a result the series of agreements thus ratified have become collectively known as the treaty of Northampton.

The terms of the treaty were widely known to the chroniclers of the period, most of whom dwell on them at some length. Some lay great emphasis on the proposed marriage alliance and clearly as the result of public gossip they refer more mysteriously to blank charters being handed to the Scots. Almost certainly this last is a reference to the return to the Scots of the documents relating to English attempts to subdue Scotland.<sup>3</sup> Bridlington concedes that the

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- 1 11 April was the date on which the writs were issued under the Privy Seal ordering the payment of the envoys expenses, E.403/236. E.L.G. Stones, 'The English Mission to Edinburgh in 1328', Scottish Historical Review, xxviii (1949), pp. 121-32; C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 60; Annales Paulini, pp. 340-41.
  - 2 Foedera II, ii, pp. 740-42; E.L.G. Stones, 'An Addition to the Rotuli Scotiae', Scottish Historical Review, xxix (1950), pp. 23-51 for a discussion of the Latin indenture and other documents connected with the negotiations at York and Edinburgh.
  - 3 Knighton, pp. 447-49; Scalacronica, pp. 155-56; Bridlington, pp. 98-99; Lanercost, pp. 260-61; Meaux, p. 358; Barbour, op. cit., pp. 240-41; Murimuth, pp. 56-7; Walsingham, p. 190; Avesbury, p. 283; Le Baker, pp. 40-1; The Brut, pp. 255-56.

treaty was a source of controversy; Knighton argues that it did not carry general consent but was arbitrarily imposed by Isabella and Mortimer and an echo of this argument may be found in the Scalacronica. Murimuth, Avesbury and Le Baker call the peace 'disgraceful', Walsingham, 'scandalous'. The Brut speaks of universal opposition with only Isabella, Mortimer and Bishop Hothum of Ely welcoming the agreement.

Certainly there was little in it for England. At least some of the £20,000 paid by the Scots found its way into Isabella's pockets<sup>1</sup> at a time when the regime's financial difficulties were steadily mounting; while the chroniclers consistently refer to terms which do not appear in the official treaty documents but which they saw as a further humiliation.<sup>2</sup> These were concerned with the return to Scotland of the Black Rood of Scotland and the Stone of Scone. There is no trace of any agreement concerning the Black Rood although the Scots regained it. The case of the Coronation stone was different. When Isabella went north to Berwick to attend the Princess Joan's wedding in the summer of 1328, orders were sent to the sheriffs of London instructing them to receive the Stone from the abbot of Westminster

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1 5,000 marks was paid by the Scots at Midsummer 1329 to Thomas de Garton who is variously described as controller of the King's household and Isabella's clerk. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 404; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 576; Cal. Pap. Reg. II, pp. 292-93. A further instalment of 5,000 marks was paid at Martinmas 1329, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 457. On 17 January 1330 a grant was made to Isabella of 10,000 marks due from the Scots at Midsummer, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 470; C.81/168/3211, while on 3 April a gift was made to Isabella by the King of 5,000 marks lately received from the Scots, Foedera II, ii, p. 785. Isabella acknowledged receipt of this at Woodstock on 20 April, E.101/384/21. A further instalment of 10,000 marks was received at Midsummer 1330, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 539; Foedera II, ii, p. 795, and the remaining 10,000 marks at Midsummer 1331, Foedera II, ii, pp. 804-05, though this had already been assigned to the Bardi for advances already made by them, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 11.

2 These references are discussed by E.L.G. Stones, 'An Addition to the Rotuli Scotiae', op. cit.

and to bring it to Isabella in the north. The abbot refused to hand it over until the matter had been discussed with the King.<sup>1</sup> This episode may be seen as signifying the contempt felt for the treaty in the country at large, a contempt shared by the King who was noticeably absent from his sister's wedding.<sup>2</sup> It was Isabella, Mortimer, Surrey and the bishops of Lincoln, Ely and Norwich who joined the marriage celebrations at Berwick in July 1328 which many saw as a national humiliation.

Modern commentators see the terms of the agreements as reasonable and as an example of Isabella's political skill.<sup>3</sup> This seems an over generous assessment. It is true that the government renounced policies which had been something of a millstone for forty years; but few were prepared to accept that a return to the situation which had obtained before 1290 was in the true interests of the English crown and the magnates. Indeed it is arguable from an English point of view that the position following the peace of Northampton was worse than the situation before 1290 when the English crown could claim feudal rights from the Scots. In 1328, after forty years of expensive military activity, faced by an ailing King, the English had been able to squeeze nothing from the Scots save an indemnity of £20,000 much of which benefitted not the perilous financial situation of the government but Isabella's own purse.

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1 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, pp. 63, 65; Lanercost, p. 260.

2 Edward's absence was particularly noted by the Lanercost chronicler and for the Scots by Pluscarden. Lanercost, p. 260. Pluscarden, p.

3 Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, p. 216; P.C. Doherty, Isabella, Queen of England, 1296-1330, (Oxford thesis), p. 172.

It is not surprising therefore that the expensive Weardale campaign and the peace which followed it were seen as creating a division between Isabella and Mortimer and other elements of the coalition which had brought them to power. Lancaster was disillusioned. A rift had been created between Mortimer and Norfolk which even the marriage of Norfolk's heir, Edward, to Mortimer's daughter, Beatrice, in June 1328 could not heal. The other royal uncle, the earl of Kent, seems also to have been alienated not merely by the military setbacks and the peace, but almost certainly by the death of Edward II which occurred between the two events. For the country at large the way that Isabella and Mortimer had conducted the Scots campaign seemed no improvement on the efforts of Edward II in 1314 and 1322. It is not surprising that people felt a sense of anger and frustration.

Particularly frustrated were those magnates who had lost their Scottish lands. That two of those who were included amongst these 'disinherited', Thomas Wake and Henry Beaumont, had played a large part in the deposition of Edward II should not have been overlooked by the regime. They were an essential part of the coalition of interests which had brought Isabella and Mortimer to power.<sup>1</sup> But in this matter as in others the government was careless of its supporters, even if it did not in this case totally overlook the interests of the disinherited. Bruce's initial proposal that forfeited lands

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1 For Wake's role, above, pp. 41-45. Beaumont, who was a cousin of Edward II by reason of his relationship to Edward's mother, Eleanor of Castile had been alienated from Edward in 1323. His marriage to the Scottish heiress, Alice Comyn, at some time before 1310 had given him a claim to the Scottish earldom of Buchan. See, R. Nicholson, Edward III and the Scots, pp. 10-11.

should remain forfeited had elicited an English response that this needed further discussion. From that moment it was regarded as far too complex a problem for a quick solution and therefore it does not feature in the negotiations at York and Edinburgh. This in itself must have contributed to a sense of anger amongst people like Beaumont and Wake. When the final terms were published at Northampton, those who had been disinherited of their estates still received no mention. That was not to say that the matter had been completely shelved, but the government was not prepared to allow the matter to delay the peace.

When Isabella set out for her daughter's wedding at Berwick, not carrying the Stone of Scone, but apparently taking one of the lions from the menagerie at the Tower of London as a gift to the Scots,<sup>1</sup> she was empowered to negotiate over the forfeited lands and two exemplars were sent in haste to her at Berwick.<sup>2</sup> Her negotiations brought some results, but of a very limited kind. Henry Percy seems to have received the most favourable treatment and in the course of the next two years to have received some redress. Another claimant, la Zouche, was not so fortunate. The cases of Beaumont and Wake did not produce speedy results and, as happened to a number of others, their lands were not restored. It is therefore not surprising to find both Wake and Beaumont opposed to the regime in the events of 1328-29 thus finally breaking from the coalition which had brought Isabella and Mortimer to power. It was not until Edward III succeeded in

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1 E.W.M. Balfour Melville, Edward III and David II, Historical Association Pamphlet, G.27 (1954), p. 5.

2 E.L.G. Stones, 'An Addition to the Rotuli Scotiae', Scottish Historical Review, xxix (1950), pp. 23-51.



asserting his own authority that the claims of the disinherited were once more resurrected and the Scots pressed to treat Beaumont and Wake as they had already treated Percy.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the way was paved for the disinherited to try to regain their lands by force in the Dupplin Moor campaign of 1332.

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1 Scalacronica, p. 156; Nicholson, Edward III and the Scots, pp. 57-8, 68-9.

(b) France

The regime's policy towards Scotland hardly enhanced the government's reputation. It was important that it should not suffer similar indignities at the hands of France. The differences between the French and English Crowns over Gascony were of long standing and hinged upon the relationship of a sovereign King who was also a vassal towards his suzerain. There was no way in which either Edward I or Edward II would have been prepared to give up Gascony; on the other hand there is little to suggest that the Capetian kings and Charles IV in particular had any desire to annexe the Duchy so long as feudal proprieties were observed and proper homage offered. Numerous provocations on the part of French officials tended to lead to negotiations rather than to war. However, when serious trouble erupted in the winter of 1323, the government of Edward II behaved with great stupidity towards its overlord, Charles IV who was forced into declaring the duchy of Gascony and the county of Ponthieu confiscate. It was in an effort to resolve this situation that Isabella went to France in March 1325.

As a result Prince Edward was invested with the duchy of Aquitaine and he did homage for this the following September. When Isabella and her son refused to return to England, an alliance with Mortimer soon led to the laying of plans for the overthrow of the Despensers. Once Isabella and Mortimer had succeeded in that immediate task, they would need to look to ways of stabilising the Gascon situation. The basis of Isabella's policy thus became the need to postpone actual conflict in Gascony, an aim all the more pressing in the light of instability in Ireland and the hostile threats to the Scottish borders. This meant making the best of the terms of the truce of 1325 whereby the English

government undertook to pay a relief of £60,000 while Charles IV hung on to the Agenais as financial compensation for the financial losses which he had incurred. But could such a watchful peaceful policy be implemented without incurring further English humiliation?<sup>1</sup>

As early as September 1326 the Papacy had intervened, sending urgent letters to all the leading figures involved in the disputes requesting support for an embassy from Avignon aimed at bringing about peace between Isabella and her husband and also between the kings of France and England.<sup>2</sup> It is hardly surprising, given the political situation, that the Archbishop of Vienne and his companions were not welcomed very warmly, although they were issued with letters of safe conduct valid until February 1327.<sup>3</sup> By the middle of February the Archbishop had returned to France and an English delegation under the leadership of Bishop Stratford of Winchester and Bishop Airmyn of Norwich had been appointed to negotiate with the king of France over all outstanding matters.<sup>4</sup>

The negotiations were slow and orders had to be issued to prevent any hinderances being caused by attacks on French merchants.<sup>5</sup> A treaty was finally signed at Paris on 31 March 1327 with the Papal envoys actively involved. The terms were hardly favourable to the

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1 The Gascon question is examined, G.P. Cuttino, English Diplomatic Administration 1259-1339 (2nd ed., Oxford, 1971). For the Gascon situation in the reign of Edward II, M. McKisack, The Fourteenth Century, 1307-99, pp. 105-111; P. Chaplais, The War of Saint-Sardos, 1323-25, (Camden, 3rd series, lxxxvii, 1954).

2 Cal. Pap. Reg. II, 1305-42, pp. 481-83.

3 Annales Paulini, p. 324; Foedera, II, i, p. 647.

4 In addition to the two bishops, John of Brittany, John of Hainault and Hugh Audley were in the embassy. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 16. Specific instructions were issued to John of Brittany on 23 February to join the delegation in France. Foedera II, ii, p. 694.

5 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 112.

English. By stipulating that at least for the time being territorial divisions should remain as at the time of his agreement in 1325, Charles was able to hang on to the Agenais, thereby largely restricting the territory held by the English to the coastal lands between the rivers Charente and Adour. In addition to the £60,000 of 1325, England undertook to pay a further 50,000 marks in damages. So far as individual Gascons were concerned there was a general amnesty though Charles excepted eight people including Sir Oliver Ingham who had commanded at Agen in 1324 and who, having been appointed Steward of Gascony in March 1326, was still serving there in February 1327.<sup>1</sup> The treaty was ratified in London on 11 April 1327. Since it virtually meant that England had made little advance on the situation of 1259 there was, at least at Avignon, some fear that the treaty might not hold. Bishop Stratford was subsequently urged to be alert to ensure that the terms were kept.<sup>2</sup>

The peace was uneasy. English merchants were harassed and Gascon officials had to be reminded that a treaty had been signed; papal envoys were still active. In August, Bartholomew Burghersh, Constable of Dover Castle, was ordered to look into reports that seamen in the Cinque Ports were planning attacks on the coast of Normandy while the state of Gascony continued to give the Pope anxiety.<sup>3</sup> Close contact with Avignon had been kept throughout the summer since negotiations regarding the marriage of Edward III to Philippa, daughter of Count William of Hainault had been proceeding. The alliance had

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1 Foedera II, ii, pp. 700-01; McKisack, p. 111; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 6; for Ingham, G.E.C., vii, pp. 58-60.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 66; Cal. Pap. Reg. II, 1305-42, p. 484.

3 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 204, 215; Foedera II, ii, p. 707; Cal. Pap. Reg. II, 1305-42, pp. 482-84.

originally been planned when Isabella and Mortimer were in Hainault during the summer of 1326.<sup>1</sup> Bartholomew Burghersh and William Trussel had been sent to Avignon in March to seek a dispensation since Edward and Philippa were related within the forbidden degrees, both being descendants of Philip III of France. Despite papal reservations about the Count of Hainault, the dispensation was forthcoming.<sup>2</sup>

In October, Bishop Roger Northburgh, having been empowered to arrange the marriage contract, set out for Hainault. His clerk John de Hoby was sent back to England in November, probably returning to his master in the company of Bartholomew Burghersh and William Clinton who had been ordered to bring the young Philippa safely to England. Before she set out the marriage was solemnly confirmed at Valenciennes.<sup>3</sup> Then escorted by the English delegation and her uncle, John of Hainault, Philippa by way of Wissant and Dover reached London on 23 December 1327. Lodged at the Bishop of Ely's house in Holborn, she received gifts from the Mayor and citizens of London before setting out after Christmas to meet the King at York.<sup>4</sup> There the wedding took place on 24 January 1328, Walsingham commenting somewhat acidly that despite the relationship of the bride to the French royal family, the marriage brought little advantage to England.<sup>5</sup>

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- 1 Isabella's Hainault alliance is discussed, Fryde, Tyranny and Fall of Edward, II, pp. 181-82.
  - 2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 61; Foedera II, ii, pp. 712-13.
  - 3 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 179, 190; Foedera II, ii, p. 719; E.403/240; Le Bel, pp. 78-80.
  - 4 Le Bel, pp. 80-81; Annales Paulini, pp. 338-39.
  - 5 Murimuth, p. 56; Bridlington, p. 99; Lanercost, p. 259; The Brut, p. 254; Walsingham, p. 192.

A few weeks later in February 1328, the whole problem of Anglo-French relations was given a new impetus by the sudden and premature death of Charles IV. He left no male heir. The nearest heir in the male line was his cousin Philip of Valois. In 1316 and 1322 daughters of the previous kings had been excluded by their uncles thereby establishing a precedent for the passing over of the daughter of Charles IV. Accordingly Philip VI was crowned at Rheims in May 1328. But not to allow women to become rulers of France was not the same as denying them the right to transmit the succession to their sons. In these circumstances Isabella's son would have a strong claim to the Crown of France. On the other hand, Isabella and Mortimer were hardly in a position in the Spring of 1328 to advance a claim which if it were to have any chance of success would almost certainly have to be backed up by military force. The chroniclers had little doubt that the claim was not pressed because of the regime's policies and preoccupation over negotiations with Scotland.<sup>1</sup> The Lanercost chronicler goes so far as to suggest that the King could not try to regain his French inheritance until peace had been made with Scotland otherwise the English could have found themselves fighting on two fronts.<sup>2</sup>

That Isabella and Mortimer were reserving their position seems to be borne out by a letter sent at the end of March 1328 to John de Haustede, seneschal of Gascony and John de Weston, constable of Bordeaux. In it the King states his intentions to recover his rights at a suitable moment and that in the meantime Haustede and Weston should

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1 Walsingham, p. 190; Lanercost, op. cit.; Meaux, pp. 380-81; Le Bel, pp. 91-93; Froissart, p. 84. Scalacronica, p. 156, states that the claim was not pressed because of the King's youth and the evil counsellors who surrounded him.

2 Lanercost, p. 261.

take secret soundings amongst the Gascon nobility to test the nature of their commitment to the English crown. In the meantime the question of the Duchy would be discussed at the forthcoming parliament at Northampton.<sup>1</sup> There is no mention here of claims to the Crown of France. What does seem clear is that Isabella and Mortimer intended to try to reassert full English authority in Gascony and thereby to embarrass the new French King.

Negotiations with the rulers of the Low Countries and with Spain were probably directed to the same end. In April the King was proposing there should be discussions with Flanders at Midsummer, though the city of Bruges was proving reluctant. At much the same time negotiations were afoot with Alphonso, King of Castile, for the marriage of the King's brother, John of Eltham, to the daughter of the late Lord of Biscay.<sup>2</sup> However, the Northampton parliament meeting on 24 April proved more militant. The magnates and prelates assembled there urged that according to common and canon law, King Edward was the rightful heir to the crown of France and that this right should be pressed. Accordingly by general consent it was decided that Bishop Northburgh of Coventry and Lichfield and Bishop Orleton of Worcester should be sent to Paris to make the claim on the King's behalf. They were there on the morrow of Philip's coronation and back in England by early June.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 Foedera II, ii, p. 736. The regime's policy towards Gascony is described by, Eugene Deprez, Les Preliminaires de la Guerre de Cent Ans 1328-1342, (Paris, 1902), pp. 38-72. Deprez suggests that rebellion in Gascony had been fomented by the government following the death of Charles IV but nothing had happened.
  - 2 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 375, 385; Foedera II, ii, p. 736.
  - 3 C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 78. The instructions to the bishops are dated, 16 May. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 271. For comment on Orleton, Haines, The Church and Politics in Fourteenth Century England, pp. 31, 183, 229.

The tensions between the two countries now seem to have increased. Proposals made at a council at Worcester in June that a force should be sent to Gascony were apparently opposed by the Earl of Lancaster whose continuing criticisms of the regime's policies were later held to have been detrimental to the country's interests in France. English merchants were attacked at Norman and Poitevin ports while the Channel Islands were raided and further attacks were expected on the English coast between Liverpool and Yarmouth. The Constable of Bordeaux was at Portsmouth assembling men, supplies and cash, some of which he was later suspected of embezzling; but a month later he was empowered, together with John de Haustede, to negotiate an alliance with the Count of Armagnac and other Gascon lords for the defence of the King's rights in Gascony and John Mautravers was ordered not to hinder his going.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile because of the French attacks, the goods of French merchants were impounded as a security until parliament could deliberate further as to what should be done. Attempts were also made to reassure the Count of Armagnac and other Gascon nobles by promising to indemnify them against any losses they might sustain while fighting for English rights in France.<sup>2</sup> The parliament at Salisbury, when it met in the autumn, was preoccupied with other business and any large scale intervention in France during the ensuing months was clearly out of the question.<sup>3</sup> It was not until the early spring of 1329 that

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1 Above, p. 161 ; C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 79; C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 298, 397-98. Orders were issued to Mautravers for Weston's arrest on suspicion of helping himself to the King's goods, 22 August 1328. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 319; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 320.

2 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 320-21; Foedera II, ii, p. 750. The goods of merchants of Amiens were released at the end of October after security had been offered, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 340.

3 Above, pp. 166 ff.



the government seems to have been in a position to take up the threads of its Gascon policies once again and even then it was in no hurry.<sup>1</sup>

A probable reason for this was that Isabella and Mortimer wished to postpone as long as possible King Edward's homage for Gascony. The previous summer an embassy from the French king had been in England to summon Edward to do homage. It had received evasive answers and no more than a promise that the King would visit Paris.<sup>2</sup> The events of the winter of 1328-29 had given him a perfect excuse for not fulfilling his promise. In April, Bishop Charlton of Hereford and Bartholomew Burghersh were sent to France to explain the position to King Philip.<sup>3</sup> In the meantime a thorough review of the Gascon situation was undertaken with all documents relating to the questions of homage and the King's rights in France being handed over to the Treasurer and his assistants. These also covered the case which had recently begun in Paris concerning the Count of Armagnac's homage as well as previous infringements of royal and Gascon nobles' liberties in Gascony, Agenais and Saintonge.<sup>4</sup> Further documents relating to the treaty made

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1 Writing in the middle of March 1329, the King promised the Gascon lords that he would send envoys to them after Easter, which that year fell on 23 April. Foedera II, ii, p. 759.

2 Deprez states that Philip's ambassadors, including Pierre Roger, abbe of Fecamp, the future Pope Clement VI, were kept waiting without being received by Edward and that Isabella was evasive. Accordingly the Bishop of Arras and Sire de Craon were sent to Gascony to seize the revenues until homage was done. Deprez, op. cit.

3 Froissart, pp. 90-92; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 538. Charlton and Burghersh left Wallingford on 13 April and returned to the King at Eltham on 11 May. The Bishop received 5 marks a day and Burghersh 40s. a day. In addition they received household and passage expenses. They both lost a horse valued at 60s. The Bardi advanced 200 marks to them on 4 April. E.403/243.

4 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 453. Bishop Stapeldon had undertaken the calendaring of archives and under the direction of John Hildesle the Gascon register had been completed by March 1319 and a Gascon Calendar by August 1321. The latter was deposited at the Treasury. M. Buck, Politics, Finance and the Church in the Reign of Edward, II, pp. 18, 167-68.

between Edward II and Charles IV and to the instructions given to Edward's ambassadors on that occasion were handed to Bishop Burghersh at Eltham at the beginning of May. By then preparations for the King to cross to France were well under way.<sup>1</sup>

Froissart suggests that Philip had stipulated that the royal party should be a small one and that Edward ignored this. Whether this be so or not, Edward was certainly accompanied by a distinguished company headed by the Chancellor, Bishop Burghersh and the Chief Justice, Geoffrey le Scrope. Members of the household included Henry Percy and personal friends of the King like William Montagu and Robert Ufford as well as Mortimer's henchmen, John Mautravers and Hugh Turpington. They arrived at Canterbury on 20 May, moving on to Dover four days later to wait for a reasonable wind. There John of Eltham was appointed Keeper of the Realm in his brother's absence and the Bardi advanced £3,333 6s. 8d. for the expenses of the journey.<sup>2</sup> Edward sailed from Dover in a ship of Winchelsea at noon on 26 May while Isabella and Mortimer returned to Canterbury to wait the King's return.<sup>3</sup>

Edward and his party landed at Wissant and then at a leisurely pace moved by way of Boulogne, Montreuil, Crecy and St. Riquier to Amiens.<sup>4</sup> There on 6 June in the choir of the cathedral Edward did

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1 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 539.

2 Froissart, pp. 93-94. His list of those present does not tally very well with the names in C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 390; E.101/384/9; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 394; E.101/384/1, m.12r. These accounts also show the King making a gift of a crown to Queen Philippa and gifts of rings to Isabella and Mortimer. E.101/384/1, m.17v.

3 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 396; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 547. Isabella lodged at Christ Church Canterbury where in Mortimer's presence the Great Seal was handed to Henry de Clyf who was to act in the absence of Chancellor Burghersh.

4 E.101/384/9. The route is interesting, indicating that Edward was familiar with the area of Crecy before he fought his famous battle there in 1346.

homage for his duchy. The chroniclers speak of reservations on Philip's part since he was unwilling to receive homage for the Agenais until he had received the promised compensation; while Edward was reported as doing verbal homage only without placing his hands between those of the king of France. The official record does not entirely bear this out. The Bishop of Lincoln first spoke on Edward's behalf, emphasising that he in no wise renounced his rights in Gascony and then handed to the chamberlain of France a note relating to the oath. Edward was then asked if he became the man of the King of France for Guienne as his forebears had been. He replied affirmatively and in response Philip expressed acceptance, saving his reservations. Edward then placed his hands between Philip's and Philip kissed him on the mouth.<sup>1</sup>

The chroniclers are correct in that the homage rendered was not the full liege homage which the situation required, and with Philip's reservations future dissension was almost inevitable. In the light of this it is not without significance that Edward's departure from Amiens was fairly rapid. On 9 June he was back at Crecy and he crossed from Wissant to Dover the next day, arriving on the morning of Whit Sunday, 11 June, with Burghersh of Lincoln and Henry Percy still in attendance.<sup>2</sup> This rapid return contrasts with the month long absence of Edward II on his visit to Amiens to do homage in 1320.

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1 Murimuth, p. 59; Le Baker, p. 43; Froissart, p. 95; Foedera II, ii, p. 765. For a discussion on the problem of homage, John le Patourel, 'The Origins of the War', The Hundred Years War, ed. K. Fowler, pp. 28-36.

2 E.101/384/9; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 549. The abbot of Cluny made the gift of a cup to Edward at Amiens on 8 June, E.101/384/1. The Great Seal was returned to Bishop Burghersh at Canterbury on 13 June, the day on which Edward seems to have rejoined his mother and Mortimer. C.C.R., op. cit.

While Froissart states that Edward III and Philip parted on good terms, the Brut reports that Philip was angered because Edward left without taking a formal farewell. Knighton quotes a report that Burghersh detected a French plot to seize the King and that Edward accordingly left secretly.<sup>1</sup> There is no further evidence for this and it seems unlikely in view of the fact that Bishop Burghersh and Geoffrey le Scrope were almost immediately instructed to return to Abbeville to discuss a possible double marriage alliance between Philip's eldest son and Edward's sister Eleanor, and a daughter of Philip with John of Eltham.<sup>2</sup>

A council was summoned to meet at Windsor on 23 July and the King was reported as being there with Bishop Burghersh, Mortimer, Percy, le Scrope, Mautravers and Thomas Berkeley on 27 July.<sup>3</sup> Nothing had come of the mission of Burghersh and Scrope and there was renewed activity in the autumn concerning John of Eltham's marriage to the infant Mary of Biscay. More significantly, however, negotiations were resumed with the French and a strong delegation of lawyers headed by Bishop Airmyn of Norwich were appointed to act as the King's proctors. They were in Paris in the first week of October.<sup>4</sup>

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- 1 J.R.S. Phillips, Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke 1307-1324, pp. 191-92 for Edward's absence from 19 June to 22 July 1320. Froissart, p. 96; The Brut, p. 261; Knighton, pp. 451-52.
  - 2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 399. Le Scrope received wages of £67 13s. 4d. for his journeys to Amiens and Abbeville, E.403/246.
  - 3 This meeting is described in the writ of summons as a 'Colloquium et tractatus'; but there is no provision for the presence of the knights of the shire, citizens or burgesses. English Government at Work, 1327-1336, I, p. 86. C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 550, 563. Also, below, p. 266.
  - 4 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 455, 440; Foedera II, ii, p. 777. Airmyn on 9 December received £89 3s. 5d. for his journey. E.403/246.

Their visit seems to have given a renewed impetus to contacts between the two governments. At the beginning of December it was agreed by the King in council that Burghersh should visit France together with Lancaster and the clerks John Walwayn and John Shoreditch. So that matters could be fully discussed before the embassy set out, postponement of a previously arranged meeting was to be sought from Philip. In the meantime separate arrangements were in hand for a visit to England by a group of Gascon nobles headed by the Counts of Perigord and Foix.<sup>1</sup>

When the embassy finally set out for France early in 1330, its composition had undergone some change. Bishops Orleton of Worcester and Airmyn of Norwich joined the earl of Lancaster in place of Bishop Burghersh, while the northern baron William de Ros of Hamelake was added to the delegation. The business to be discussed was significant for not only was the question of the royal marriage alliances once more on the table together with the Gascon problems raised at Amiens in June, which meant resuming the processes of Montreuil and Perigord; but Philip was now voicing anxieties over the form of words used by King Edward when he did homage the previous summer. They were clearly inadequate and were now thought to have been prejudicial to Philip's position as suzerain.<sup>2</sup> In response to Philip's demand concerning the

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- 1 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 586. Safe conducts for the Gascon party were issued on 26 December; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 465.
  - 2 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 482, 491; Foedera II, ii, pp. 777-78. Lancaster was to have respite of all debts due at the Exchequer. This referred to the £30,000 recognisance due from him as a result of his rebellion the previous year. Above, p. 184. C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 515-16, 593. Documents relating to the processes of Montreuil and Perigord together with Stapeldon's Gascon Calendar had been taken to France by Elias Joneston, keeper of documents, when King Edward had visited Amiens to do his homage. In January 1330, Joneston, in accordance with council orders, transferred to Henry of Canterbury a number of documents containing transcripts not only of treaties between England and France but the form of homage rendered by Edward I and the citation and adjournment of homage by Edward II. Joneston was in France with these documents between 26 February and 18 March 1330. Cuttino, English Diplomatic Administration, 1259-1339, pp. 31-32.

homage the English government was urged, when it consulted the magnates at Eltham at the end of January, to take a firm line and it was no doubt this measure of support which led the regime during the Winchester parliament in March to test the measure of support they might expect by asking the magnates and prelates what aid they would give in defence of Gascony.<sup>1</sup>

The embassy crossed from Dover to Wissant on 10 February. It returned to the King at Reading on 25 March. It seems to have had little success. The King was still looking for the implementation of the pardon for Ingham and the seven Gascon nobles who had been specifically excluded from the arrangements of 1327.<sup>2</sup> On the day following the delegates' return, orders went out for a fleet to be assembled at Plymouth by the end of April so that John of Eltham and other magnates could be carried to Gascony.<sup>3</sup> It would seem that Philip had once again summoned Edward to appear before him in person. On 10 April, John Shoreditch and two associates appointed as the King's proctors were instructed to explain the reasons for the King's refusal to appear or to accept Philip's jurisdiction. But at the same time negotiations were to continue and on the same day at Wood-

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- 1 At Eltham, Archbishop Meopham urged that every step should be taken to secure peace; but if Philip threatened to disinherit Edward of Gascony then he should be resisted by force. At Winchester in the absence of the Archbishop the prelates were not prepared to make a response. They did promise, however, that Convocation would consider the matter. C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 130.
  - 2 For Orleton's role in the embassy and in the second mission which returned to France in April 1330, Haines, The Church and Politics in Fourteenth Century England, pp. 31-33. Orleton received £64 15s. 8d. for his expenses and Airmyn £106 by writs dated at Reading, 24 and 25 March 1330. E.403/249. For Ingham, above, p. 236, and Foedera II, ii, p. 781.
  - 3 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 502; C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 16.

stock, Orleton, Airmyn and Walwayn were instructed to return to France with Shoreditch. Within a few days the assembling of the fleet at Plymouth had been put back until the middle of May, while other supplies ordered to Portsmouth would not now be needed until mid-June.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the postponement the government was clearly alarmed. Royal representatives were sent to the Archbishop's Council at Lambeth to explain to the clergy the dangers which were now threatening and to press the urgency of the need for aid. But the clergy refused to be moved; the Pope had only recently laid a tax on them and where the laity had granted a tax the Lateran council forbade the clergy to make a grant for the same purpose.<sup>2</sup> Part at least of the grounds for refusal was specious since the laity had not granted a subsidy but had been requested to offer aid. In accepting the offer of 1,000 marks from the City of London, the King had stated there was no intention of taking an aid, but that he gratefully accepted the money as a gift. This too was cynical, since the Londoners had been asked at Winchester to make a contribution towards the defence of Gascony and had agreed to do so if others did likewise.<sup>3</sup>

Gascony itself was not neglected. John Darcy together with Guillaume de Seintz, Sire de Pommiers was commissioned to treat with

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- 1 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 509, 511, 512; C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 18-19, 22, 28; Foedera II, ii, pp. 785-86.
  - 2 Annales Paulini, p. 348; English Government at Work, 1327-1336, II, pp. 228-29. The Historia Roffensis, p. 370, credits this refusal to the influence of Bishop Hamo de Hethe. Below, p. 277.
  - 3 Annales Londonienses, pp. 248-49. At the same time as they offered the 1,000 marks the Londoners wrote to Isabella, to Mortimer and to Bishop Burghersh seeking the continuance of their favour.

the Gascon nobles in a bid to consolidate support there.<sup>1</sup> Orleton and his party crossed from Dover on 21 April and they did not return until 26 May.<sup>2</sup> They were on this occasion a little more successful, but the agreement signed at Bois de Vincennes on 8 May made no reference to the question of homage which had moved to the centre of the Anglo-French dispute. As an agreement it stands largely as a series of English responses to the complaints of Philip regarding English failures to implement previous agreements. Territory had not been restored as promised and the indemnities of 50,000 marks and £60,000 had not been paid. The people of the Agenais continued to suffer from the English connection while Philip's subjects banished from France continued to be received in the Duchy. Finally, specified Gascon castles had not been rased as stipulated. The English promised to investigate all these complaints and where appropriate remedy them. In return Philip would hand back castles he had confiscated from a number of Gascon lords, and commissioners would be appointed to ensure that this agreement as well as previous ones would be observed. Edward would ratify the agreement in writing before 22 July.<sup>3</sup>

The treaty was in fact confirmed at Woodstock on 8 July. In addition to the question of Edward's homage, it left unsettled the negotiations for a proposed marriage alliance between the two royal families. This issue was not, however, dead, for a new team of negotiators was empowered to continue discussions on this and other out-

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1 Foedera II, ii, pp. 788-89. Darcy was granted 200 marks to equip himself for the task by a writ dated, Woodstock, 25 April 1330. The King's uncle, the earl of Norfolk received 500 marks being sent to Gascony on similar business at the same time. E.403/249.

2 Haines, op. cit.

3 Foedera II, ii, pp. 791-92.



standing matters. So Bishops Northburgh and Airmyn together with Walwayn and Shoreditch found themselves under orders to discuss this issue as well as the outstanding debt problem and other matters which had been raised at Amiens.<sup>1</sup> Such issues as the treaty did deal with were hardly settled to either English or Gascon satisfaction. It was no more conducive to English interests than the disgraceful treaty of Northampton.

The regime's policy towards France like that towards Scotland seems to have been rather ambivalent. War was costly, the regime therefore would have preferred peace but the magnates of England seem to have wished for a more war-like stance. They wanted Edward to put forward a strong claim to the French crown and they no doubt felt a kindred sympathy for the barons of Gascony who had suffered at the hands of the French. In this dilemma Isabella and Mortimer temporised. They continually made war-like noises but when Philip called their bluff they were obliged to retract and conclude peace on terms which were certainly not favourable to England. Thus the negotiations seemed to bring the governments no closer to each other. So indecisive were the military preparations by England that the accusations against Mortimer the following autumn included charges that he had financially benefitted from the operations by levying a fine in lieu of service on those who had been summoned to come to the King.<sup>2</sup>

Thus while the English humiliation over Gascony was nothing like so great as that suffered at the hands of Scotland, the government's peace policy did little to enhance English reputations. The ratific-

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 534; Foedera II, ii, p. 794.

2 Rot. Parl. II, pp. 52-53. For a comment on this, below, p. 301.

ation of the treaty of Bois de Vincennes on 8 July effectively altered nothing. But by that date the regime was being assaulted by new fears and new dangers. Gascony remained an issue, but for the moment other events were to overtake attempts to deal with the problem.<sup>1</sup>

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1 The last months of the regime are discussed in Section 6, below.

(c) Law and Order

The regime's foreign policy directed towards the maintenance of peace, successful perhaps in its own terms, but regarded as humiliating by many of the people, came under criticism when Mortimer fell. The only area of policy for which Mortimer was not indicted in November 1330 was that relating to the maintenance of law and order and the implementation of justice. It is clear that this was an area to which the government gave a great deal of attention, for not unnaturally it was an area of concern to the ordinary people.

Amongst the petitions presented in the parliament of February 1327 may be found requests that private quarrels should not be allowed to disturb the peace and that loyal men should be assigned in each county as Keepers of the Peace with power to punish according to law and reason.<sup>1</sup> However, when the government took action on this petition the resultant statute did not contain authority for keepers of the peace to punish, while commissioners assigned to the counties under an order of 8 March 1327 found themselves without the vital power to arrest suspects.<sup>2</sup> This, coupled with the fact that sheriffs were ordered to release prisoners held in the gaols,<sup>3</sup> does not seem to have been a very promising start and the chroniclers complained that this led to continuous violence. There may well have been some increase in judicial activity during the year 1327-28, though it is

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1 Rot. Parl. II, pp. 10-11.

2 English Government at Work, 1327-1336, III; B.H. Putnam, 'Shire Officials: Keepers of the Peace and Justices of the Peace', p. 187.

3 The Brut, p. 248.

impossible to say whether this could be ascribed to an increase in crime.<sup>1</sup>

It is also difficult to assess how far baronial violence affected local crime and therefore increased the need for firm administration of justice. Equally it is not easy to decide how far barons used local disturbances to further their own ends. Yet there are suggestions that some of the local violence of the years 1326-1328 was politically motivated and that appeals from the people for an end to disturbances of the peace were justified. Without a close analysis of those indicted in the commissions of the peace, it is impossible to be positive in this regard but certainly some of those involved in what on the surface appears to be local Gloucestershire rivalries in the spring of 1327 were known supporters of Edward II.<sup>2</sup> The issues which caused strife between the great abbeys of Abingdon, St. Albans and Bury St. Edmund's were similarly local; but clearly the involvement of Londoners in these disputes was not simply the result of urban co-operation.

The source of contention was inevitably the liberties and land holding of the townsmen which were believed to be under threat from

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1 Barbara A. Hanawalt, Crime and Conflict in English Communities, 1300-1348, p. 226. A series of tables in the book, figures 12-19, pp. 243-50, showing the number of crimes per year in the counties of Norfolk, Yorkshire, Essex, Northampton, Huntingdon, Surrey, Somerset and Hereford suggest that the years 1327-30 saw a slight increase in crime rates though certainly not approaching the peaks of earlier years. But statistics of this sort are not to be relied on. They are often no more than an indication of judicial activity since crimes coming to court in a given year does not mean they were committed in that year. The only safe conclusion may well be therefore that Isabella and Mortimer stimulated judicial activity.

2 Above, p. 132.

the church authorities. At St. Albans the townsfolk were urged on by Londoners to threaten violence unless their demands were granted. The situation was momentarily eased so far as the abbey was concerned by the presence in January 1327 of Henry of Lancaster; but once he had gone physical violence was directed against the abbey and the townsmen's demands were renewed.<sup>1</sup> As a result there was a meeting in London in February to try and resolve the dispute. Twelve arbitrators were appointed and, to the abbey's chagrin, advised in favour of the town having its liberties. After further discussion the abbot was obliged to agree an indenture which granted the townsmen's demands. The monks accepted this under protest and the disputed lands were handed over.<sup>2</sup>

The trouble at Abingdon produced greater violence.<sup>3</sup> At the end of April a dispute had arisen at Oxford between the scholars and the university authorities because the former complained that their liberties had been infringed by new statutes. It was therefore not surprising that the scholars should make common cause with the townsfolk of Abingdon who were seeking release from the authority of the abbey. The abbey gates had already been unsuccessfully attacked but

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- 1 Lancaster passed through the town on his way from Kenilworth to London about 25 January 1327. Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani a Thome Walsingham, II, 1290-1349, ed. H.T. Riley, R.S. (London, 1867), pp. 155-58.
  - 2 Op. cit., pp. 160-71; the indenture is dated 16 March 1327 and was confirmed on 14 April, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 93. Considerable damage was done to the lands handed over. There was further violence some seven years later when after a determined stand by the abbot Richard of Wallingford, the abbey regained its liberties. Gesta Abbatum, pp.175-76; Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, (Cambridge, 1950), p. 266.
  - 3 G. Lambrick, 'Abingdon and the Riots of 1327', Oxoniensa, 29-30, (1964-5), pp. 129-141.

with the support which came from Oxford the abbey was broken into, buildings were burned and church property seized. The prior who was sick, was threatened until he signed agreements granting the men of Abingdon custody of their town and the right to elect for themselves a provost and bailiff. No-one seems actually to have been killed but some of the monks had narrow escapes. When news of the riots reached London a commission of oyer and terminer was appointed to investigate the attacks. In the meantime the abbot and monks were granted royal protection because they were too frightened to approach the devastated abbey. John de Stonor, a justice of the common pleas was appointed to strengthen the commission a few weeks later, but it could not have made much progress since a new commission was issued to John Mautravers, Stonor and others at the beginning of January 1328 on the complaint of the abbot of Abingdon who now accused Oxford men as well as the people of Abingdon. In due course the rioters were punished for their initial success, losing the charter which they had extracted from the monks by force.<sup>1</sup>

The events at Bury were more serious still and the quarrel there was more prolonged. It was all part of a long drawn out struggle for municipal independence.<sup>2</sup> It seems to have begun on 13 January 1327 with a meeting between some men of Bury and some Londoners who urged

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1 Annales Paulini, p. 332; Knighton, p. 443; Knowles, op. cit., pp. 267-68; C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 221-22. The commission was appointed on 24 May, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 151. For royal protection, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 127; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 203. Stonor was added to the original commission on 20 August. For the new commission, C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 221-22.

2 The fullest account of these events is to be found, Depraedatio Abbatiae Sancti Edmundi, Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey, II, ed. T. Arnold, R.S., pp. 329-353 on which the following paragraphs are largely based. See also, M.D. Lobel, The Borough of Bury St. Edmund's (Oxford, 1935); R.S. Gottfried, Bury St. Edmund's and the Urban Crisis 1290-1535 (Princeton U.P., 1982).

them to attack the abbey. The next day three thousand men broke into the abbey. They ill-treated the monks, removed vessels, gold, silver and jewels and imprisoned the Prior. The following days saw renewed attacks on the abbey buildings from which royal charters were removed. The abbey's nominee as alderman of the town council was replaced by the townsmen's own choice, John de Burton. Monks who tried to contact the abbot who was in London at the parliament which was approving the accession of Edward III were prevented from getting word to him. Houses were destroyed, the town gates taken over and rents due to the abbey collected by the rioters who threatened death to any who would not pay.

When the abbot returned from London on a short visit at the end of January, he was obliged to make concessions to the rioters and to exonerate them formerly from the offences they had committed. Having thus granted the borough autonomy the abbot returned to Westminster.<sup>1</sup> Some of the rioters followed him there and when they found that he was winning support against their actions they hastened back to Bury to renew the plundering of the abbey's resources. The townsmen now found new allies against the abbey in the persons of the Friars Minor at nearby Babwell who had long been trying to gain a footing in the town. The harassment of the abbey and its servants thus continued. In May the King intervened ordering both sides to send two representatives to him at York before the middle of June so that the dispute could be settled.<sup>2</sup> By that time the government was fully committed to the Scottish campaign and could do little more than appoint overseers to

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1 He used the pretext that he had been appointed a receiver of bills. Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey, II, p. 334.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 151.

see that the peace was not breached.<sup>1</sup> This was not particularly successful. Reports reached the north early in August that the men of Bury had taken advantage of the King's preoccupations to beat up some of the abbey's men, to cut down trees and to carry off £200 worth of goods. The King could only reiterate his prohibitions against breaking the peace.<sup>2</sup>

The next serious outbreak came in October. The blame for it was placed by each party on the other. According to the monks it was the rioters who began to threaten them and then under the leadership of John de Burton embarked on the further destruction of abbey buildings so that the monks were obliged to offer armed resistance.<sup>3</sup> The townsmen, in a letter begging advice and help from the City of London authorities, blamed the monks for imprisoning within the abbey grounds women and children who had been attending a church service. When their release was demanded, the monks attacked the burgesses who retaliated by setting fire to the abbey buildings, though the church itself was saved by the joint effort of the townsmen and the monks. These two accounts<sup>4</sup> suggest that it took very little to start a riot and the government was exasperated by the whole situation. On 19 October the prior had been seized and mocked and although the monks tried to discuss an agreement, Burton and his friends seized the twenty four monks of the delegation and kept them imprisoned for a week while twenty two of the abbey's manors were

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- 1 Robert Walkefare and John Claver were associated with John Tendencyng and Ralph Bocking for this purpose on 25 July. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 156.
  - 2 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 211.
  - 3 Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey, II, pp. 337-39.
  - 4 For the letter, C.P.M.R. 1323-64, p. 35.



plundered.<sup>1</sup> A royal commission under the king's uncle, the earl of Norfolk, was now appointed to arrest those attacking the abbey and to bring any other criminals to justice.<sup>2</sup> A week later in response to a formal complaint of the abbot the justices, John Stonor, Walter Friskene, Robert Mabelthorpe and John Bousser were appointed to a new commission of oyer and terminer. The abbot named 154 people, including butchers, drapers, tailors and mercers as having been involved in the attacks on the abbey and its servants during which property had been destroyed or stolen and letters and charters had been extracted by force. Further complaints estimated the value of stolen livestock as being £600.<sup>3</sup>

When Robert Morley and John Howard, under Norfolk's commission, appeared in the town there were thoughts of resistance but in the event none was offered and the men arrested were carried off to Norwich in thirty carts. The justices then got to work and nineteen rioters were hanged.<sup>4</sup> Amongst those dealt with were John de Burton and his close associates; but they were not dealt with effectively. It was Burton who was to lead the raid on the house of the unfortunate abbot Richard de Draughton at Chevington in October 1328. As has already been observed, this may have been no more than a continuation of the events of the previous year,<sup>5</sup> and certainly the opportunity of access to the abbot's seal given by his kidnapping, was used to secure

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1 Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey, II, pp. 339-47.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 213-14. Norfolk was associated with Thomas Bardolph, Robert Morley, Peter Uvedale, John Howard and Robert Walkefare.

3 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 217-19.

4 Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey, II, pp. 347-49.

5 Above, pp. 167-68

the release of some of those imprisoned for offences against the abbey. But we should not overlook the fact that Isabella had been well received at Bury in September 1326, that the King visited the shrine of St. Edmund, he had been there as recently as 25 September 1328, and that the abbot had been appointed one of the receivers of petitions in the parliament of February 1327. He was clearly trusted by the regime while as we have seen, Hamo de Chigwell the leader of those Londoners who keep appearing in all the trouble spots was an opponent of Mortimer.<sup>1</sup>

Amongst those involved in the abbot of Bury's kidnapping was the London skinner, John Coterel, who was subsequently indicted before the royal commission investigating the case and hanged.<sup>2</sup> It is tempting in view of his involvement with opponents of the regime like Chigwell to connect him with his namesakes the famous Coterel gang from the Midlands and so to ascribe to the gang some sort of political affiliation. This gang emerged in Derbyshire in August 1328, when James, John and Nicholas Coterel, at the instigation of one Robert Bernard, a former priest at Bakewell, ejected the vicar of Bakewell from his church. Bernard in March 1326 had appeared as a supporter of Isabella and Mortimer and had been imprisoned in Oxford gaol.<sup>3</sup> They were subsequently joined by William Aune, a former constable of Tickhill Castle, who had been a supporter of Edward II and an opponent of Thomas

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- 1 Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey, II, pp. 352, 328; Walsingham, p. 180; E.101/383/14; above, p. 255, n.1; G.A. Williams, Medieval London, From Commune to Capital, pp. 301-05.
  - 2 Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey, II, p. 353.
  - 3 J.G. Bellamy, 'The Coterel Gang: an Anatomy of a Band of 14th. Century Criminals', E.H.R., lxxix (1964), pp. 698-717.

of Lancaster.<sup>1</sup> The Coterels forged a link with Sir Robert Ingram, sheriff of the counties of Nottingham and Derby between February 1327 and November 1328, and since they extensively harassed Henry of Lancaster's estates in Derbyshire and Staffordshire, they would not have been entirely anathema to the regime. In February 1328, Thomas of Lancaster's executors claimed that £5,000 worth of animals had been stolen in an area extending to Northamptonshire, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Pickering. This argues good organisation. It does not necessarily suggest direct political inspiration, but the chain of communication is there and Mortimer was at Nottingham in January 1328.<sup>2</sup>

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- 1 Aune had been a servant of Gaveston and an accomplice of Baldock and the Despensers. Tickhill had been granted to Isabella in February 1327; J.R. Maddicott, Thomas of Lancaster, pp. 306-07; C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 66-69. In February 1328 Aune was assigned 40 marks from the Exchequer in lieu of 40 marks from the issues of Tickhill, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 258. He also received a grant of the office of Tronage of wool at Boston, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 238. In November 1330 Aune petitioned for compensation for the loss of the manor of Lee in Norfolk and the keepership of Tickhill Castle. The promise was made of a Constablenesship or 'graunde Baillie', Rot. Parl. II, p. 36. William Aune was appointed keeper of Abergavenny Castle in February 1331, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 230. It is possible however that more than one William Aune appears in the records, for William Aune was appointed in June 1328 to inquire into the detention of forfeited Despenser goods, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 347, and William Aune was constable of Caerphilly Castle in 1329. He was relieved of this position on 4 April 1330. This follows the Kent conspiracy in which Aune was involved. C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 122, 175. In August 1330 he was not to be molested for his adherence to Kent, C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 53. It is, of course, likely that Aune, a supporter of Edward II, should be involved with Kent. If all these references are to the same man Bellamy's suggestion that he was in straightened circumstances hardly stands up. J. Bellamy, Crime and Public Order in England in the Later Middle Ages, p. 74.
  - 2 J.G. Bellamy, 'The Coterel Gang', op. cit.; dates of Ingram's appointment, C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 17, 110; Mortimer, C.53/114. The Coterels again raided Lancaster's lands in Derbyshire and Staffordshire in June 1329. J. Bellamy, Crime and Public Order in the Later Middle Ages, p. 78.

There is no direct link between John Coterel in London and his namesake in Derbyshire just as the varied backgrounds of the Coterel gang makes it impossible to ascribe to them a positive political affiliation. It is clear that the gang was available to almost anyone who was ready to make it worth their while to act lawlessly and undoubtedly for a time they made violence pay. In the same way the Folvilles of Ashby-Folville in Leicestershire established a notoriety for murder and robbery, their most notorious crime being the murder of Roger Beler, a baron of the Exchequer, in 1326. The motive for the crime seems to have involved local rivalries and political disagreement, but there is really no greater evidence to connect the Folvilles with politics than there is to connect the Coterels. As in the latter case, so in the former, the evidence is entirely circumstantial.<sup>1</sup> The Despenser government in 1326 had specifically excluded Beler's murderers from the pardons offered to those who would fight against Mortimer, while the Mortimer regime gave an early pardon to those murderers.<sup>2</sup> The Folvilles are later found giving support to Mortimer against Lancaster in the crisis of 1328-29 in return for which they received a general pardon in March 1329.<sup>3</sup> When Mortimer fell orders were quickly issued for the arrest of the Folvilles<sup>4</sup> but as usual it proved ineffective and they remained at large only to make common cause with the Coterels in the brazen kidnapping of Sir Richard

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- 1 E.L.G. Stones, 'The Folvilles of Ashby-Folville, Leicestershire, and their Associates in Crime, 1326-1347', T.R.H.S., 5th series, vii (1957), pp. 117-136.
  - 2 The pardon is dated 11 February 1327. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 10.
  - 3 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 374.
  - 4 C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 61.

Willoughby, a justice of the King's bench, in January 1332. Nevertheless there are just enough hints to suggest that Mortimer may have used the Midland gangs to harass Lancaster but no direct link was even suggested in the Mortimer indictment in 1330 and that may perhaps be regarded as evidence that any connection is mere speculation.

It is, however, clear that medieval criminal bands, as well as being in business for themselves, were also in the employ of a magnate or a religious house and that not everyone regarded them with hate and fear. Indeed they could hardly have so long escaped justice for the murders they committed had they not been supported either out of fear or sympathy by the local population and warned by their spies if they were in danger of the law catching up with them. Usually these spies were men of their own type but the bands won a wider sympathy because all classes of society found they could add to their income by crime and readily turned to crime to resolve differences.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore hardly surprising that after a decade of political violence, the government of Isabella and Mortimer should respond to the pleas of the people by attempting a firmer administration of justice, even while they themselves quietly continued to exploit the circumstances which gave rise to conflict.

It is difficult to assess from where within the government the initiative in these matters came. B.H. Putnam speaks of Mortimer and the chief justice of the King's Bench, Geoffrey Scrope, as being in control, and sees the Statute of Northampton of 1328 as the focus

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1 J. Bellamy, Crime and Public Order in England in the Later Middle Ages, pp. 73, 82, 84; Hanawalt, Crime and Conflict in English Communities, 1300-1348, pp. 211-12, 273.

of Mortimer's measures for peace. E.L.G. Stones is more cautious. His view is that inferences drawn from Scrope's speeches do not establish Scrope in a dominant position close to Mortimer, yet there are few candidates other than Scrope capable of initiating and carrying out the changes which took place between 1327 and 1330. Helen Cam more directly links Mortimer with the Statute of Northampton and sees the speeches of Scrope and William Herle at the beginning of the General Eyres of 1329-30 as describing a policy to restore law and order, which if not actually being carried out was certainly being implemented under his auspices.<sup>1</sup>

Mortimer's career does point to an interest in the law. He had been justiciar in Ireland, 1319-20, during which time he had held a parliament in Dublin which had produced statutes relating to public order and administrative efficiency. The people of Dublin spoke of him as having 'thought much of saving and keeping the peace'.<sup>2</sup> He had been appointed Justiciar of north and south Wales during pleasure on 20 February 1327 and this was extended to a life grant in November 1328.<sup>3</sup> That he took this position seriously is suggested by the fact that John Giffard as deputy justiciar was commissioned eighteen months after Mortimer's fall to investigate oppressions by the former justiciar.<sup>4</sup>

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- 1 B.H. Putnam, 'Shire Officials; Keepers of the Peace and Justices of the Peace', English Government at Work, 1327-1336, III, p. 188. B.H. Putnam, 'The Transformation of the Keepers of the Peace into Justices of the Peace, 1327-1380', T.R.H.S., 4th series, IV (1929), pp. 19-48; E.L.G. Stones, Sir Geoffrey le Scrope (c.1285-1340), Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Glasgow (1954), pp. 142-43; Helen M. Cam, 'The General Eyres of 1329-30', E.H.R., xxxix (1924), pp. 241-252.
  - 2 R. Frame, English Lordship in Ireland, 1318-61, p. 161.
  - 3 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 19; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 327.
  - 4 C.P.R. 1330-34, pp. 346-47.

His own experiences in his trial in 1322 may also have given him some interest in seeing that the due processes of law were carried out even though he had not been over scrupulous in this regard when dealing with the Despensers.<sup>1</sup>

With the possible exception of Oliver Ingham there does not seem to be anyone else with legal experience close to the centre of the regime. Ingham had held the post of Justiciar of Chester between 1322 and 1325 and did so again from February 1328 until October 1330.<sup>2</sup> The county had been notoriously restless during Edward II's reign and Ingham's experience would have been useful in advising Mortimer and Scrope. It is not likely that he was in any sense the initiator of change. In any case Isabella and Mortimer were far too jealous guardians of their own power to permit initiatives from those they patronised. Even Scrope could hardly have operated without Mortimer's encouragement and we should probably look no further than Mortimer himself as the source of measures which weakened the authority of local justices and passed power to the central government.

The act of 1327, far from extending the power of local justices of the peace, had rather set bounds to their authority by not giving them the power to punish.<sup>3</sup> Soon complaints of the failure of local gentry to ensure that the peace was kept meant that magnates were appointed to supervise them. Mortimer himself was appointed chief keeper of the peace in the counties of Hereford, Stafford and Worces-

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1 For reference to Mortimer's conviction in 1322, below, p.319.  
For the Despensers' convictions in 1326, above, pp. 17-18, 28-29

2 P.H.W. Booth, The Financial Administration of the Lordship and County of Chester, 1272-1377 (Manchester, 1981), p. 60.

3 Above, p. 251

ter in June 1327.<sup>1</sup> But such supervisory activity was hardly satisfactory as a permanent measure and the parliament at Northampton in May 1328 came up with a different solution probably on Mortimer's initiative, but one with which Scrope was clearly associated at least as far as responsibility for its implementation was concerned.

By the terms of the Statute of Northampton armed and mounted men were not to be present when the King's justices were going about their business nor were they to be present in fairs or markets. This was to be enforced by local officials. However, when it came to the keeping of the peace in accordance with the terms of the statute of Winchester, special justices with the power to punish were assigned to the task. Finally with regard to crimes already committed, special justices were assigned to hear the cases. This last clause was implemented by a series of commissions of oyer and terminer issued on 15 May 1328 to cover sixteen counties. Those sitting on these commissions included a number of magnates and justices. Scrope himself with associate justices was empowered to hear cases in any county. An important task was therefore assigned to the King's Bench, for Yorkshire had not been included in the counties listed under the Statute. Scrope accordingly took the King's Bench to York for the Trinity Term 1328.<sup>2</sup> A further gap was filled when a commission was

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 90, 152.

2 H. Cam, 'The General Eyres, 1329-30', E.H.R., xxxix (1924), pp. 241-252; B.H. Putnam, English Government at Work, 1327-1336, III, pp. 188-89; E.L.G. Stones, Sir Geoffrey le Scrope (c.1285-1340), Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, pp. 147-49; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 297.



issued on 20 July to cover the counties of Lancashire, Shropshire and Staffordshire.<sup>1</sup>

The powers of these commissions were not dissimilar to those granted to earlier justices of Trailbaston. They were to inquire into officials' misdeeds and to hear and determine cases of felony and trespass. Helen Cam suggests that this was merely a preliminary to Scrope's wider plan for the restoration of the General Eyre as the most effective method of establishing law and order. In the face of the Lancastrian upheaval in the winter of 1328-29, attempts to prevent the carrying of arms were doomed to failure and renewed orders to the counties had little effect.<sup>2</sup> Scrope and his fellow justices were ordered to be with the King at Leicester in mid-January so that they might follow the King and deal with cases as they went;<sup>3</sup> but by the appointed date Lancaster had submitted and the government turned its attention to the postponed Salisbury parliament which met at Westminster on 9 February 1329.<sup>4</sup>

However, the aftermath of the Lancastrian debacle does see a

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- 1 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 297. Amongst those on these various commissions were magnates such as William de Ros, Richard de Grey, Bartholomew Burghersh, William la Zouche, Hugh Courtenay and Thomas Berkeley and justices such as John de Stonor, Richard Willoughby, William Herle and William de Denum.
  - 2 In July the sheriff of Lancaster had been ordered to prevent anyone going armed in the county in accordance with the order of the Northampton parliament, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 402. In August tournaments were forbidden, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 407. In September sheriffs were ordered to forbid armed men to meet together, Foedera, II, ii, p. 751; and a similar instruction went out at the beginning of the Salisbury parliament in the middle of October, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 413. Further instructions went to the sheriffs on 10 and 11 November 1328. C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 420-21.
  - 3 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 424.
  - 4 Above, pp. 183-84

resurgence of the keepers of the peace. Miss Putnam suggests that this may have been due to a discussion in parliament between 9 and 22 February 1329, but this is to ignore the writs issued at Windsor on 30 January to Bartholomew Burghersh, John Cobham and John Field as keepers of the peace in Kent in accordance with the Statute of Winchester with power to inquire into felonies, arrest felons and punish or take fines. It is specifically stated that this meets the demands of the Westminster parliament and this must refer to the request of the Commons in the parliament of February 1327. Further writs were issued in March to cover parts of the north of England, for the Isle of Wight in April and in May for the counties of Northampton and Sussex.<sup>1</sup> Some sort of controversy would seem to have been going on and the government may have been unable to decide whether to make a wider use of the keepers of the peace. In the event commissions of the peace for thirty eight counties were enrolled on 18 May 1329 in a form resembling that of 1327 with the addition of the authority of determining felonies and trespasses. This certainly appears to be a wide concession to the commons. If it was a genuine concession the triumph of the advocates of the keepers of the peace was short lived.<sup>2</sup>

A council met at Windsor on 23 July 1329. Mortimer and Scrope were certainly there together with a large number of lawyers, churchmen and magnates.<sup>3</sup> Amongst the thirteen lawyers, eight had apparently

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1 B.H. Putnam, English Government at Work, 1327-1336, III, p. 189; Foedera II, ii, p. 755.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 429-31; B.H. Putnam, 'The Transformation of the Keepers of the Peace into the Justices of the Peace, 1327-1380', T.R.H.S., 4th series, IV (1929), pp. 19-48.

3 Summons had been sent out on 14 June, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 550. A note on the Close Rolls dated 27 July records the King's presence at Windsor together with that of the Bishop of Lincoln, Mortimer, Henry Percy, Thomas Berkeley, John Mautravers and Geoffrey le Scrope. Above, p. 244.

never been summoned before. After discussing the question of the tranquillity and quiet of the people, the decision was taken to hold a General Eyre, the first since that held in London in 1321.<sup>1</sup> Commissions for holding the Eyre were issued on 3 September. It was to be held in two counties, Northampton and Nottingham. Scrope was to preside over the former and William de Herle over the latter. Scrope was to be at Northampton on 6 November and Herle and his associates at Nottingham a week later. Further orders went to the sheriffs to make local preparations and the chief justice of the Common Bench was ordered to adjourn all pleas concerning the two counties to the eyres.<sup>2</sup>

Hardly had the eyres begun than attempts were made to bring them to an end. Early in December, Scrope and Herle together with the sheriffs of Shropshire, Stafford, Hereford and Gloucester were ordered to inquire into false rumours concerning the entry of aliens into the country. Certain magnates were trying to end the eyre by spreading these rumours. The magnates are not named, nor the vague nature of the rumours further defined. The curious incident suggests

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1 H.M. Cam, 'The General Eyres of 1329-30', E.H.R., xxxix (1924), pp. 241-252.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 439. Scrope was associated with Lambert de Trykyngham, John de Cantebrigge, John Randolf and John de Radenhale: Herle sat with Ralph de Bereford, John de Ifeld, Adam de Brom and William de Denum; Cam, op. cit. The most recent examination of the General Eyre is that by David Crook, 'The Later Eyres', E.H.R., ccclxxxiii (1982), pp. 241-268. He agrees that the eyre's revival was a police measure to cope with lawlessness as a response to petitions in parliament asking for action. He disagrees with E.L.G. Stones' and G.O. Sayles' view that there was a financial reason for the eyre. An eyre carried no greater power than a Trailbaston commission, but it was prestigious and Scrope may well have recalled the impact of the London eyre of 1321 over which he had presided.

that some magnates at court were trying to protect their clients from the probing investigations of Scrope and Herle.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever the cause of the rumours no more seems to have been heard about them. The eyre continued and was also extended into the counties of Bedford and Derby. Scrope seems to have finished his immediate task towards the end of June 1330, but the work could not be continued. That summer brought increasing pressure on the regime's resources and it is quite possible that Scrope was too valuable an adviser to be long absent from court, particularly when affairs concerned with France were demanding attention. It is also probable that having experienced the vast weight of work involved in an Eyre, Scrope may have felt that it was not really a practical way of proceeding. By the end of 1330 it seems to have been realised that an eyre was an unsuitable way of enforcing the law and that it was obsolescent.<sup>2</sup> With the fall of Mortimer in October 1330 the policy was abandoned and the November parliament of that year reverted to former practice. While the eyre had been in progress the new powers of the keepers of the peace had been of little use. Now the eyre was abandoned the keepers lost those new powers as justices, and reverted to their former status. Commissions of the peace issued in February 1331 reverted to the form of 1327, while commissions of oyer and terminer were appointed to deal with the arms clause of the Statute of Northampton.<sup>3</sup>

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1 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 588.

2 David Crook, op. cit.

3 E.L.G. Stones, Sir Geoffrey le Scrope (c.1285-1340), Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, pp. 159-163.

The reversion to former practice on Mortimer's fall may be seen as a comment on the regime's judicial policy. Even though it did not suffer direct attack in the Mortimer indictment, it can hardly be termed a success. Unrest and violence were not abated, and though Isabella and Mortimer heeded the Commons' complaints in February 1327, the steps they took in the parliaments at Westminster and Northampton and at the Windsor Council did little to fulfil the people's wishes. Indeed the measures taken may be seen as yet another example of the efforts of the regime to channel the source of all power into the hands of the Crown as administered by Isabella and Mortimer. By limiting the powers of the keepers and by appointing overseers under commission of oyer and terminer and ultimately by the use of the General Eyre, the government kept a firm control on the administration of justice. Scrope found that overcentralisation was not a practical proposition and was quite willing to do the bidding of a new parliament after Mortimer's policies had collapsed. Indeed he was probably responsible for the ensuing improvements in the administration of justice as he continued to serve the Crown in a variety of capacities until his death.<sup>1</sup>

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1 B.H. Putnam, The English Government at Work, 1327-1336, III, p. 190.

(d) Finance

The regime's foreign policy and its attitude to law and order seem to have been marked by a lack of decisiveness which could be held to suggest a pragmatic approach to government rather than the following of a consistent policy line. Perhaps the only fixed objective aimed at by Isabella and Mortimer was the maintenance of their own power. Their administration of the country's finances during their four years of power seems similarly to have been inefficient and improvident, transforming the financially favourable position which they inherited into a precarious situation by excessive spending and heavy borrowing.

The result of the fiscal policies of the last years of Edward II's reign had been the amassing of huge wealth.<sup>1</sup> The various Exchequer reforms of the years 1323-26 were designed to maximise the use of the Crown's resources and to enable all outstanding debts to be collected as speedily as possible. The situation had been immensely complicated in 1322 by the confiscations of the lands of the Contrariants, which meant the transference to the Crown not only of the income from their lands, but also personal possessions, jewels and debts. Although leases on many of these estates were taken up by supporters of the King, the Crown itself received considerable benefits not least from the estates of Thomas of Lancaster, valued at £11,000 a year, which the King retained for himself. An estimate of the King's net income drawn up in January 1324 quotes the enormous

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1 The latest examination of these policies is to be found in M. Buck, Politics, Finance and the Church in the Reign of Edward II, pp. 163-196.

sum of £60,549.<sup>1</sup> This sum was almost equal to the £62,000 held in reserve at the Exchequer when Archbishop Melton handed over as Treasurer to Bishop Stratford of Winchester on 17 November 1326.<sup>2</sup>

The amount of money inherited by the regime of Isabella and Mortimer on its assumption of power was not, however, confined to that found in the treasury. Cash and plate belonging to Edward II's fallen ministers were appropriated and further sums belonging to the Crown were found in Wales. £1,568 10s. 11½d. belonging to the Earl of Arundel was paid into the King's Wardrobe at Hereford in November 1326. At much the same time £868 5s. 11d. belonging to the Younger Despenser, most of which had been found at St. Swithin's, Winchester was handed over. Further sacks of Arundel's valuables which had been deposited in Chichester Cathedral were handed over to the Wardrobe at Hereford on 21 November. This windfall amounted to approximately £560 0s. 0d. It was augmented by more of the Younger Despenser's plate worth £124 14s. 7d. found in the Tower and £200 from the temporalities of Bishop Airmyn of Norwich. £800 belonging to Hervey de Stanton had been seized at Bury St. Edmund's as Isabella passed through the town at the end of September and in addition there was the Elder Despenser's treasure taken at Leicester.<sup>3</sup>

These sums, however, were trivial compared with later findings. On 19 August 1326, Edward II then at Porchester had received £7,000

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1 J.R. Maddicott, Thomas of Lancaster, 1307-1322, pp. 22-23; Natalie Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, pp. 97-98.

2 E.101/332/21.

3 E.101/383/8 m.5r.; C.P.R. 1324-27, pp. 339-40. The Despenser plate and jewels was given by the King to his mother in January 1327, C.C.R. 1323-27, p. 629. The treasure of the Elder Despenser had been seized for Lancaster at Leicester, Knighton, I, p. 435, above, p. 10. For Hervey de Stanton's treasure, above, p. 7

from the Exchequer. At least £1,870 of this had been spent on supplies but seven barrels remained deposited at St. Swithin's Priory, six bearing the Exchequer seal and one the chamberlain's. When these were examined they were found to contain £4,005 13s. 10d.<sup>1</sup> When all this is added together it comes to something in excess of £70,000. When Bishop Orleton of Hereford handed over the keys of the Treasury to Bishop Burghersh of Lincoln on 27 March 1327, only £8,883 4s. 7d. remained besides a few thousand pounds of florins. This represents an expenditure of some £54,500 in four and a half months.<sup>2</sup> Some of this was replaced by the discovery of £13,295 in Caerphilly Castle when it surrendered in April 1327, money which arrived at York at the end of June, in time to enable the Scottish campaigners to receive pay.<sup>3</sup> This money must represent a proportion of the £29,000 which the King's clerk, John de Langton, had handed to Edward II at Chepstow on 20 October 1326. The remainder seems to be unaccounted for.<sup>4</sup> Considering the apparent failure to trace this sum, the Exchequer's persistence in trying to secure a mere 300 marks from John Howard, Edward II's representative in East Anglia, is remarkable. This sum had been entrusted to him when the King was trying to raise troops. Howard had failed to raise any, but despite instructions in October and December 1326 to return the money, he took no notice. When instructed in February 1327 to appear in person at Eastertide he did not turn up. When the war in Scotland became imminent he was ordered in May, to hand the money to the sheriff to

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1 Memoranda Roll 1326-1327, No. 813, p. 107; E.101/383/8 m.5v.

2 E.101/332/26.

3 Above, pp. 130, 209.

4 Memoranda Roll 1326-1327, No. 212, p. 36.



provide victuals for those going north.<sup>1</sup>

It is, however, hardly surprising that the regime needed all the money it could lay its hands on. Even before Isabella and Mortimer had landed in England they were extremely heavily financially committed. Their war policy against Scotland was very costly and they had to face demands early in their period of rule. An important source of revenue was lost to them when they were obliged to return the confiscated Contrariant lands, so that they were increasingly dependent upon traditional sources of revenue to meet their expenditure. Income from the Crown lands, subsidies, customs and loans all had to be exploited in an effort to meet the expenses of government and household and to finance the generous rewards which Isabella and Mortimer gave to themselves and the not so generous gifts bestowed on their supporters.<sup>2</sup>

It is extremely difficult to assess accurately what the regime's income may have been, although Joseph Strayer has attempted to do this in his introduction to the second volume of The English Government at Work, 1327-1336. He divides the revenues of the Crown into three different areas: farms of shires, boroughs and royal manors, escheats, wardships and reliefs; secondly amercements, fines and profits of the seals and mints; and finally duties on exports and imports, lay subsidies and clerical tenths. Strayer estimates a figure of about £15,000 per annum for the first two of these groups.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Memoranda Roll 1326-1327, No. 1596, p. 218; No. 1615, p. 221; No. 2056, p. 281.

2 Above, p. 126-28.

3 The English Government at Work, 1327-1336, II, pp. 4-5.

It is, however, almost impossible to assess the returns in terms of yearly amounts for while it was part of the duties of the sheriffs in the counties to collect the farm of the county, the methods of accounting were always in arrears and the amounts coming in from fines and amercements through judicial action in the Exchequer were irregular.<sup>1</sup> For the county farms, however, an annual figure of some £7,500 has been calculated.<sup>2</sup>

Fines and amercements may have added about £635 a year.<sup>3</sup> But assessing the returns from the escheators is even more perilous. The figures of the accounts of William Trussel, escheator south of Trent, between 26 February and 29 September 1327 total about £500. But the figures for subsequent terms are much smaller, suggesting that buyers were not readily available in the first months of the regime or that Mortimer was not sufficiently confident to farm out the lands. The year 1327-28, when Simon Bereford was in charge, drew in £309 9s. 0½d. and the following year £300 12s. 11½d. In comparison escheats north of Trent were worth very little; £74 15s. 0½d. to 29 September 1327 and £83 12s. 1d. for 1327-28, £73 1s. 5d. for 1328-29 and £645 11s. 0½d. for the year 1329-30. This last figure should serve as a warning as to the unpredictable fluctuations of totals received in any given year since this inflated figure was solely due to the forfeitures of Thomas Wake following the Kent debacle which yielded £559 7s. 9½d.<sup>4</sup> These figures mean that wardships and reliefs

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1 For the fiscal responsibilities of the sheriff, op. cit., pp. 73-100.

2 Op. cit., pp. 76-77.

3 Op. cit., p. 5.

4 The English Government at Work, 1327-1336, II, pp. 149, 152.

may be said to account for between £1,500 and £2,000, leaving the issues of justice at the central courts and other branches of administration producing around £4,000 to £4,500.

The third of Strayer's groups embraces the regular revenues derived from the customs as well as the occasional income from lay subsidy and clerical grant. The revenues from the customs have been calculated as running between a minimum of £9,400 2s. 4d. in 1328 and a maximum of £16,082 14s. 11½d. in 1327. The figures for the other two years of the regime of Isabella and Mortimer stand nearer to the average of these two extremes, £13,355 4s. 0¼d. in 1329 and £12,483 8s. 10¼d. in 1330.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to these regular annual returns the government received grants of special taxes offered by parliament. The Lincoln Parliament of September 1327 made such a grant, being 1/20 on moveables, to help pay for the war against the Scots and collectors were appointed by commissions dated 23 September and 5 and 12 October. The first half of the tax was to be paid into the Exchequer by 3 February 1328 and the rest at Midsummer.<sup>2</sup> The collectors, however, accounted in an extraordinary dilatory fashion. Only five areas had accounted by the following July and the county of Essex only settled in November 1330. The total yield of the tax was £25,438, but since some £18,000 of this had been granted by assignment under the Great

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1 The figures are to be found in Sir James H. Ramsay, A History of the Revenues of the Kings of England, 1066-1399, II (Oxford, 1925), p. 292.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 172-74.

Seal and the seal of the Exchequer very little actual cash can have appeared.<sup>1</sup>

While there was only one lay subsidy granted to the regime two requests were made for clerical subsidies. The first was made at the same time as the request to the laity at the Lincoln parliament which had met between 15 and 23 September 1327. Isabella and Mortimer pointed out that all the treasure found after the Despencers' deaths had been exhausted in the Scots' war, but the clergy of Canterbury postponed making a response until All Saintstide. The province of York was summoned to meet on 12 October.<sup>2</sup> In the event the northern province granted 1/10 of goods and temporalities to be paid in two halves in February and June 1328. The clergy of Canterbury meeting at Leicester granted a similar 1/10 to be paid in May and November 1328.<sup>3</sup> Again there was no great haste to make the collection. The Bishop of Hereford, who had been appointed Treasurer in May 1328, did not notify the Exchequer as to who his collectors were until January 1329.<sup>4</sup>

However, first returns are dated 15 February 1328 and the bulk of receipts occurred before July 1329, but small amounts continued to trickle in for the next seven years. As in the case of the lay

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1 English Government at Work, 1327-1336, II, pp. 220-21. J.F. Willard, 'The Crown and its Creditors, 1327-1333', E.H.R., xlii (1927) suggests that the government's relations with its creditors were almost wholly on an assignment basis. This certainly seems to be the case.

2 Knighton, p. 446; Historical Letters and Papers from the Northern Registers, ed. J. Raine, pp. 344-46. Above, p. 222

3 Op. cit., pp. 349-50; Knighton, p. 447; Annales Paulini, p. 338; English Government at Work, 1327-1336, II, p. 228.

4 Op. cit., pp. 235-36.

subsidy, assignments had been made against the expected yield in advance of collection. These assignments amount to £9,455 11s. 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. Since the total charge against the collectors amounts to £18,766 8s. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., more than half the yield was anticipated by assignments.<sup>1</sup> The slowness of the returns and the comparative inefficiency of the collection must be due to the uncertain political situation in the second half of 1328 and it is not therefore surprising to find the regime turning once again to the clergy for help almost before the previous grant had been collected.

This second request was made at the Winchester Parliament of March 1330 at a time which was hardly propitious. Relations with France were strained, but more significantly the regime was in the process of bringing about the fall of the earl of Kent. It is therefore not surprising that with Archbishop Meopham absent, the clergy refused an answer. The King accordingly ordered Meopham to summon the prelates to a meeting on 16 April at which it was hoped he would induce them to grant a subsidy. Archbishop Melton was to hold a similar meeting in the northern province on 25 April. Objections were raised at the meeting of the Canterbury clergy on the grounds that Pope John XXII had ordered the clergy to pay a 1/10 for four years which was to be equally divided between himself and the King. Bishop Hethe of Rochester expressed strong objections which led to the rejection of the government's request despite explanations from two royal officers, present at Lambeth, of the urgent need for money to secure the defence of the realm.<sup>2</sup> The grants from the laity and

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1 English Government at Work, 1327-1336, II, pp. 256, 262.

2 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 130; Annales Paulini, p. 348; Historia Roffensis, p. 370; Foedera, II, ii, p. 787.

clergy between 1327 and 1330 therefore totalled only £44,204 8s. 10½d. of which £27,455 11s. 5¾d. was assigned before collection. This total is considerably less than one year's income in the last years of Edward II's reign.

It seems therefore that the regime's annual income was running well below that of Edward II in the years before his fall. Sir James Ramsay has produced totals of £39,624 11s. 4½d. for the year 1328-29 and £37,368 16s. 8d. for 1329-30.<sup>1</sup> Figures relating to later in Edward III's reign show an Exchequer revenue for 1342-43 of £19,325 16s. 1d. and £15,721 19s. 6d. for 1345-46. Customs figures for 1362-63 are estimated at about £15,000. These figures would seem to suggest an ordinary revenue without special grant of something in the order of £33,000.<sup>2</sup> Such a figure would certainly be above that obtaining earlier in Edward III's reign and in view of the heavy financial obligations incurred by Isabella and Mortimer through their invasion of England in 1326 and their campaign against the Scots in 1327, it is not surprising to find that the regime was obliged to borrow on a considerable scale to meet its current expenditure.

Isabella and Mortimer had already been obliged to borrow money to pay for the immediate expenses of their invasion in 1326 even before they arrived in England. As early as 15 December 1326 the Treasurer was ordered to pay £1,300 to the keeper of Isabella's wardrobe to pay off a loan received from the Bardi while she was abroad.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 Sir James H. Ramsay, A History of the Revenues of the Kings of England, 1066-1399, II, p. 293.
  - 2 G.L. Harriss, King, Parliament and Public Finance in Medieval England to 1369, p. 148.
  - 3 Edward A. Bond, 'Extracts from the Liberate Rolls relative to Loans supplied by Italian merchants to the Kings of England in the 13th and 14th Centuries', Archaeologia, xxviii (1840), pp. 207-326. The entry from the Liberate Roll 20 Edward II is printed there as Extract clxvii, p. 312.

On 8 February 1327 the Treasury was ordered to pay the merchants of the Bardi a further sum of £2,000 which they had advanced to Isabella overseas.<sup>1</sup> The Scots' war brought renewed pressure in the summer of 1327 and a loan of 1,000 marks was made in July and a further 1,000 marks at the beginning of August. By the end of September the outstanding debt was £2,066 13s. 4d. of which £500 was interest and £900 had been paid in Paris to John of Hainault as wages for the Scots' war.<sup>2</sup> Repayments were very leisurely<sup>3</sup> and further advances had been made long before other loans were settled. The Bardi's London house had been plundered in the riots of October 1326 and the government agreed to buy this for £700 and the Exchequer was instructed in February 1328 to pay for this or make an appropriate assignment.<sup>4</sup> The King's marriage to Philippa of Hainault in January 1328 brought renewed expense. £2,417 10s. 3d. had been spent by the Bardi on the King's behalf on jewels for the wedding and the cost of their carriage from Paris to York had to be included. Payments of £1,000 had been made to them before the end of February and a further £400 was to be paid in June but the entry was cancelled.<sup>5</sup>

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- 1 Foedera II, ii, p. 686; C.62/104 m.2. The Bardi had evidently handed this to Isabella in person. A further £368 6s. 8d. was paid to Thomas of London, former keeper of Isabella's wardrobe to help meet expenses incurred in France when on Edward II's business.
  - 2 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 140, 141, 168.
  - 3 £1,160 4s. 4d. was repaid on 6 February 1328; £173 2s. 4d. on 24 February; E.403/232. By 3 March 1329 the Bardi had received £1,803 3s. 11½d. and a further £133 6s. 8d. was paid on 20 May 1329. E.403/240.
  - 4 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 230; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 259. Documents relating to the company's house in Lombard Street were handed to Henry Clyf, keeper of the rolls of chancery, at Northampton on 13 May 1328, C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 378-79. See also above, p. 21
  - 5 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 231; E.403/236.

It was, however, the Scots War and in particular the obligations which the regime incurred towards John of Hainault which caused the government's debts to mount. In addition to the 2,000 marks borrowed in July and August and the £900 paid to John of Hainault in Paris, a further £1,000 was paid to him by the Bardi on the King's behalf at the end of September.<sup>1</sup> This, however, was only part of the £4,000 which the King had undertaken on 21 August 1327 to pay the Hainaulters for their wages and for the replacement of horses lost on campaign.<sup>2</sup> This money had to be found together with far greater sums. By March 1328 the Bardi had undertaken to pay John of Hainault £7,000 and they were licenced to export £4,000 of this. A year later the Bardi had not gained repayment.<sup>3</sup> In May 1329 when the King was leaving for France a new assignment was made to secure payment of £535 13s. 2d. still owing and an additional gift of £2,000 was made at the same time since they were losing money on the deal.<sup>4</sup>

But the King's journey to France was costly and the Bardi made a loan of 5,000 marks for this.<sup>5</sup> In view of the increasing difficulty in securing repayment on their loans it is perhaps surprising that the Bardi were still forthcoming. However on the King's return in June, instructions were given for them to receive the 10,000 marks due to

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1 E.403/232.

2 Memoranda Roll, 1326-1327, No. 142, p. 27.

3 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 254. A writ dated 12 March 1329 is concerned with the repayment of this sum. E.159/105, m.59.

4 E.159/105, mm.76, 83; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 395. The £2,000 was in thanks for the 5,000 marks for the King's journey and the £7,000 provided for John of Hainault. In fact it was interest.

5 On 15 May 1329. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 390; E.101/384/1.



be paid by the Scots later in the year and for them to have first charge on a further £739 15s. 5d. paid into the Exchequer. Despite previous allocations £7,406 6s. 9d. was still owing to John of Hainault<sup>1</sup> and attempts were made to speed up repayments since the greater part of these were in arrears. Even so 5,000 marks and £739 13s. 5d. were still outstanding on 20 September 1329 and there was apprehension that the Bardi might withdraw from royal service.<sup>2</sup>

If the loans to the King for the Hainaulters were an on-going saga<sup>3</sup> so also were advances and repayments of moneys needed for the daily expenses of the royal household. The keeper of the wardrobe until 20 August 1328 was Robert de Wodehouse. He was succeeded for a brief period by Richard de Bury, a former member of the King's household when he had been earl of Cornwall. Bury was succeeded as Keeper on 24 September 1329 by Thomas Garton who remained in charge until 16 October 1331.<sup>4</sup> On 17 August 1329, Richard de Bury secured an agreement whereby the Bardi undertook to cover the financial needs of the household at the rate of £20 a day. Bury received £760. By 31 October 1330 his successor Garton had received £8,060. In addition at

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- 1 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 418; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 470. These repayments dragged on. Miniscule payments of £30 and £9 17d. were made in February and March 1330. E.403/246.
  - 2 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 472, 490. It had been decided that with 5,000 marks being paid at Michaelmas and Martinmas 1329, the outstanding £739 13s. 5d. should be repaid on 24 June 1330. E.159/105, m.83. This arrangement does not seem to have been kept. See previous note.
  - 3 The whole question of loans in this period has been examined by, E.B. Fryde, 'Loans to the English Crown 1328-1331', E.H.R., lxx (1955), pp. 198-211. His figures do not always seem to tally.
  - 4 Tout, Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England, IV, pp. 75-76.

some time before July 1330, £2,000 intended for John of Hainault had been diverted to the household, making a total of £10,820 between August 1329 and October 1330. During the whole of his period as keeper of the wardrobe until October 1331, Garton borrowed £16,762 13s. 4d. directly while the Bardi advanced a further £1,167 6d. to others on his behalf.<sup>1</sup>

The total amount borrowed by the regime in the two years from August 1328 to October 1330 was in the region of £31,965 18s. 8d. Between 1328 and 1331 the government's total borrowing was £39,576 6d.; but the Bardi also supplied the wardrobe and the Queen's household with goods valued at £2,312 14s. 5½d. while they also paid £52 in government compensation for wool seized at sea by a royal ship. With interest the total debt for the period was £53,040 17s. 11½d.<sup>2</sup>

From the summer of 1329 onwards determined attempts seem to have been made to deal with the problems of household expenses and the loans advanced for payment of those expenses. The Exchequer was once again ordered to pay the Bardi speedily or make assignment on future funds since they had agreed to provide a daily sum of money for the cost of running the King's household.<sup>3</sup> A week later they were granted an assignment on the customs of all ports until the loans they had made to the Wardrobe were repaid. A certain number of assignments, however, which had already been made were to have priority.<sup>4</sup> In November a Bardi loan of £300 was delivered to the Chamber. Further

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1 E.B. Fryde, op. cit.

2 Ibid.

3 On 20 August 1329. C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 488. This was the loan arranged by Richard de Bury.

4 Those to John of Hainault, Count of Sully, John Berners, John of Florence and two others. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 421.

instructions with regard to customs payments were made in March 1330, but payments seem to have remained well in arrears for a payment of £4,000 was promised for the non-payment of other loans within the time stipulated.<sup>1</sup> At Pentecost the Treasurer was ordered to pay the Bardi the sum of £1,318 16s. but almost immediately a further loan of £2,000 was paid to Thomas Garton for the wardrobe.<sup>2</sup> As seems to have happened before, no sooner had the regime reduced the debt than they borrowed more. In June, Garton had paid £80 to the Bardi against the loan of £2,000 advanced for household expenses between 24 September 1329 and 1 January 1330. This meant that £817 0s. 8d. of that sum had been repaid. But the extravagant and self-perpetuating borrowing of the regime was almost at an end. By the end of July the greater part of the debt had been paid off.<sup>3</sup>

In August the King's share of the expected clerical 1/10 was assigned to the Bardi<sup>4</sup> but it was not until after Isabella and Mortimer fell in the following October that further substantial allocations were made. Then in addition to the 1/10 the Bardi received assignment of the 10,000 marks which had been due from the Scots at Midsummer which it was hoped would make inroads not only on the outstanding chamber debts but also on the £3,406 6s. 9d. still owing for advances

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- 1 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 461; C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 15. The Bardi were to be paid by indenture from the customs of Hartlepool, Newcastle upon Tyne and Boston with effect from 17 August 1329, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 521.
  - 2 Foedera II, ii, p. 790; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 568.
  - 3 E.403/249. In addition to the £817 0s. 8d., payments were made on 21 June (£50), 14 July (£150), 17 July (£466 13s. 4d.), 23 July (£64), 28 July (£16 0s. 2d.), 30 July (£402 3s. 6d.).
  - 4 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 549; C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 60.

made to John of Hainault.<sup>1</sup> Inevitably payment was not made on time and £1,000 interest was added on 21 December 1330.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the loans for the Scots' war, the daily running of the wardrobe, the King's wedding and Isabella and Mortimer's invasion, the Bardi advanced payments to a number of individuals on the King's behalf. The earl of Surrey, William Montagu, Bartholomew Burghersh, the earl of Kent, the bishop of Norwich and the bishop of Hereford all received money at the hands of the Bardi, some of it for the expenses of diplomatic missions and some clearly for wages promised in return for service to the King.<sup>3</sup> The largest advances of all seem to have been made to Mortimer in connection with his service with the King at the time of the Lancaster crisis between 28 December 1328 and 17 January 1329. For this he had been paid the enormous sum of £1,260 6s. 6d. In addition they had paid Mortimer on the King's behalf the £1,000 granted him at the time of the marriage of his daughter Beatrice to the young Edward, son of the earl of Norfolk.<sup>4</sup>

The complexities of the Crown's credit operations were increased by the fact that it borrowed not only from the Bardi, but also from the merchants of Hull, Richard and William de la Pole. Richard had

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1 C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 11.

2 C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 29.

3 Surrey, E.159/105, m.35; Montagu and Burghersh, C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 450, 513; Kent, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 520; bishop of Norwich, E.159/105, m.74, E.403/243; bishop of Hereford, E.403/243.

4 For the advance of £1,260 6s. 6d. to Mortimer, E.159/105, m.54. The Bardi had been repaid £378 14s. 5d. of the sum on 27 February 1329. The remainder, £881 12s. 1d., was settled on 14 December 1329, E.403/246, E.101/384/1. Writ for repayment of the £1,000, dated 31 March 1330 is C.81/169/3371.

been appointed King's butler at Hull in May 1326.<sup>1</sup> In April 1327 he was appointed King's butler and gauger of wines and this inevitably involved him in the problems of household expenditure.<sup>2</sup> As early as the following July he had provided £2,000 to cover the cost of wines and household expenses during the Scottish campaign and in August, in association with his brother William, he produced £2,001 5s. 11d. for the wages of the Hainaulters.<sup>3</sup> While the Crown took steps in November to deal with outstanding loans to the Poles by making a grant of 2,000 marks on the customs at Hull, it was soon borrowing again, £1,200 in December 1327. In March 1328 a further assignment of £500 was made on the 1/20 granted at the Lincoln Parliament to cover £500 owed to Richard; but the Poles were unable to obtain immediate repayment of this since they did not produce the requisite tallies.<sup>4</sup>

This rather haphazard series of loans was brought to an end at the time of the Northampton parliament in May 1328. The Pole brothers then undertook to advance the King £20 a day for his household expenses.

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- 1 Northern Registers, pp. 334-35. Richard de la Pole writes to Archbishop Melton, explaining that he will now be too busy to look after Melton's interests in Hull and suggesting who might take over control of the Archbishop's affairs.
  - 2 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 33, 45. For the Poles' support of the Mortimer regime, Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, IV, pp. 85-87.
  - 3 C.62/104, m.8; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 165. Richard had apparently also advanced a further £2,000, making a total loan of £6,001 5s. 11d. over these months. A loan of £4,000 for the Scots' war in William's name is referred to under date 12 July 1327, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 137. It seems that this includes Richard's £2,000. Richard received an assignment on the customs of Boston and Hull on 28 April 1328 for the repayment of the Hainaulters' wages, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 277.
  - 4 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 190, 191, 254; C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 269, 277. The £1,200 was repaid by March 1329, C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 439.

Although a similar agreement was negotiated by Richard de Bury with the Bardi fifteen months later the sum was hardly adequate. The agreement with the Poles was reached on 22 May. The household expenses for the week 22 to 28 May 1328 amounted to £257 17s. 1½d. with a further £52 6s. 0d. for foreign expenses.<sup>1</sup> The uncertainties of these financial transactions are made clear by the steps taken to arrange for the repayment of these advances. The Poles were first assigned half of the London customs with the promise of the remainder when the Bardi had been repaid the £1,690 then owed to them. Within a fortnight the Exchequer realised that there were other assignments on the London customs which had to be taken into account and the Poles received an additional assignment on the customs of Ipswich, Yarmouth, King's Lynn, Boston, Hull, Hartlepool and Liverpool and an order to this effect was sent to the ports on 6 January 1329.<sup>2</sup> The interest owing to the Poles amounted to 1,000 marks and they had received half of this by March 1329.<sup>3</sup> However, the pressures on the government were considerable. The Bardi had also promised to pay money for the household expenses and had obtained letters obligatory under the Great Seal as security. They secured a grant on the customs of all ports until their loans were repaid but this meant the Poles surrendering their assignments on the customs of the east coast ports. In return they

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- 1 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 301; E.101/383/20. By 15 June the Poles had already advanced £600. In the same period household and foreign expenses totalled £684 6s. 11½d. The agreement between Bury and the Bardi is referred to above, p. 281
  - 2 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 333, 338; C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 353-54, 401. A further contribution to the settlement of the debts was to be made from the proceeds of the sale of the contents of the King's granges on the lands of the Archbishop of Canterbury in Middlesex and Surrey. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 344.
  - 3 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 345; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 443.

were granted payment of one mark on each sack of wool exported, as also the customs of Hull.<sup>1</sup>

Between 21 August 1328 and 9 February 1329 the Poles advanced £2,840 for the expenses of the household. The whole of this sum was repaid between April and June 1330. At much the same time they secured £846 towards repayment of a further 2,000 marks loaned.<sup>2</sup> In the matter of repayments they do not seem to have had to wait so long as the Bardi, but with the collapse of the regime in October 1330 they fared less fortunately. As a result of his support of Mortimer, Richard de la Pole lost the post of chief butler and collector of the customs on wine in favour of a Gascon merchant. However, this fall from favour was comparatively short lived and in the long term Edward III was unable to do without the financial support of the Poles.<sup>3</sup> It has been suggested<sup>4</sup> that between August 1328 and October 1331 the Poles lent the government £3,630. The figures in the preceding paragraphs suggest that between April 1327 and October 1330 the figure is much closer to £14,474 12s. 7d. Since the regime's debts to the Bardi amount to £44,415 1s. 0½d., the total owed to their bankers by the government amounted to some £58,889 13s. 7½d.<sup>5</sup>

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1 C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 488; C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 421.

2 E.403/249, £80 on 28 April 1330, £1,485 on 22 May, £535 18s. on 25 May and £739 2s. on 5 June. The £846 was paid on 28 June.

3 Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, IV, pp. 87-88.

4 E.B. Fryde, 'Loans to the English Crown 1328-1331', E.H.R., lxx (1955), pp. 198-211. The Poles in the same period received £3,497 from the customs.

5 See, Appendix II.

The way in which the regime disposed of its income is in many areas as difficult to fathom as where the money came from. A study of the Issue Rolls for the years 1327 to 1330 suggests a total expenditure of £171,293 19s. 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., almost a quarter of which, £44,022, was spent between February and April 1327.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that this vast expenditure was due to the obligations incurred by the involvement of the Hainaulters in the invasion of September 1326. The Scots war in the summer of 1327 then compounded this expenditure not least because the regime recalled John of Hainault and his men to their aid almost as soon as they had got them out of the country. Payments were made to cover the periods from 9 November 1326 to 10 March 1327 and again from 8 May to 8 September 1327. These payments cover the wages of the Hainaulters and the replacement of the horses which they lost on the two expeditions; they also include the cost of ransoming men taken prisoner by the Scots and expenses incurred following the melee at York in early June 1327.<sup>2</sup> Further individual expenses raised the total owed as set out in an indenture made between John of Hainault and the keeper of the King's wardrobe, Robert de Wodehouse, to an astonishing £54,946 19s. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.; an amount sufficient to swallow up almost all the Exchequer reserves.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 Sir James H. Ramsay, 'Expenditure of Edward III', The Antiquary, I, (Jan-June 1880), pp. 156-60.
  - 2 Above, p. 207
  - 3 E.101/18/4. Approximately £13,500 was due for the first campaign, leaving £41,400 due for the Scots campaign. The extraordinary figure of £21,482 5s. 6d. was claimed as compensation for loss of horses. This must be a grossly inflated estimate in view of the fact that many of the Hainaulters chose to leave their horses behind in England and that when John de Ros, steward of the household, sold 407 of these horses he only raised £920 2s. 8d. E.101/383/8.



The payments to English supporters of Isabella and Mortimer fall far short of those made to the Hainault mercenaries. Perhaps it was considered that the limited distribution of land was sufficient;<sup>1</sup> perhaps the forces the magnates were able to raise were comparatively small. The King's uncle, Edmund of Kent, received wages of £1,093 5s. 10d. for the Scots campaign, but this was exceeded by Mortimer's £1,395 8s. 11d. The total war wages appearing in the account book of John de Brunham, clerk of the wardrobe, amount to £4,076 2s. 9½d.<sup>2</sup> Henry Percy served with 149 men-at-arms and 200 hobelars for twenty five days in July and August 1327 and for this he received £330 3s. 4d.; Richard de Grey received £63 for himself, one knight and eight men-at-arms for keeping guard over Isabella between 27 May and 24 August 1327. The constable of Bamburgh, Robert Horncliff, received £100 for the twenty men-at-arms and 60 hobelars he had garrisoning the castle.<sup>3</sup>

The Lancastrian upheaval in the winter of 1328-29 brought further military expenditure. On this occasion Mortimer received £1,260 6s. 6d. for service between 28 December 1328 and 17 January 1329. Henry Percy was paid £414 6s. for a period between December 1328 and February 1329 with a force that gradually increased in size to a maximum of 24 knights and 74 squires. Earl Warenne only received £120 2s. 8d. even though he had 60 men-at-arms with the King for twenty nine days. Warenne seems,

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1 Above, pp. 76-84.

2 E.101/383/8. This includes £533 17s. 4d. for William de Ros of Hamelake, £332 18s. 10d. for Henry Percy, £268 10s. for Hugh Audley, and significantly £915 15s. 1d. for Antony de Lucy who commanded the garrison at Carlisle. Geoffrey de Mortimer was paid £8 0s. 9d. These entries are to be found on mm.10r. and 17r.

3 E.159/105, m.26; E.403/232.

however, to have been bound to stay with the King for a fixed period and consequently was eligible for a larger sum, £333 6s. 8d. being due to him between September and December 1328. Percy seems to have had a similar indenture, being bound in the sum of 500 marks per year to remain with the King.<sup>1</sup> Others were similarly paid for attendance upon the King in time of peace and war.<sup>2</sup>

Servants of the regime also received expenses for diplomatic missions. The negotiators with the Scots, the embassies to Paris about the royal homage and messengers to the Papacy at Avignon all had to be paid. Reginald de Cobham received £80 3s. 4d. for an embassy to Brabant in which he lost several horses.<sup>3</sup> In May 1329, Bishop Airmyn of Norwich was repaid 200 marks for expenses incurred in Gascony while John Chiddock received £48 7s. 8d. for several different visits to Brabant and Flanders.<sup>4</sup> William la Zouche of Mortimer, Geoffrey le Scrope, William de Denum, Henry Percy and the Bishops of Lincoln and Norwich all received ample payments for the negotiations with the Scots in the spring of 1328.<sup>5</sup> In the spring of 1329 before Edward's own visit to Paris the embassy of the bishop

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1 E.403/240; E.403/246.

2 Humphrey de Bohun, Robbert Ufford, Bishop Hotham of Ely, Gilbert Talbot and William Montagu all received payments varying between £31 and £188 16s. 8d. in the period 12 March to 30 July 1330. E.403/249.

3 E.159/105, mm.30, 38. He received a gift of £40 for the loss of horses.

4 E.159/105, mm.74, 64.

5 E.403/232. For this embassy, above, pp. ~~226-27~~ . Le Scrope and Denum received an advance of £20, La Zouche and Percy £33 6s. 8d. each, Airmyn £40 and Burghersh £100. Further payments were made on their return to Lincoln in April 1328. Burghersh received a further £90 and Airmyn £93 6s. 8d. Percy had £66 13s. 4d. and le Scrope £40. E.403/236.

of Hereford and Bartholomew Burghersh received an advance of 200 marks and further sums were due on their return.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently le Scrope and Bishop Burghersh of Lincoln received their expenses for accompanying Edward to Amiens in May 1329. William Montagu received £57 3s. 4d. in July 1330 as his retainer and also to cover the previous autumn's journey to Avignon. The total of Bartholomew Burghersh's expenses for that journey, which lasted between 15 September 1329 and 1 April 1330, was £518 18s. 6½d. and Montagu subsequently received further sums towards an outstanding debt of £198 3s. 10d.<sup>2</sup>

These endless small payments, some of them not so small, for the routine business of government must quickly have mounted up. Other great occasions placed a further strain on resources. The cost of the embassy of Roger Northburgh, bishop of Lichfield, which brought Philippa of Hainault to York for her wedding was £383 10s. 4d.<sup>3</sup> The Bardi advanced £2,147 for jewels<sup>4</sup> while the household account for the week of the wedding shows that Dona amounted to £1,811 14s. 11d.<sup>5</sup> The Coronation in February 1327 had also been an occasion for lavish expenditure. An account in the Dunstable Annals shows a total expenditure of £2,835 18s. 2½d. This should be compared with a total of £1,323 1s. 7¾d. on the wardrobe accounts. The difference is mainly accounted for by the fact that Dunstable includes £1,367 5s. 7½d. under the heading

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1 E.403/243.

2 E.403/246; E.403/249; E.403/253.

3 E.403/232. Above, p. 237

4 Above, p. 279

5 E.101/383/20.

Great Wardrobe.<sup>1</sup> The King's offering in Westminster Abbey on that day amounted to 173 florins of Florence.<sup>2</sup>

Expenditure in the wardrobe was generally fairly heavy. Between 9 November 1326 and 11 March 1327, a time when the household expenses of Edward III were combined with those of Queen Isabella, expenditure amounted to £21,138 6s. 3d. The roll continues until 23 January 1328, making a total period of fourteen and a half months during which expenditure amounted to a final sum of £92,517 15s. 4½d.<sup>3</sup> This includes the expenses of the Hainaulters and other costs incurred on the Scots campaign. These figures may be compared with those for wardrobe expenditure during Edward I's campaigns in Scotland in 1300 and 1301 which amounted to £64,105 and £77,291 respectively.<sup>4</sup> This suggests that the figures for 1327-28, while irresponsible in a government whose income was unlikely to have met more than half the expenditure, are not unduly extravagant in terms of war-time costs. In any case the household and foreign expenses for the seven months, 25 January to 20 August 1328,

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1 Annales Monastici, III, Annales de Dunstaplia, Appendix, pp. 411-12. E.101/382/9. The two accounts may be compared: (the wardrobe figures in brackets) Panetria £45 17s. 6d. (Dispensarii £45 17s. 6½d.), Boteleria £188 14s. 8½d. (the same), Coquina et poltereria £584 10s. 4d. (Coquina £585 7s. 1d.), Salteria et salseria £215 0s. 0d. (Scutillar £215, Salseria £9 3s. 3d.), Magna Garderoba £1,367 5s. 7½d., Private Garderoba £216 18s. 5¾d. (Garderoba £241 18s. 5¾d.), Aula et Camera £20 1s. 1d. (£20 13d.), Stabulum £12 8s. 3¼d. (£12 8s. 3¼d.), Vadia £4 10s. 3d. (£4 10s. 3d.) Item pro halis faciendis in toto £179 12s. 0d. Total £2,835 18s. 2½d. (£1,323 1s. 7¾d.). Four days later the wardrobe accounts show Dona for the replacement of horses (presumably the Hainaulters') amounting to £1,223 6s.

2 E.101/383/8.

3 The wardrobe roll is E.101/382/9.

4 M. Prestwich, War, Politics and Finance under Edward I (London, 1972), p. 175. In 1339 Edward III was admitting to the need for £300,000 to release him from his debts, G.L. Harriss, King, Parliament and Public Finance in Medieval England to 1369, p. 253.

only amount to £9,934 17s. 8½d.<sup>1</sup> A summary of wardrobe expenses for the third year of the King's reign show that expenses amounted to £8,244 10s. 3¾d. and that for the fourth year they were £12,390 10s. 3d.<sup>2</sup> Richard de Bury's accounts for the wardrobe for the eight months January to September 1329 imply heavy expenditure, perhaps attendant upon the aftermath of the Lancastrian upheaval and the King's visit to France.<sup>3</sup> Figures are not available for the period August 1328 to January 1329 but wardrobe expenses for the whole period 1327 to 1330 must have been in the region of £130,000.

This does not seem entirely unreasonable in the light of earlier and later levels of expenditure. Nevertheless the regime was still obliged to resort to borrowing on a considerable scale. The need for this clearly stems from the employment of John of Hainault and his mercenaries in 1326 and during the Scots campaign. Once the enormous inherited moneys of Edward II had been spent the only other way of meeting these expenses would have been to levy heavy taxation. The subsidy granted at Lincoln in September 1327 and the clergy grant later the same autumn brought only limited relief and the clergy when requested for a second grant in March 1330 immediately made difficulties. There is no reason to suppose that requests for further lay subsidies would have received any more favourable response. Such a request, in the light of the fragile nature of the coalition which had put Isabella and Mortimer in power, would almost certainly have been politically damaging, as would have been attempts to revive

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1 E.101/383/20.

2 E.101/384/1, m.12v.

3 E.101/384/9. Some figures are missing from the account, but the total for the period must have been in excess of £7,500.

prerogative forms of tax such as scutage. Indeed when Edward III in the parliament of February 1338 claimed the scutage of 1327 he was obliged to withdraw the request in the face of strong objections.<sup>1</sup> The objections would almost certainly have been stronger in 1327.

There might have been greater justification for the heavy borrowing if the Weardale Campaign had produced more positive results from the English point of view. What was humiliating was that the costly campaign had led merely to the treaty of Northampton and what many regarded as an English surrender. Many suspected that neither Isabella nor Mortimer wanted war, and indeed these suspicions were probably justified. Certainly in the case of Gascony they were extremely anxious to postpone a military confrontation which would undoubtedly have led to more heavy costs. Yet having embarked on a military venture against Robert Bruce, they might have done better to have maintained a war-like stance rather than opening peace negotiations with an ailing king. In the end they incurred odium both for a military defeat and heavy expenditure.

Yet the accusations of appropriating the king's treasure which were made against Mortimer in 1330 might not have been so easily pressed if he and Isabella had not revealed themselves not only personally financially extravagant but greedy. The vast increase in Isabella's dower in 1327 and the channelling of the Scottish fine into Isabella's purse meant that those moneys were not available, as they

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1 G.L. Harriss, King, Parliament and Public Finance in Medieval England to 1369, p. 236. M. Prestwich, War, Politics and Finance under Edward I, p. 222, comments that Edward I's attempts to use tallage and feudal aids in the last years of his reign merely indicated that there was little future in prerogative forms of taxation.

should have been<sup>1</sup> to alleviate the costs of government and to lessen the need for heavy borrowing. This extravagance is reflected at a more personal level for the accounts for the opening years of Edward III's reign contain references to the exchange of numerous gifts of plate and jewellery between Isabella, Mortimer and the King. It is perhaps little wonder that Edward III grew up to be lavish in his expenditure both nationally and personally, and over generous in the gifts he bestowed upon his servants, when one considers some of these exchanges.<sup>1</sup>

On 6 September 1329, during the King's visit to Wigmore, Mortimer gave Edward an ornate gilt cup weighing 5ls. 2d. and in return received several cups from the King. Queen Philippa received a crown worth 200 marks at Canterbury in May 1329 and the bishop of Lincoln was given a ewer at Gloucester in September. The bishops of Ely and Coventry were the recipients of gifts the previous year and servants like Mautravers and Wyard also feature.<sup>2</sup> Yet, between May and September 1329 in Richard de Bury's account roll of receipts, payments and jewellery it is Mortimer's name which most frequently occurs.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps here at last we can catch a genuine glimpse of Mortimer's shadowy figure, a lover of fine jewellery and display which seems to run counter to the image of the ruthless and all powerful magnate,

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- 1 Mortimer received a diamond ring worth £20 at Dover on 25 May 1329. Three weeks later the offering made by the King at the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury was valued at 60s. E.101/384/1, m.17v.
  - 2 E.101/384/1, mm.16-18.
  - 3 In addition to the items already cited, Mortimer received a gift of various cups on 20 June 1329, at Windsor. They were valued at £6 18d., £3 15s., 102s. 10d., 79s., 119s., 68s. 3d., 71s. 6d. E.101/384/1, m.18v.

but corresponds to the chroniclers' verdict that he lived in royal state.<sup>1</sup>

What perhaps demonstrates more than anything else the improvident nature of the regime's financial dealings are the declining reserves which are revealed as successive treasurers passed on the keys of the Exchequer. The £54,839 8s. 2d. in ready cash handed over by Archbishop Melton to John Stratford in November 1326 had already been reduced to £8883 4s. 7d. when Stratford's successor, bishop Orleton, handed over to Bishop Burghersh at the end of March 1327. Fourteen months later Burghersh was only able to hand on £1,318 17s. 9½d. When Archbishop Melton resumed the treasurership on 1 December 1330 after Mortimer's fall, all he found at the Exchequer was £41 2s. 11d.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps there can be no better evidence than these figures of the inefficient financing of the regime/of Isabella and Mortimer. As in the case of their other policies, domestic and foreign, they had very little to show for their years of power. There seems to be therefore considerable justification for the criticisms voiced in 1330 with regard to Scotland, Gascony and the wasting of the king's treasure.

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1 The Brut, pp. 261-62.

2 Melton-Stratford, E.101/332/21; Orleton-Burghersh, E.101/332/26; Burghersh-Charlton, E.101/332/28; Wodehouse-Melton, E.101/333/3. See also, above, p.272.



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The Fall of Isabella and Mortimer

By the spring of 1330, the position of the regime was becoming increasingly precarious. If there were no signs of immediate collapse, the growing isolation of Isabella and Mortimer and the dangerous failure of their policies meant that criticism was growing and opposition becoming more active. If Lancaster was not the threat he had been eighteen months earlier, his supporters Beaumont and Wake, in exile overseas only awaited an opportunity to strike. The leaders of the Church no longer placed the weight of their moral support behind the government; the finances were over-stretched; the peace made with Scotland and France, partially in an attempt to check military expenditure was unpopular. Only a small group like the Bishop of Lincoln, John Mautravers, Geoffrey le Scrope and Simon Bereford could be counted on to give unfailing support. As has already been observed,<sup>1</sup> the elimination of the earl of Kent seems to have been aimed at deterring possible opposition. Almost certainly what it did was to confirm the growing feelings of the young Edward III that the time had come to assert his own authority. Inevitably this must mean the end of the rule of Isabella and Mortimer.

Edward III reached his seventeenth birthday in November 1329.<sup>2</sup> Two months previously William Montagu, the king's intimate friend, and Bartholomew Burghersh had been issued with letters of protection for a journey abroad to treat with Otto, lord of Cuyck whom the king wanted

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1 Above, p. 197

2 He had been born on St. Brice's Day, 13 November 1312. Vita Edwardi Secundi, ed. N. Denholm Young, Nelson's Medieval Texts (London 1957), p. 36.

to retain.<sup>1</sup> It is not clear if this was a cover. It seems unlikely for it was certainly known in London that Montagu and Burghersh were heading for Avignon and they remained at the Curia for a considerable time.<sup>2</sup> It appears that Montagu carried with him to Avignon a letter in the hand of Richard de Bury who until 23 September 1329 had been keeper and treasurer of the wardrobe, and who seems immediately on relinquishing that office to have become keeper of the Privy Seal.<sup>3</sup> The letter as it now exists in the Vatican archives has no seal and is not dated.<sup>4</sup> The contents of it appear to have been known only to Bury, Montagu and the king. To avoid the Pope mistaking the wishes of Isabella and Mortimer expressed in the King's name and under the royal seals for the genuine wishes of the king, Edward agreed to write in his own hand the words, Pater Sancte, on those letters which came on his authority alone. While the letter refers to the making of appointments, it clearly sets up the possibility of the king having

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- 1 On 12 September 1329. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 443; Foedera II, ii, pp. 772-73. They received an advance of 400 marks from the Bardi, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 450. Montagu was paid £57 3s. 4d. for the period 19 September 1329 to 8 May 1330 as the King's retainer, but also to cover his wages and expenses in going to the Papal court, robes for himself and two of his knights and the replacement of two horses. E.403/249, A further entry in November 1330 suggests that the total amount owing Montagu for this journey was £198 3s. 10d., E.403/253.
  - 2 Annales Paulini, p. 348. They were certainly out of England in November 1329, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 458. They were at Avignon about to return in February 1330. Cal. Pap. Reg. II, p. 497. A total of £518 18s. 6½d. was due to Burghersh for wages and expenses for himself and two companions and for the replacement of his horses to cover the period between 15 September 1329 and 1 April 1330, E.403/253.
  - 3 Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, V, p. 5, n. 7.
  - 4 For a discussion of the letter's significance and a copy of the text, C.G. Crump, 'The Arrest of Roger Mortimer and Queen Isabel', E.H.R., xxvi (1911), pp. 331-32.

a direct private correspondence with the Pope over the head of Isabella and Mortimer. Thus as early as September 1329, Edward was thinking in terms of acting without the help or knowledge of his mother and her lover, and of building up his own party by the advancement of trusted members of his household.<sup>1</sup> An interim reply to the king's letter received in February 1330 showed the Pope to be sympathetic to his request.<sup>2</sup>

A further incentive to shake off Mortimer's restraining hand came with the news that Queen Philippa was pregnant. The possibility of the birth of an heir to the throne changed the king's outlook for he now had an added incentive to guard his crown. This also prompted him to arrange for Philippa's coronation which took place at Westminster on 18 February 1330. The previous day she had entered London in state, riding between the king's two uncles, the earls of Norfolk and Kent.<sup>3</sup> The Archbishop of Canterbury presided at the ceremony assisted by the bishops of Hereford and Rochester.<sup>4</sup> The king, at this time, also took the first steps to ensure that the Queen received a proper endowment. The honour of Pontefract was surrendered by Isabella and held by Philippa with effect from 12 February 1330. The grant to the Queen also

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- 1 For comment on the lack of connection between this letter and the coup which brought down Isabella and Mortimer, P.C. Doherty, 'Isabella, Queen of England 1296-1330', pp. 306-07.
  - 2 A reply dated 18 February 1330 says that Montagu and Burghersh would give the king a fuller answer on their return. Cal. Pap. Reg. II, p. 497.
  - 3 Annales Paulini, p. 349. Historia Roffensis, p. 370, specifically links the coronation with Philippa's pregnancy. The coronation is also referred to, Bridlington, p. 100; Walsingham, p. 192; French Chronicle, p. 63. Thomas de Garton was paid £60 8s. 5½d. for the expenses of the household at the time of the Queen's coronation, 7 July 1330, E.403/249.
  - 4 Historia Roffensis, op. cit.

embraced the county of Glamorgan of which Mortimer had been made custodian as early as June 1327.<sup>1</sup>

Thus by the time of the Winchester Parliament of March 1330 the signs are that Edward III was already chafing at the restraints imposed by Mortimer and his mother. That they were aware of the king's unease is confirmed by the speed with which the earl of Kent was dispatched, an event which Edward was still not yet powerful enough to resist. As a result of Kent's death, the number of exiles overseas was increased; Thomas Wake, Fulk FitzWaryn and Rees ap Griffith now joined those like Henry Beaumont and Thomas Roscelyn who had fled after the Lancastrian rebellion in the winter of 1328-29.<sup>2</sup> A group similar to that which had grown up around Isabella and Mortimer in 1326 was now in the spring of 1330 forming in Paris. The arrival of a close supporter of Lancaster like Wake would have been a great encouragement to men who posed an increasing threat to Mortimer's government. In the face of that threat even the king did not go unsuspected by Isabella and Mortimer, as is indicated by the fact that it was reported that John Wyard had been specifically ordered to spy upon the king.<sup>3</sup>

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 501. Isabella received a compensatory grant, above, p. 123; Mortimer's appointment, above, p. 106

2 For Lancastrian exiles, above, pp. 180, 183; for Kent's supporters, above, pp. 145

3 Wyard appears as a King's esquire on an account roll for June 1328, Memoranda Roll 1326-1327, No. 2270, pp. 373-76. For Wyard as a spy, Rot. Parl. II, p. 52. He was a close and trusted supporter of the regime from the earliest days. In November 1326 he brought Arundel's money and jewels which had been left at Chichester Cathedral to Isabella at Hereford, C.P.R. 1324-27, p. 339; above, p. 271. A year later he received permission to crenellate the manor of Stanton Harcourt in Buckinghamshire, which he had received in fee simple from Mortimer; at the same time he received pardon for taking possession without licence, 7 October 1327, C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 179, 182. He was also granted at Kent's request the reversion in fee simple of the manor of Martley in Worcestershire where he subsequently obtained free warren, wardship and marriage of the heir of Thomas de Wodeham, 23 March 1330, C.81/169/3379. Following Mortimer's fall orders were issued for the ports to be watched to prevent his escape, 3 December 1330, but he was subsequently, 10 January 1331, with parliament's consent, pardoned for his support of Mortimer. Later in the same month he is found going on pilgrimage to Santiago, C.P.R. 1330-34, pp. 53, 43.

If there was some anxiety about the intentions of the exiles in the spring of 1330, it is clear that that fear was increased by the uncertainties relating to the Gascon situation.<sup>1</sup> Appeals had been made at Winchester to magnates, clergy, the City of London and apparently to knights of the shire.<sup>2</sup> The accusations subsequently made against Mortimer included two relating to Gascony. It seems that at Winchester the boroughs agreed to provide a man-at-arms for service in Gascony and that Mortimer contrived to turn this to his own advantage. This seems to imply that he levied a fine in lieu of service. The second charge was that those summoned directly to come to the King found themselves offered the alternative of serving in Gascony or making a fine.<sup>3</sup> There seems to be no real evidence for this. It would certainly be surprising that compulsory service should have been envisaged and fines in lieu would most certainly have created strong opposition. The government's attitude to the sending of a force to Gascony was certainly ambivalent and this may well have been a contributing factor to the long delays encountered by the proposed expedition of John of Eltham in the spring and summer of 1330.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Above, p. 247

2 For the clergy, above, pp. 247, n. 2 ; 277. For the City of London, above, p. 247

3 Rot. Parl. II, pp. 52-3

4 Supplies were ordered for the expedition on 26 March 1330, C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 15-16. Ships were to be ready for John of Eltham at Plymouth by 29 April. Half of these were later ordered to Portsmouth, 12 April 1330, Foedera II, ii, p. 786, where the king seems to have intended to be some time in June. Orders for purveyance prior to his arrival were issued on 31 May when Walter de Shobdon was appointed to supervise the fitting out of Eltham's ships, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 529; Foedera II, ii, p. 793. The King's visit to Portsmouth may well have been delayed by the birth of Edward of Woodstock on 15 June 1330, but other threats were also emerging by the middle of June.

Isabella and Mortimer were undoubtedly reluctant to commit themselves to full scale military activity in Gascony. The indecision is understandable for such expeditions were costly but the threat to internal security still remained and so long as this was the case it would not perhaps have been wise to send too many men to Gascony.<sup>1</sup>

The King remained at Woodstock throughout the first half of the summer. He arrived there towards the end of March and did not move until the last week of July. John of Eltham remained with him.<sup>2</sup> An imminent departure for Gascony did not seem likely. Early in June writs went out to the leading clergy and magnates summoning them to a colloquium et tractatus at Oseney on Monday 9 July.<sup>3</sup> Despite a plot led by Richard Arundel and centred on the border counties of Shropshire and Staffordshire which had been uncovered at the beginning of June, it can hardly have been envisaged that the Oseney meeting would take place in an atmosphere of high tension and crisis.<sup>4</sup>

The Council had originally been summoned to consider the state of Gascon affairs following the ratification of the treaty of Bois de Vincennes which had taken place the day before the council met.<sup>5</sup> Its deliberations were interrupted by the arrival of urgent letters

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- 1 A fleet of 40 ships, Foedera II, ii, p. 786, does not suggest a particularly large scale expedition.
  - 2 C.53/117.
  - 3 C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 141. Knights of the shire and representatives of cities and boroughs were not included.
  - 4 Orders for the arrest of Richard Arundel and his associates were issued on 4 June, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 181. Arundel avoided arrest and escaped to join the other opponents of the regime abroad, returning with them in December 1330. C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 20.
  - 5 8 July 1330. Above, pp. 248-49

from the Count of Hainault.<sup>1</sup> This set in train a spate of rumours and hurried administrative activity.<sup>2</sup> The news was that the exiles were ready to move; they had assembled a force and ships were ready to transport them to England. At once the sheriffs were alerted that forces should be arrayed in the shires<sup>3</sup> and reliable supporters of the regime were instructed to survey the men available in the counties of the north, Warwick, Northampton, Nottingham, Leicester, Stafford, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Dorset, Kent, Sussex, Lancashire and Gloucestershire.<sup>4</sup> A fortnight later similar orders went to the remaining counties, to Ingham in Cheshire, to the palatinate of Durham and to London and other leading towns and cities.<sup>5</sup> Before the end of the

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1 Annales Paulini, p. 350.

2 Rumours had reached Prior Eastry at Canterbury well before 17 July when he wrote to Archbishop Meopham thanking him for accurate information relating to the Council at Oseney. Litterae Cantuarienses, p. 320.

3 Foedera II, ii, p. 794; C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 147. Lest men should be diverted from essential defence of the realm, or form the possible nucleus of a rebel force at home, tournaments were forbidden. Ibid.

4 Orders were issued on 12 July. They went amongst others to Henry Percy in the northern counties of Yorkshire, Cumberland, Westmoreland and Northumberland; to Simon Bereford in Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire; Mautravers in Wiltshire, Hampshire and Dorset; Bartholomew Burghersh for the important counties of Kent and Sussex and to Mortimer himself for Gloucestershire. C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 563-64. Perhaps Mortimer felt he could not leave the court at this time for his son Edmund was subsequently associated with his father's commission. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 569. Mortimer remained in the vicinity of the court for the rest of the summer although the witness lists on the Charter Rolls suggest he could have been absent from Woodstock between 18 and 21 July. C.53/117.

5 Men involved in the second batch of instructions included Robert Ufford (Norfolk and Suffolk) and Hugh Courtenay (Devon). Towns included Bristol, York, Norwich, Winchester and Carlisle. C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 571.



month Bartholomew Burghersh had been ordered to array the men of the Cinque Ports and William de Ros was to take similar steps in Lincolnshire.<sup>1</sup>

There were fears also concerning the security of the City of London. On 11 July the Mayor and twenty four leading citizens were summoned to appear at Woodstock on 22 July. Simon de Swanland prevaricated. He pleaded that the City was in a state of unrest and that he and his colleagues would more usefully serve the King by remaining in London to enforce law and order. This provoked a swift response from Woodstock in terms that could not be ignored. After a further consultation at Guildhall on 19 July, Swanland, John de Grantham and other aldermen and commoners of the City set out next day for Woodstock. After two days of consultation with the king, pledges of the City's loyalty were given and promises made that the King's lordship would be maintained. The royal council had to be satisfied with this response and the Londoners returned to the City to report at a meeting which was held at Guildhall on 28 July.<sup>2</sup>

But the situation remained unsettled. There was rebel activity in Sussex<sup>3</sup> and breaches of the peace were reported in Lincolnshire where Mortimer's supporters Hugh Turpington and Simon Bereford were associated with Ralph Basset in a commission of oyer and terminer.<sup>4</sup> In Durham the bishop was ordered to cause Ralph Neville to raise a force to protect the northern coasts while Mortimer as justice of

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 570.

2 Annales Londonienses, pp. 249-51.

3 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 572.

4 Commission dated 16 August 1330, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 573.

Wales was instructed to take steps to arrest supporters of the exiled Rhys ap Griffith who were reported as preparing aid for potential invaders.<sup>1</sup> There were fears too for the security of the Channel Islands, the loyalty of whose keepers, Peter Bernard of Pynsole and Laurence du Galors of Bayonne, was suspect.<sup>2</sup> The court meanwhile moved at the end of July from Woodstock, first to Northampton then to the north midlands before arriving early in September at Nottingham.<sup>3</sup>

The immediate crisis seemed to have passed but the problems of Gascony and the French King still remained. Letters arrived from Philip complaining of King Edward's failure to meet the July deadline which had been laid down for the clarification of the question of homage. It was pointed out that Edward should have done liege homage and that the matter must now be settled without any ambiguity. A new deadline was set for the middle of December.<sup>4</sup> Both the King and Isabella also received letters from the Pope. John XXII expressed some astonishment that Kent and his supporters should have believed Edward II to have been alive. He himself was convinced that the late King's funeral had been no deception, otherwise Isabella and her son would assuredly have restored the captive to liberty, a scarcely veiled reproof. The letters to Isabella went on to deal with the French problem which the Pope had believed settled. Since this was not the case he urged her not to break off negotiations, but to

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1 C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 151; Foedera II, ii, pp. 796, 797.

2 Montagu, Turpington and Maurice de Berkeley went security for their loyalty, 29 August 1330, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 189.

3 C.53/117.

4 For the question of homage, above, pp. 243, 245. For Philip's letter, Foedera II, ii, p. 797.

persist in trying to bring about a settlement which would bring lasting peace and security.<sup>1</sup>

On 6 September the leading clergy and magnates were once more summoned to a meeting, this time to be held at Nottingham on 15 October.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime despite Philip of Valois' failure to accept the English ratification of the Treaty made at Bois de Vincennes, nothing was to be done in Gascony which would infringe that treaty.<sup>3</sup> While the Pope's aid was invoked in helping to secure a peace,<sup>4</sup> there was little optimism that a settlement could be reached. On 20 September a long letter was sent to Darcy and Haustede, the King's representatives in Gascony, setting out the reports received from the royal envoys in Paris. These described the intransigence of the French and the government in commenting on this expressed its determination to defend Gascony. Steps would be taken to help the Duchy, but not until the following year since it seemed unlikely that with winter approaching Philip would invade until the following spring. However, if the vines of Bordeaux and the goods of its inhabitants should be threatened then the invader must be resisted. Money would be needed and the forthcoming council at Nottingham would be asked to make provision for a sum sufficient to help the forces already in the duchy and to reinforce them. The King's clerk, Arnold de Till,

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1 Pope John XXII quoted the verse: Quicquid agas prudenter agas et respice finem, Ferre minora volo ne graviora feram. Cal. Pap. Reg. II, pp. 498-99.

2 C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 153.

3 Orders to that effect were sent on 9 September to John Darcy and John Haustede, seneschal of Gascony and Constable of Bordeaux, Foedera II, ii, p. 798.

4 Ibid.

would personally reassure the Gascons that no effort was to be spared to secure their interests.<sup>1</sup> To secure Gascon support, Darcy and Haustede were empowered to grant franchises and liberties to Bordeaux, Bayonne and other towns in the Duchy while negotiations were also to be initiated during the winter months to try and win over the Count of Foix and those in the Agenais who had acknowledged Philip's authority.<sup>2</sup>

Two further steps were taken by the government in the last days of Isabella and Mortimer's rule. Arrangements were made for the dispatch of an embassy to secure alliances with the rulers of the Low Countries<sup>3</sup> and a safe conduct was issued for Edward Baliol to come to England. Similar letters had already been issued on 20 July so that Baliol might come from France where, according to the Brut, he had incurred the hostility of King Philip and only escaped from arrest at the instigation of Henry Beaumont. This appears a somewhat garbled story and it is far more likely that the English government were making an attempt to disengage Baliol from the other exiles who like himself had Scottish claims to press. The reissuing of the letters of protection three months after they had first been granted suggests that Baliol was in no hurry to come to England and that he remained close to Beaumont and others with Scottish interests.<sup>4</sup>

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1 The letter is in Foedera II, ii, pp. 798-99 and C.61/42/4.

2 Foedera II, ii, p. 799.

3 William FitzWaryn, Hugh Elys Dean of Wolverhampton and John de Hildesley were appointed on 1 October to negotiate an alliance with the Duke of Brabant and the Count of Flanders. The commission was extended on 11 October to include the Count of Gueldres and the Count of Loos and others. Foedera II, ii, p. 799.

4 Foedera II, ii, pp. 795, 799; The Brut, p. 273. For a discussion on this, R. Nicholson, Edward III and the Scots, p. 64.

The court did not remain at Nottingham for the whole of the period between the summoning and meeting of the October council. In the third week of September it is to be found at Clipstone and Worksop<sup>1</sup> but by early October, if charter attestations are accurate, it was back at Nottingham with its main supporters gathering.<sup>2</sup> During this period the name of the king's close friend, William Montagu also regularly appears. On 16 October more ominously perhaps for Isabella and Mortimer, the names of Bishop Stratford of Winchester and the earl of Lancaster appear as witnesses.<sup>3</sup> Both leading supporters and leading opponents of the regime were therefore assembled, while Isabella and Mortimer perhaps more than on any previous occasion, appeared apprehensive. According to the chronicler Le Baker, Mortimer complained that Lancaster had been allocated lodgings in the town too close to the castle and the constable, the earl of Hereford, out of fear of Mortimer hastily arranged for Lancaster to be lodged further away. Moreover Isabella and Mortimer were reported to be holding the castle keys so that not even the King or members of the council could come and go without their knowledge. It is also specifically mentioned that none of the King's friends were permitted to lodge within the castle walls.<sup>4</sup>

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1 C.81/175/3955, 3958; C.61/42/4.

2 Between 6 October and 15 October regular charter witnesses included the Bishop of Lincoln, John of Eltham, Oliver Ingham, Roger Mortimer, Hugh Turpington and Isabella's former clerk Robert Wyvil, the newly promoted Bishop of Salisbury. On 16 October the list can be expanded by adding John Hothum, the bishop of Ely, Henry Percy, William de Ros and John Warenne, earl of Surrey. C.53/117.

3 Lancaster was present at the Oseney colloquium in July. Stratford's name last appears at Woodstock in May. C.53/117.

4 Le Baker, p. 45; The Brut, p. 269.

That the King's friends were suspect is absolutely clear, while the king himself was increasingly asserting himself and therefore distancing himself from the policies of Mortimer and his mother. It has been suggested<sup>1</sup> that the slowness of proceedings against Kent's followers in the King's Bench may well have been due to Edward's readiness to oppose the regime; it has also been observed<sup>2</sup> that by the spring of 1330 Edward's personal position was changing and that the signs all pointed to the King wishing to assert his own authority. Mortimer's ascendancy must have become intolerable. Apart from the intimate nature of his relationship with Isabella and the dominance he had established over her, he was reported as maintaining a household retinue numbering some 180 people, thus putting himself on an equal footing with the King and Isabella.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore it was said<sup>4</sup> that he did not accord proper precedence to the young King, that he allowed Edward to rise to greet him and always walked at his side. For a man of Edward's temperament, ambitious and courageous, it would have been intolerable to submit much longer to such arrogance and pride as Mortimer, old enough to be his father but still his subject, revealed. It is therefore not surprising that he should wish to surround himself by companions of his own age, nor that such companions should wish to benefit from royal favour and patronage. But patronage rested in the hands of Isabella and Mortimer and so long as the King's power was limited so also must be the benefits available

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1 N. Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, p. 225.

2 Above, pp. **297-300**

3 The Brut, p. 271, n. 31.

4 Le Baker, p. 45.

to his young companions.<sup>1</sup> Only by the removal of Isabella and Mortimer could Edward occupy his rightful place as King and by the summer of 1330 they must have been facing the implications of that truth just as Edward himself was.

How far the King may have gone in initiating a plot to overthrow Mortimer is very obscure. Inevitably such moves would have to be shrouded in secrecy and apart from a factual outline of events little information is to be found in the chroniclers about what lay behind Mortimer's fall. Tout speaks<sup>2</sup> of a plot initiated by Montagu in the previous August, citing the Scalacronica as a reference. There is no positive evidence of a concerted plot at so early a date; on the other hand by August 1330 the enemies of the regime must have been discussing in broad terms ways and means of bringing Mortimer's government to an end, so that Tout is assuredly correct to refer to the King's goodwill towards Montagu and to suggest that Lancaster's support had already been secured, a view supported by both N. Fryde and McKisack. The latter goes so far as to suggest that Lancaster was the motivating force behind the opposition.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand it has been argued that the coup which brought about Mortimer's fall was almost an accident and that there is no evidence to support McKisack's assertions about Lancaster. It was a coup planned and executed in twenty four hours.<sup>4</sup> But such a view oversimplifies the situation and ignores the

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1 This point is discussed, P.C. Doherty, Isabella, Queen of England, 1296-1330, p. 314.

2 Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, III, p. 29.

3 N. Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, p. 225; McKisack, The Fourteenth Century, pp. 100-01.

4 P.C. Doherty, op. cit., pp. 305, 319.

trends of the previous twelve months and the growing pressure on Edward to take action. It ignores, too, the chroniclers' hints at conspiracy<sup>1</sup> and the more positive assertion that the King was plotting to overthrow Mortimer with the help of his young companions.<sup>2</sup>

What is certain is that the crisis for the King and his party came suddenly; but that when it occurred they were ready and able to act effectively. That suggests that Edward and Montagu knew exactly whom they could trust and that those they trusted had forces available who could be called to arms at very short notice. If the final arrangements for Mortimer's arrest were planned and executed in twenty four hours, they were only successful because the ground had been prepared in the previous months. It was reports of that groundwork reaching Mortimer which triggered off his attack not only on Montagu but on the King himself which led to his fall.<sup>3</sup>

It was reported to him, perhaps by other members of the royal council, that he was to be accused of compassing Edward II's death. Those who were suspected of bringing forward these accusations, including the King himself were examined by a group which seemingly included Isabella and Mortimer, Bishop Burghersh and Bishop Wyvil, Simon Bereford and Hugh Turpington. Each individually denied any knowledge of such accusations, Montagu asserting that he would in no way be associated with a plot which was inconsistent with his duty. Mortimer was provoked into stating that he could no longer trust the

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1 Knighton, p. 453; Avesbury, p. 285.

2 Scalacronica, p. 157. Le roy embrasa covyne oue les ioenes gentz entour luy a remuer cest gouvernail et a destruyre le dit cont.

3 The Brut, p. 268.



King's word. As soon as the meeting was over, Montagu told the King that it would be better for them to eat the dog than for the dog to eat them.<sup>1</sup> Thus immediate action was decided upon.

With the castle so closely guarded it was necessary to gain the support of William Eland, the Constable of Nottingham Castle, who knew of an underground passage which was not known to Mortimer's supporters and by way of which the castle could be entered secretly. Either the King himself or Montagu at the King's command secured Eland's co-operation.<sup>2</sup> The Brut states that on the evening of the same day, Friday 19 October 1330, Montagu, John de Bohun the earl of Hereford, and their companions rode out of Nottingham and that when this was reported to Mortimer he took it as an admission of guilt and sent orders for the ports to be closed to prevent their escape.<sup>3</sup> It is hardly likely that at such a crucial moment Montagu and his associates would have drawn attention to themselves by simulated flight and as an attempt to lull Mortimer into a sense of false security it would hardly have done more than staying put.

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- 1 The best accounts of these events are to be found in, The Brut, pp. 268-71; Scalacronica, pp. 157-58. Other chroniclers tell much the same story, differing only in points of detail. Further information concerning the confrontation between Mortimer and the King's friends is to be found in Rot. Parl. II, p. 53. Les avantditz ses Secrez lui exciteront d'estre de la covyne de ses Enemis par dela, en destruction de la Roigne sa mere et dut dit Roger laquele chose il efferma sur le Roi que le parole le Roi ne peoit estre creu a contraire de son dit.
  - 2 Scalacronica, op. cit. refers to the King approaching Eland. The Brut, op. cit. states that Montagu was sent to Eland by the King. Eland received his reward. On 26 October 1330 he was granted custody of Nottingham Castle for life, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 18. He also received the castle and honour of Peverel in Derbyshire, quit of render, for life, for his good service. C.81/176.
  - 3 The Brut, p. 270.

Towards midnight a small group gathered in the castle park close to the entrance to the underground passage where Eland met them at the open postern. In the dark some of the party missed their way and were late at the rendezvous. Those who were there, fearing that any noise could betray them, decided not to delay so that only a group of some twenty four men entered the castle to be joined by the King himself somewhere on the way to the quarters occupied by Isabella and Mortimer.<sup>1</sup>

Some idea of who was present on that night can be learned from the pardons subsequently granted to those involved in service at Nottingham Castle on the night of Mortimer's arrest. Most prominent of course was Montagu himself, but the group also included Robert Ufford, William Clinton, John de Neville of Hornby and Edward de Bohun.<sup>2</sup> Mortimer himself was in his room, probably in conference with Isabella and Bishop Burghersh.<sup>3</sup> As the plotters approached the alarm was

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1 Scalacronica, p. 158.

2 Montagu, Ufford and Clinton were created earls of Salisbury, Suffolk and Huntingdon at the time Edward of Woodstock was created earl of Cornwall, above, p. 92. Pardons: Montagu, 10 January 1331, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 69; Ufford, 12 February 1331, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 74; Clinton and John Neville of Hornby, 24 February 1331, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 82; Edward de Bohun, 20 January 1331, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 53. To the five mentioned above the following names may also be added: Thomas West, who was associated with the pardons granted to Clinton and Neville; William, son of William de Carleton of Fourehough, 31 March 1331, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 90; John de Molyne, an esquire of the household also described as the king's yeoman, 28 March 1331, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 110; Robert de Walkefare, 2 October 1331, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 172; Thomas de Thornham, knight, 7 October 1331, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 177; Thomas Wyneham of Thornham, knight, 20 October 1331, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 177 and four servants of William Latimer who were in his company that night, John Maunsel, Elis le Rovedor, Thomas son of Elis and Robert Digby, 3 November 1330 and 28 December 1330, C.81/176; C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 211.

3 Knighton, p. 453.

raised by the Steward of the Household, Hugh Turpington, who was instantly killed by John Neville.<sup>1</sup> In the ensuing melee as Mortimer struggled to arm himself a second member of the household, Richard de Monmouth, was killed.<sup>2</sup> As the party approached Mortimer's room the King had hung back, but Isabella sensing his presence cried out, "Dear son, have pity on the gentle Mortimer".<sup>3</sup> But Mortimer was arrested while Bishop Burghersh ignominiously tried to escape by way of a latrine.<sup>4</sup> By the following morning the town of Nottingham was securely in the hands of the king's supporters and the leading adherents of Isabella and Mortimer, Oliver Ingham, Simon Bereford and

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- 1 Le Baker and Scalacronica agree that Neville struck the blow. Scalacronica and the Brut disagree as to whether Turpington died from a blow from a sword or a mace. Le Baker, p. 46; Scalacronica, p. 158; The Brut, p. 271.
  - 2 Only the Scalacronica, op. cit. refers to this second death, a squire killed resisting in the hall. Monmouth, who is referred to as the king's yeoman, had escaped from the Tower with Mortimer in August 1323. For this he was pardoned 21 February 1327, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 14. In the following years he received various grants including in August 1330 land at Upton-St-Leonard in Gloucestershire forfeited by the earl of Arundel, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 549. His death at Nottingham is mentioned in the pardon granted to Edward de Bohun on 20 January 1331, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 53. His lands were taken into the King's hands on 6 December 1330, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 201, but there is reference to lands of his in Herefordshire valued at 18s. 8d. plus a yearly rent of 5s. 2d. being assigned to his widow in dower, 20 April 1331, C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 224-25.
  - 3 Le Baker, p. 46; The Brut, p. 271, says she called Mortimer "a worthy knight, her friend and beloved cousin".
  - 4 The arrest is referred to by all the chroniclers, Murimuth, p. 62; Avesbury, p. 285; Annales Paulini, p. 252; Bridlington, p. 101; Walsingham, p. 193; Eulogium Historiarum, p. 201, which refers to the night of 18 October; Knighton, p. 453, who correctly dates it, Friday 19 October; French Chronicle, p. 64. It is the Meaux chronicler who refers to Bishop Burghersh, Meaux, p. 360.

Mortimer's sons Geoffrey and Edmund were in custody.<sup>1</sup> Other of Mortimer's allies slipped away during the night to take refuge on their own lands.<sup>2</sup>

The next morning the news was circulated to the sheriffs that Mortimer, Ingham and Bereford, the principal agents of misgovernment and of the king's dishonour, had been arrested. Henceforth the king himself would direct affairs, supported as was only right by a council of magnates.<sup>3</sup> Orders were now issued for the seizure of Mortimer's lands and property and similar instructions were issued with regard to his son Geoffrey, Ingham and Bereford.<sup>4</sup> The court did not delay at Nottingham. Taking Mortimer with them they moved by way of Loughborough to Leicester where they remained from 23 to 26 October.<sup>5</sup> A number of necessary administrative steps were taken during these days. Most importantly because the King desired a speedy reform of the country's government, writs were issued summoning a parliament to meet at Westminster on Monday, 26 November. It was rather short notice, thirty three days rather than the customary forty, and in the writs it was specifically stated that this was not to be a precedent. It sprang from the king's urgent desire to put the government of the

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1 The chroniclers do not make clear the position of Isabella and Bishop Burghersh. The former was placed under some restraint. Burghersh continued to witness charters until early December. C.53/117. He surrendered the Great Seal to the King at Westminster on 28 November. C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 166.

2 The Brut, p. 271.

3 C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 158-59.

4 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 193-94. See below, p. 353.

5 Le Baker, p. 46; C.81/176.

realm into proper order.<sup>1</sup>

A number of changes were also made amongst administrative personnel, most notably with regard to the Welsh march where Mortimer's arrest had left a large void. Gilbert Talbot was appointed justice of South Wales and John Wysham, justice of north Wales. Ingham was replaced as justice of Chester by William de Clinton who was also given charge of the important castles of Chester, Rhuddlan and Flint.<sup>2</sup> Both the escheators were replaced, Simon Bereford south of Trent by Robert Selyman and John de Bolingbroke by John de Houghton for the area north of Trent.<sup>3</sup> Edward de Bohun was empowered to fulfil the office of constable in place of his ailing brother, the earl of Hereford.<sup>4</sup>

The death of Turpington also meant there had to be a new steward of the household. Ralph Neville of Raby, whose kinsman had killed

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1 C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 160-61. The forty days rule goes back to Magna Carta (1215) c.14. English Government at Work, 1327-1336, I, p. 106, n. 1. T.F. Plucknett miscalculates the number of days between 23 October and 26 November. J.C. Holt, 'The Pre-history of Parliament', discusses procedures involved in the implementation of writs for election and draws attention to the problems caused by distance and the sheriffs' response. Forty days notice may have been reasonable at the time of Magna Carta, later other factors were influential. The English Parliament in the Middle Ages, ed. R.G. Davies and J.H. Denton (Manchester, 1981), pp. 1-28.

2 C.P.R. 1330-34, pp. 10, 13.

3 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 192, 193. Selyman only remained in office until 17 January 1331 when he was replaced by William Trussel, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 222. Bereford's sub-escheators Hugh de Cokeseye and Richard de Pensax were continued in office by Trussel. After Bereford's fall sub-escheators rendered accounts not to the escheators as usual, but directly to the Exchequer where special commissioners may have been assigned to check their accounts. English Government at Work, 1327-1336, II, E.R. Stevenson, The Escheator, pp. 159-60. Houghton remained in office until 4 November 1331, op. cit., p. 152.

4 C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 112.

Turpington was already acting in this capacity at Leicester on 25 October.<sup>1</sup> During the royal stop at Leicester the king had been anxious to dispose of Mortimer without further ado. He was however persuaded otherwise<sup>2</sup> and Mortimer and his friends were sent on to London where they were consigned to the Tower on 7 October under the guardianship of a household knight, Arnold de Duro Fort and Robert de Walkefare.<sup>3</sup> There he remained in the custody of six of the king's sergeants-at-arms until parliament met.<sup>4</sup> The chroniclers are less certain of Isabella's fate. The indications are that she was sent under restraint to Berkhamsted where she remained until she was brought under escort to join the king at Windsor for Christmas.<sup>5</sup> First reports had suggested that Edward was behaving harshly towards his mother. The Pope had heard such reports early in November and wrote begging him to treat her kindly. The reports were not true and the Pope wrote again commending Edward for his humanity.<sup>6</sup>

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1 C.53/117, no. 32.

2 Scalacronica, p. 158.

3 Duro Fort and Walkefare were allocated £10 for their expenses and those of other men-at-arms guarding Mortimer, his son Geoffrey and Simon Bereford, by a writ dated at Woodstock, 30 October 1330. E.403/253; Annales Paulini, p. 352. Walkefare was involved at Montagu's instigation, SC.8/152/7583.

4 Bereduc de Tylle, Roger Pledour, Gaucelyn de Isnak, Isard de Laneplane, William de Heyntes and Gaillard de Savenak, king's serjeants-at-arms, were paid £6 on 19 November for their stay at the Tower guarding Mortimer, E.403/253.

5 Thomas Wake, Ebulo Lestrangle, William de Bohun and his brother Edward were sent to Berkhamsted on 21 December to bring Isabella to Windsor for Christmas. C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 36.

6 Cal. Pap. Reg. II, p. 497. The Pope wrote on 7 November quoting reports which had reached him on 3 November. He also wrote to Queen Philippa asking her to intercede with the king on Isabella's behalf. The following day he wrote to Lancaster, Montagu, Archbishop Meopham and Bishop Stratford of Winchester urging them to incline the king to mercy. Cal. Pap. Reg. II, p. 498. The names are significant as indicating those whom the Pope believed would have some influence over Edward. The reports of 3 November were quickly contradicted by a merchant arriving at Avignon with more up to date news.

In the meantime Edward had moved by way of Lutterworth and Daventry to Woodstock where he spent the first week in November.<sup>1</sup> From there instructions were sent to the sheriffs to ensure that all who had grievances against the king's former ministers, or who believed that they had been unjustly treated by magnates or royal councillors should appear to make complaint at the forthcoming parliament. The King had also been led to understand that former representatives of the counties had been chosen on a factional basis and that they had obstructed the proper redress of grievances. For the forthcoming parliament, the sheriffs are to see that the knights of the counties are loyal and honest and free of association with any faction.<sup>2</sup> Thus the King stated his intention of breaking away from the factional mode of government which had existed in the last years of his father's reign and throughout his own minority. But generally government remained at a low key and the king stayed away from London, first at Woodstock, then at Clarendon in Wiltshire.<sup>3</sup> However arrangements were made for representatives to be in Paris early in December, thus meeting King Philip's requirements for the discussion of the Gascon homage; more significantly from the domestic point of view safe conducts were issued for the return of Mortimer's exiled enemies, Thomas Wake, Henry Beaumont, Richard Arundel, Fulk FitzWaryn, Thomas Roscelyn

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1 C.81/176.

2 C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 161-62.

3 The king was at Woodstock until 6 November. He was at Clarendon at least between 12 and 16 November. He subsequently moved nearer London, being at Kingston-on-Thames on 25 November, the day before parliament met at Westminster. C.81/176.

and Rhys ap Griffith.<sup>1</sup> Edward was content to await the meeting of parliament on Monday, 26 November 1330.

Parliament's first and most important business was to deal with Mortimer. When Thomas of Lancaster had been brought to trial after the battle of Boroughbridge in 1322 he had been allowed to make no answer to the long indictment laid against him and the Lanercost chronicler had observed that he was sentenced, "sine parlamento et sine maiori et saniori consilio praehibito". It was an unprecedented mode of procedure which caused considerable disquiet.<sup>2</sup> Four months later certain justices were appointed by special commission to pronounce judgement on Roger Mortimer of Wigmore and his uncle, Roger Mortimer of Chirk, in form prescribed by the King himself. None of the commissioners had had previous experience of criminal proceedings and they were commissioned not to try but to pass sentence. The prisoners were thus condemned without arraignment and unheard.<sup>3</sup> In 1327 when Mortimer petitioned for annulment of the sentence, it was on the grounds that arraignment and the right of reply could only be

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- 1 John de Hildesley and John de Shoreditch were appointed on 7 November to go to Paris as the king's representatives. They were instructed to appear before King Philip on 14 December. C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 38. See above, p. 305. The safe conduct for the returning exiles were issued on 25 November by which date they had already been summoned by the king to return. C.81/176. C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 20.
  - 2 J.R. Maddicott, Thomas of Lancaster, 1307-1322, pp. 311-12; N. Fryde, The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, pp. 58-60; Lanercost, p. 244. See above, p. 60 for Henry of Lancaster's petition seeking reversal of the judgement.
  - 3 The commissioners were Walter de Norwich, William de Herle, Walter de Friskene, John de Stonor and Hamo de Chigwell. The whole question of arraignment and the right of reply is discussed, L. Owen Pike, Introduction to Year Book 19 Edward III, Year Books of the Reign of King Edward III, Year XIX, R.S. (1906), pp. xxxvi-li.



dispensed with in time of war and that this had not been the case in 1322. Furthermore he pleaded that since the sentences were not by lawful judgement, they were contrary to Magna Carta and to law. On these grounds the sentences were annulled. Yet both the Despensers were condemned unheard in 1326<sup>1</sup> and the procedures involved on that occasion were extremely dubious. Although in the case of the younger Despenser William Trussel had apparently been appointed as one of a number of judges on the authority of Prince Edward as Custos of the realm, the condemnation of Despenser makes no mention of justices and the judgement seems to have been passed in the name of the people. This could not therefore have been a regular court.<sup>2</sup> When more recently Kent had been hastened to his death in 1330, he had apparently been subjected to formal examination and condemned by parliament on the King's instructions.<sup>3</sup> It seems more likely that these orders were issued by Isabella and Mortimer in the King's name and since, as also in the case of the younger Despenser, there is no formal record of proceedings, the judgement may well have been passed not by parliament but simply in its name. This procedure had proved very useful in the deposition of Edward II when Trussel had renounced homage to the King as procurator of parliament. There were of course other irregularities in the procedure against Kent, not least in the nature of the evidence against him, and Kent's widow Margaret and his heir Edmund sought a review of the process in parliament so that justice might be done and Kent's lands restored to his family.<sup>4</sup> There were therefore

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1 Above, pp. 17, 29.

2 G.A. Holmes, 'Judgement on the Younger Despenser, 1326', E.H.R. lxx (1955), pp. 261-67.

3 Above, p. 193

4 Rot. Parl. II, p. 55.

several precedents for by-passing normal judicial procedures when at the Westminster Parliament of November 1330, Mortimer was not allowed to enter a plea to the indictment against him so that Murimuth observes he suffered as had all the other nobles who had perished since Lancaster's death and what had been measured out to others was now measured out to him.<sup>1</sup>

The indictment was long and detailed.<sup>2</sup> It began with the accusation that Mortimer had arrogated to himself the royal power, that he had ignored the stipulation of the Westminster parliament of 1327 with regard to conciliar advisers for the King who had been placed under a strict supervision and that he had appointed ministers and household officers at will, advancing his own allies to the exclusion of the king's natural counsellors. This situation had been made worse at the Salisbury parliament of 1328 where Mortimer and his supporters had appeared with an armed retinue despite the fact that this had been strictly prohibited. As a result several peers, including Lancaster, had feared to appear and Mortimer had been able unchallenged to threaten violence against the prelates if they dared to suggest anything which was contrary to Mortimer's will. When Lancaster and others sought to pay their duty to the king and to assume their proper role as his advisers, Mortimer's threats obliged them to withdraw without their being able to speak to the king. Subsequently Mortimer had ridden against them and on their submission had imposed exorbitant

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- 1 Murimuth, p. 62. The fact that Mortimer was not permitted to answer secured the reversal of the judgement against him on petition of his grandson, Roger Mortimer, in 1354, L. Owen Pike, op. cit.
  - 2 Rot. Parl. II, pp. 52-53. There is a transcription in Knighton, I, pp. 454-58.

finances on some and exiled others seizing their lands, which was contrary both to Magna Carta and to law.

The indictment went on to state that Mortimer steadily appropriated royal power to himself. He had taken prizes as if he were the king himself and he had greatly increased the number of knights and other servants who accompanied him and the king. In this way the king was surrounded by enemies and unable to act freely. The king's freedom of action was further limited by the way in which Mortimer had taken the king's treasure for his own use and that of his supporters. Jewels and money had found their way into Mortimer's pockets, not least the 20,000 marks which were payable by Scotland under the terms of the treaty of Northampton.<sup>1</sup> He had further weakened the resources of the Crown by securing grants of castles, towns, manors and franchises in England, Wales and Ireland not only for himself but for his supporters.

There were references to Mortimer's policies with regard to Gascony and Ireland. When at Winchester he persuaded the boroughs to make provision for men to serve in Gascony, he had contrived to turn this to his own profit as he had also done in the case of knights individually summoned who were obliged to make a fine rather than actually serve in Gascony. So far as Ireland was concerned, he had supported and rewarded those who were the king's natural enemies after they had attacked and killed those who were loyal to the Crown.

But perhaps the most damning part of the indictment was that which related to Mortimer's dealings with the royal family. Despite the fact

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1 The indictment refers to 20,000 marks. In fact the total sum due from the Scots was £20,000. Above, p.227. See also below, p.325.

that it had been agreed that the deposed Edward II should live at Kenilworth in such comfort as befitted his estate, Mortimer had seen fit to ignore the decision of the peers and had arranged for Edward to be transferred to Berkeley Castle where he had been treacherously murdered at Mortimer's instigation. He had in the last months of the former king's life kept Isabella away from him, making her believe, so it was alleged, that if she confronted him her husband would attempt to murder her. He thus dishonoured both Isabella and her son. But that was not all. He had laid the plot which deceived the earl of Kent into believing that his half-brother might still be alive and when Kent had taken steps to try and get at the truth, Mortimer had had him arrested and swiftly executed. The final charges concerned the young Edward III himself. In the last days of his power, Mortimer had made accusations against the king's intimate supporters and against the King himself, whose word he said, could no longer be relied on.

When the chroniclers came to report the indictment against Mortimer they added to it items relating to the dishonour which had accrued to the Crown through the debacle of the campaign against the Scots in 1327 and the humiliating terms of the scandalous peace of Northampton. Le Baker refers also to the regime's policy of friendship with France and the fact that the king had to do homage.<sup>1</sup> Since Le Baker was writing some twenty years later when the French wars were a prominent issue we may see his comment as stemming from the political situation of his own time. The condemnation of the Scots situation certainly sprang from popular feeling against the regime's policies. But neither Scotland nor the French homage were issues in the parliamentary indictment.

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1 Murimuth, pp. 63-64; Scalacronica, p. 158; Le Baker, p. 47.

How far can we justify the other accusations against Mortimer, those which are in the official record?

The history of the regime between 1326 and 1330 largely supplies the answer. There is no doubt that the wishes of the parliament of 1327 with regard to councillors were ignored and only a small number, chiefly of Mortimer's supporters, were regularly about the king.<sup>1</sup> Lancaster and his allies were soon excluded and their frustration was revealed in the events surrounding the Salisbury parliament of 1328 and its aftermath.<sup>2</sup> Here again Mortimer's behaviour does seem to bear out the accusations against him and the recognisances the government looked for in the spring of 1329 were extremely heavy. It is true that neither Lancaster nor his leading supporter Thomas Wake were driven into exile at this point, but the departure of Henry Beaumont was significant<sup>3</sup> while the £30,000 fine levied on Lancaster represented some five or six years income.<sup>4</sup>

The accusation that Mortimer had abrogated the royal power to himself is more difficult to answer. Where we have evidence of the size of Mortimer's retinue, of his behaviour towards the king, of

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1 Above, pp. 67-70 , for a discussion about the king's councillors.

2 For the Salisbury parliament and what followed, above, pp. 166-172.

3 Several others, of course, subsequently went into exile, many after Kent's death.

4 J.R. Maddicott places the total value of the Lancastrian estates in the time of Thomas of Lancaster at something just over £11,000 a year, Thomas of Lancaster, 1307-1322, pp. 22-23. The events of 1322 had considerably reduced the value of the Lancastrian estates and Henry of Lancaster's reinstatement did not fully restore him to his brother's position in relation to the estates. His revenues for the year 1330-31 were £6,408 12s. 7½d. net; and for 1331-32, £5,549 7s. 6½d. net. Somerville, History of the Duchy of Lancaster, I, (London, 1953), pp. 32-33.

lavish hospitality and Round Tables we find pointers to the outward trappings of royal splendour. The lavish exchange of gifts of plate and jewellery on the royal visit to Wigmore and the inventories of his possessions add to this impression.<sup>1</sup> We may also in this regard refer to the marriages of his daughters Beatrice and Agnes to members of the royal family.<sup>2</sup> But if all this was merely the outward show, the realities did not lag behind. Mortimer was seldom very far away from the king during these years and while there is no way of knowing how much of the Crown's real income passed into Mortimer's hands and it can be observed that the Scots' money did not find its way directly to Mortimer though Isabella certainly did very well out of the transaction,<sup>3</sup> there is little doubt that the regime's expenditure consistently outstripped its income which suggests extravagant and wasteful policies.<sup>4</sup>

The evidence with regard to the accretion of land on the Welsh march and in Ireland cannot be denied while Mortimer further buttressed his power by the offices which he secured. The title Earl of March merely serves to confirm the position which he occupied.<sup>5</sup> In Ireland too, particularly in the last months of his tenure of power, he strengthened his position.<sup>6</sup> It was, however, his reaction to the

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- 1 For Mortimer's retinue and attitude to the king, above, p.309 ; for his hospitality and the Round Table, above, p.186 ; for his plate and jewels, above, pp.295-96. For the inventory, below, p.354 ; and Appendix III.
  - 2 Beatrice married the heir of the king's uncle, Thomas of Brotherton; Agnes married Lawrence Hastings, the heir to the earldom of Pembroke, above, p.110.
  - 3 Above, p.229 , n.1 . and pp.127-28
  - 4 Above, pp.270-296
  - 5 For the land Mortimer obtained on the March and the offices he secured in Wales, above, pp.104-13.
  - 6 For Mortimer's Irish acquisitions, above, pp.115-16.

murder of the earl of Louth in June 1329 which caused Ireland to appear in the formal indictment against him. John Bermingham had been a political supporter of the Despensers holding the county of Louth as a liberty. He was accordingly distrusted by Mortimer. Bermingham was murdered by the gentry of Louth who rapidly obtained pardon from the government. When this was felt to be inadequate because it only specifically named six people, a fresh pardon was granted in May 1330 involving seventy eight people who were also permitted to keep the goods looted from the dead earl and his men. There is no evidence that Mortimer was involved in Bermingham's murder; his treatment of the murderers showed how much he condoned it and therefore justifies the references to Ireland in the indictment.<sup>1</sup> It is more difficult to substantiate the Gascon charges for which there appears to be no direct evidence while the charges themselves seem to be extremely improbable.<sup>2</sup>

But in the end it was the death of Edward II and Mortimer's behaviour towards him and other members of the royal family which caused the greatest resentment. That Mortimer was ultimately responsible for the murder at Berkeley is beyond doubt. His servants were involved and he was actively engaged in encouraging them as he did also in the proceedings which brought Edward's half brother, the earl of Kent, to his death. This readiness to strike at the Crown and those near in blood to it is further exemplified by Mortimer's hostility to Lancaster and in the last months of his government by his

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1    Bermingham's murder is discussed by Frame, English Lordship in Ireland, 1318-1361, pp. 32-33, 190-91. The Louth pardon, dated 31 May 1330 is C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 531-32.

2    The slowness of the steps to reinforce Gascony and the improbable nature of the charges are discussed, above, pp. 247-48, 301-02, 305

threats to the young Edward III.<sup>1</sup> If in 1326 the intentions of Isabella and Mortimer had been to administer the government on behalf of the King they soon found that this could only readily be done if the king was a minor. In exercising that government they gradually found themselves taking over the powers of the Crown. With those powers in his hands the next step might well be for Mortimer to aim at the Crown itself. Many people felt that already he had surrounded himself with the trappings of royalty, others feared his arrogant ambition. The formal indictment against Mortimer concluded that all these things were notorious and known to be true. The bulk of the evidence suggests that in a large measure they were.

Parliament wasted little time. The magnates examined the articles and returning to the king agreed that all these things were known to them, especially the question of the death of Edward II. Then as judges of parliament with the king's assent and with Mortimer standing before them, the opening words of Psalm 52, Why do you glory in wickedness, embroidered on his robe, they adjudged him a traitor to the King and country and that he should be drawn and hanged. The earl of Norfolk as Earl Marshal was to supervise the execution assisted by the Constable of the Tower in the presence of the mayor, sheriff and aldermen of London.<sup>2</sup> The sentence was carried out on Thursday, 29 November 1330, when Mortimer, dressed in the black mourning robe he had worn for Edward II, was dragged on an ox-skin behind horses from

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1 For Edward II, above, pp. 139-41; Kent, pp. 190-92; Edward III, pp. 311-12

2 Rot. Parl. II, p. 53; Meaux, p. 360. Psalm 52 appears to be commonly quoted against traitors. It was used in the case of the Younger Despenser and Baldock, above, p. 28. The Exchequer was subsequently ordered, 19 January 1331, to make allowance in the account of the sheriffs of London for their expenses incurred at the execution of Mortimer and Bereford, C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 109.



the Tower to Tyburn. Before he died he admitted to the people his responsibility for Kent's death. Then he was hanged and there his body remained for two days until it was taken down and removed for burial at the Friars Minors' church in Newgate.<sup>1</sup> This was not, however, its final resting place. For some reason it seems to have found its way to the Friars Minor at Coventry, who were reluctant to give it up and Mortimer's widow Joan was obliged to petition the king so that pressure might be put on the friars to deliver the body to her in order that she might bury it amongst the other members of the Mortimer family at Wigmore.<sup>2</sup>

With Mortimer disposed of, parliament turned its attention to his associates. Of those who had been arrested at Nottingham only Simon Bereford was to die.<sup>3</sup> That he should have been singled out seems strange. His name appears but rarely in the chronicles and he is not associated by them so directly as others in the events of the previous years. He had been with Isabella in the early days of the invasion of 1326, and had succeeded William Trussel as escheator south of Trent on 13 December 1327, a post which he retained until his fall.<sup>4</sup> He received a number of grants including the forfeited Despenser manor of Iselhamstead in Buckinghamshire and he held the castle and manor of Tickhill from Isabella. He was granted the reversion of Tickhill in

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- 1 Murimuth, p. 62; Lanercost, p. 266; Knighton, p. 458; Rot. Parl. II, p. 58.
  - 2 SC.8/61/3027. The petition was granted and orders were issued on 7 November 1331 for Mortimer's body to be handed over, C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 403.
  - 3 Bereford was the son of William de Bereford, Chief Justice of Common Pleas, who died in 1326. D.N.B., II, p. 325.
  - 4 Knighton, p. 432; C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 72-73.

December 1328.<sup>1</sup> There is little here to mark him out for special treatment. Yet there are one or two hints that Bereford was not overscrupulous in carrying out his responsibilities and there were some complaints. At Iselhamsted he seized forty acres of land from his neighbour John Cyfrewant and enclosed it in the park.<sup>2</sup> In January 1330 he was ordered to restore the issues of land at Great Curborough near Lichfield which he had taken into the king's hands on the false grounds that William de Venour, who had inherited the land, was insane. At the same time he was ordered to return lands that he had taken custody of which were held not in chief but of other lords. Following Kent's death, he was accused in April 1330 of allowing his sub-escheator to remove the goods of Arnold Garsie de St John from Kent's manor of Pirbright in Surrey and he was subsequently ordered not to interfere there.<sup>3</sup> About the same time he was meddling with the temporalities of the diocese of Salisbury during the vacancy of the see following the death of Bishop Robert Mortival.<sup>4</sup> But this hardly seems to justify the accusation that he was notorious as aiding Mortimer in all his crimes.

The accusations against him do, however, refer to two specific

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- 1 Iselhamsted was originally granted in June 1327, he received the stock in December, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 194. Iselhamsted was granted to William Latimer on 17 December 1330, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 31; for Tickhill, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 344. It should be noticed that Queen Philippa was granted Tickhill on the day of Bereford's arrest, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 34.
  - 2 When Iselhamsted was taken into the king's hands in November 1330, John was in danger of losing his land for good and petitioned for its return, Rot. Parl. II, Petition No. 33, p. 37.
  - 3 C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 2, 1, 135, 29-30.
  - 4 By a grant of Edward II the temporalities of the see went to the Dean and Chapter of Salisbury, C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 13.

crimes.<sup>1</sup> The lesser of the two was that he was a notorious harbourer of robbers and felons. In May 1327 Bereford had received pardon for trespass and homicides in connection with various parks and warrens<sup>2</sup> and he could easily have soon been up to his old tricks again. More significantly Bereford was accused of murdering his liege lord and destroying the blood royal. There is no direct evidence of his involvement in the death of either Edward II or Kent, although it is curious to note that in the strange letter of Manuele Fieschi it is Bereford who is associated with Gurney as Edward's murderer rather than Mautravers whose name appears in the chronicle.<sup>3</sup> In passing judgement, the lords commented that they did not do so as Bereford's peer but as judges of parliament.<sup>4</sup> He was adjudged guilty and hanged in the presence of the earl of Norfolk on 24 December 1330.<sup>5</sup>

Judgement was also passed on five other servants of the regime. Thomas Gurney and William Ocle were condemned for involvement in the murder of Edward II while John Mautravers, who knew of Edward's death, Bogo de Bayeux and John Deverel were all sentenced as having been principal agents in the ingenious plot which brought down the earl of Kent. Once again the lords were faced with the dilemma that these men were not their peers and once again they claimed they could only pass judgement as judges in parliament because the murdered victims

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1 Rot. Parl. II, p. 53.

2 C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 104.

3 For a discussion on Manuele Fieschi's letter, above, pp. 142-45.

4 A point commented on by B. Wilkinson, Constitutional History of Medieval England, 1216-1399, II, p. 168.

5 Rot. Parl. II, p. 53; Knighton, I, p. 458, gives the date of Bereford's execution as 16 January 1331.

were of royal blood. For the future, they agreed, no lord should be called upon to judge anyone other than his peers and the present cases must not be called upon as precedents to oblige them to do so.<sup>1</sup>

The sentences of death however were passed in the absence of the accused. Mautravers, Ocle, Gurney and Deverell had not surrendered and were trying to flee abroad. The ports were closed to them while the order for their arrest, issued on 3 December, also embraced John Wyard and the former constable of Wallingford Castle, William de Exon.<sup>2</sup> By 9 December it seems to have been known that Gurney and Ocle had made good their escape. A week later when orders were issued to the sheriffs to take into custody the goods and property of all the wanted men, the others seem also to have got away though there was still some confusion about Mautravers.<sup>3</sup> While forfeited lands were to be returned to their rightful owners, provision was made for his wife Agnes, a sister of Simon Bereford.<sup>4</sup> By February 1331 longer term arrangements

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1 Rot. Parl. II, pp. 53-54.

2 C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 165.

3 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 206-07. Although the order states that the wanted men had withdrawn the realm the sheriffs are instructed to use a county posse to arrest them. The position with regard to Mautravers is further confused by the fact that on 29 October 1330, John Mautravers was granted custody of the royal manor and park of Clarendon, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 18. Clarendon had been granted at the request of the earl of Kent on 2 November 1327 to Giles Beauchamp, but subsequently committed to Mautravers. A new grant committing the custody of Clarendon to Beauchamp was made with parliament's consent on 10 December 1330, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 219. The October 1330 grant could have been to Mautravers' father though by reason of age it seems very unlikely. The Younger Mautravers fled by way of Cornwall according to a reference in G.E.C. viii, p. 583.

4 The Countess of Kent received manors forfeited by Mautravers at Bedhampton in Hampshire and Pirbright in Surrey, C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 86; C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 84. Some of the earl of Arundel's lands which had passed into Kent's hands and subsequently been confiscated had to be returned to Richard Arundel, but Kent's widow received property to the value of £627 7s. 4d. in compensation, 15 February 1331, C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 191.

were being made for the disposal of his holdings.<sup>1</sup> Arrangements were also made with regard to Gurney's wife.<sup>2</sup>

The subsequent history of Mautravers and Gurney is of considerable and contrasting interest. Mautravers eventually settled in Flanders where he was interviewed by William Montagu in 1334 as a result of having offered to make a confession. What information he had to impart was not felt at that time to exonerate him sufficiently for the part he had played in Edward II's murder and Kent's downfall to allow a pardon. In November of that year the lands of John Giffard of Brimsfield which he had held were granted to Maurice de Berkeley.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, time does seem in this case to have acted as a healer. By 1339, Edward III was evidently prepared to make use of his services and he received a grant of £100 per annum, presumably for working with the Flemish leader Jacob van Arteveldt to bring Flanders over to England's side in the opening exchanges of the Hundred Years War. He was, however, still in Flanders in 1342 when his wife visited him. It was from Flanders that he made his submission to the King in 1345 and petitioned to be allowed to stand trial in parliament. He was still abroad in 1348 when he was variously employed as an envoy to Ghent

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- 1 Land in Berkshire was granted to Robert Bullock for a five year term, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 233. Other property in Berkshire and Dorset was granted to John de Neville, C.Ch.R. 1327-41, pp. 230-31. Richard de Grey received the manor of Oveston in Northamptonshire for a seven year term at an annual rent of £35 12s. 11½d., C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 287.
  - 2 C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 89; C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 254.
  - 3 23 March 1334. For avoiding suspicion, the King on learning lately that John Mautravers the Younger, lately banished because he withdrew from the realm for certain causes, was desirous to reveal to him many things concerning his honour and the estate and well being of the realm, has charged William de Montacute to speak with the said John on his behalf and report what he learns to him. C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 535. C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 423.

Bruges and Ypres and also as Keeper of the Channel Islands. His outlawry was eventually annulled in 1351 and his estates fully restored in 1352.<sup>1</sup>

Gurney's story did not have so fortunate an ending.<sup>2</sup> As in the case of Mautravers, Gurney's land and property was subject to confiscation<sup>3</sup> and while this process was under way in the early summer of 1331, news was received that Gurney had been arrested at Burgos in Castile and had been committed to prison there on the orders of King Alphonso. A request was immediately sent to Alphonso and the authorities at Burgos to hand Gurney over to John de Haustede, the seneschal of Gascony.<sup>4</sup> A week later further letters followed to Alphonso and Sir John de Leynham, his chamberlain, requesting them to examine Gurney before sending him to Bayonne preparatory to his being brought to England. The letters from King Edward requested that the examination at Burgos should take place in the presence of the King's serjeant-at-arms, Bernard Pelegrym, who was to try to obtain from Gurney a confession relating to all those involved in the death of Edward II. Such a

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- 1 Mautravers' later career is traced, T.F. Tout, 'Captivity and Death of Edward of Caernarvon', Collected Papers of Thomas Frederick Tout, III, pp. 177-78; G.E.C. viii, pp. 581-85. For his rehabilitation, C.P.R. 1350-54, p. 110; C.C.R. 1349-54, p. 312.
  - 2 The evidence for Gurney is conveniently assembled, J. Hunter, 'On the Measures taken for the Apprehension of Sir Thomas de Gournay one of the murderers of King Edward II and on their final issue', Archaeologia, xxvii (London, 1838), pp. 274-97. This article is based on entries in Foedera and Pipe Roll accounts. Where no other citation is made, refer to this article.
  - 3 Chests which Gurney as Constable of Bristol Castle had sent to Keynsham Abbey were to be opened and examined and their contents sold in the presence of the mayor of Bristol, May 1331, op. cit.
  - 4 C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 315.

confession was to be put in writing and Pelegrym to return to England with the information as fast as possible. In the meantime Giles de Ispannia was to be sent to Bayonne where he would question Gurney further before returning with him to England.<sup>1</sup>

Orders were issued on 30 May 1331 for Giles de Ispannia to bring Gurney to England.<sup>2</sup> He crossed from Dover to Whitsand on 11 June and journeyed to Bordeaux by way of Paris. After a short stay there he moved on to Burgos where he arrived towards the end of July. But there his troubles began for he was unable to secure possession of the imprisoned Gurney. He spent at least four months chasing round Spain to get permission from King Alphonso and Leynham for Gurney to be handed over despite the fact that King Edward had written to Alphonso requesting safe conduct for Gurney and Giles and the King of Navarre had already been approached to allow them free passage through his kingdom.<sup>3</sup> Eventually Giles returned for a time to Bordeaux, but on his arrival back in Spain early in 1332 it was to find that Gurney had escaped. He did however get custody of Gurney's servant, a man called Tilly, and also arrested Robert Lynel who is described as being the King's enemy.

While Giles was able to return to England, Tilly was imprisoned in Gascony and Lynel remained in Spain. A letter dated 25 June 1332 requested that Lynel should be handed over to Edward III's representatives. Giles de Ispannia's journey had not, however, been totally in vain. After his return in July 1332, various sheriffs were ordered

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1 C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 316, 322.

2 C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 121.

3 C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 324-25.

to assist him in pursuing those who had been involved in Edward II's death. Between July 1332 and January 1333, three men concerned in the late king's death, William de Kingsclere, Richard de Well and John le Spicer, were all arrested; there is no indication as to the nature of their involvement but their arrest must have been due to information secured from Gurney.

At the beginning of 1333 there was further news of Gurney. He had been arrested in Naples and while Giles de Ispannia was once again sent to Gascony to confront Tilly, William de Thweng was ordered to Naples to bring Gurney back to England. Once he had secured Gurney's person, Thweng set off by boat to Aigues-Mortes in southern France. From there he decided to cross to Bayonne by way of Aragon. En route he found himself arrested and it may well have required the personal intervention of Edward III to secure his release.<sup>1</sup> Under escort Thweng and Gurney moved on to Bayonne but by this time Gurney was ill and two physicians were called in to treat him, but in vain for he died at Bayonne. The circumstances may well have been suspicious. Thweng was clearly anxious not to leave himself open to any possible repercussions. While Gurney's body was taken by boat from Bayonne to Bordeaux, it was twice prepared for burial and two notarial instruments were drawn up at Bayonne and Bordeaux, presumably setting out the circumstances of Gurney's death. The body was subsequently brought to England and Thweng reported to the king at Berwick-on-Tweed on 7 July 1333 while his men kept a close guard on Gurney's body.

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1 Edward III wrote to the King of Aragon on 6 October 1333 thanking him for releasing Thweng.



The whole episode seems strange, just as the ambivalent attitude of Edward III's government to Mautravers might seem unusual. That Edward III both as a son and as a king would have been interested in his father's death is to be expected. What does seem surprising is the apparent mystery which hangs around those accused of murdering Edward II and the failure of the government to make clear what had happened. Did they not know? It hardly seems likely. Yet it has been suggested that this failure to produce a clear-cut statement is to be read as an admission that Edward was alive,<sup>1</sup> that Gurney's death was highly suspicious and Mautravers' pension a bribe to keep him silenced. For if Edward II was alive then Edward III's title as King might be challenged and any claim to the Crown of France would be weakened. Yet in the end is it so improbable that Gurney being brought home to face justice should die of natural causes or that Mautravers in the 1330s was too poignant a reminder of how the King had come by his throne?

Certainly apart from the chase of Gurney there was no witch-hunt of Mortimer's supporters and only those involved with the murder of Edward II and Kent's execution were punished. Ocle and Deverell both made good their escape abroad but as late as the summer of 1331 there was still an alert out for Deverell.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the most fortunate of those arrested with Mortimer was Oliver Ingham who like Mortimer and

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1 The question of the possible survival of Edward II is discussed above, pp. 142-43. See also, Cuttino and Lyman, 'Where is Edward II?', Speculum, July 1978, pp. 522-43.

2 Some of his lands in Wiltshire were still not in the escheator's hands as late as 26 October 1331 when the King learned that others enjoyed the benefits of the estate. C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 283.

Bereford, was described as one of the principal directors of the realm's dishonour. His lands were ordered to be taken into the King's hands on 22 October 1330, but further proceedings against him were stopped and he received a formal pardon on 8 December. This was granted in view of his services in Aquitaine during the previous reign and since 1327. His lands were restored.<sup>1</sup> It was a wise decision for Ingham was to render loyal service to Edward III for the rest of his life. At some time before 16 July 1331 he was appointed Steward of Aquitaine and he served in Gascony until July 1343. He died six months later.<sup>2</sup>

Another who may have been surprised to find himself at liberty was John Wyard, whom Mortimer had set to spy on the king. He too, with parliament's consent, received a pardon in January 1331 and immediately prepared to set out on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James at Compostella.<sup>3</sup> The administrative machine worked slowly for three days after his pardon had been granted orders that money raised by the goods belonging to Mortimer, Bereford, Mautravers, Gurney, Deverell and Ocle also included Wyard's name.<sup>4</sup>

There was one other against whom parliament initiated proceedings and that was Thomas Berkeley, Mortimer's son-in-law, and yet another closely involved in the problems of Edward II's death. But Berkeley's case is particularly strange. He was accused that Edward had been

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1 C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 158; C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 193-94; C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 22; C.81/176/4077.

2 G.E.C., vii, p. 60.

3 C.P.R. 1330-34, pp. 53, 43.

4 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 219.

murdered while in his custody. He pleaded that in no way had he any responsibility for Edward's death and indeed he had no knowledge of it until the present parliament. He had been ill at the time, was away from Berkeley Castle where Edward was and could remember nothing. It is impossible to believe that Berkeley meant by this that he did not know that Edward was dead. Even given illness, and his memory about this seems to have been curiously faulty, such a statement is incredible, since he admitted he was indeed in charge of the castle and had been joint custodian with Mautravers of the late king. What Berkeley must have meant is that he was unaware of the way in which Edward died. This too is difficult to believe. Those in charge of the castle were his servants and Mautravers' first wife was Berkeley's sister. His confidence in these retainers may have been high but given his position and the doubt there must be about his illness, it is hard to exonerate Berkeley from all blame.<sup>1</sup>

In the event Berkeley's explanation was accepted and he was pronounced not guilty of direct involvement in Edward II's death.<sup>2</sup>

However, if his convenient illness exonerated him of that responsibility, he still had to explain how the murderous Gurney came to be in charge and a day was appointed for him to explain this to the king. In the meantime he was placed in the care of the steward of the Household, Ralph Neville. He was subsequently discharged with his mainpernors at the request of the prelates and magnates in the

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1 Berkeley's role in September 1327 and the dubious nature of the illness he made his excuse is discussed above, p. 146, n. 2

2 Rot. Parl. II, p. 57. The jurors included John Darcy, John Wysham, William Trussel and Roger de Swinnerton, all of whom had been servants of the regime.

parliament held at Michaelmas 1331. Nevertheless he did not receive complete acquittal until 16 March 1337.<sup>1</sup>

Three others had been present at Nottingham at the time of Mortimer's arrest, Bishop Wyvil of Salisbury, Bishop Burghersh of Lincoln and Queen Isabella herself. Wyvil, a former clerk of Isabella's, had been consecrated as bishop in the royal chapel at the time of the Oseney meeting in the middle of July 1330.<sup>2</sup> Very quickly reports injurious to Wyvil were being circulated at the Papal Curia and it is clear that his reputation was not highly regarded.<sup>3</sup> He had, however, had no serious opportunity to become seriously involved as Bishop in events at Nottingham though he is referred to as having been present at the confrontation between Mortimer, Montagu and the King. In the event he was permitted to return to his diocese where during his long episcopate, for he did not die until 1375, he seems to have established a reputation as a pastor and a builder. Perhaps more significantly he was involved in a long drawn out dispute with the Montagu family over the possession of Sherborne Castle which had been lost to the see of Salisbury two hundred years before. Wyvil finally recovered possession.<sup>4</sup>

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- 1 Rot. Parl. II, pp. 57, 62; Tout, 'Captivity and Death of Edward of Caernarvon', Collected Papers, III, p. 274.
  - 2 Annales Paulini, p. 349 gives the date, 15 July.
  - 3 C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 156; Murimuth, p. 60 uses the word illiteratus which suggests some lack of education. That he was also referred to as inconsequential seems somewhat harsh in view of the fact that he had been keeper of the Privy Seal to Edward III as Duke of Aquitaine, C.C.R. 1323-27, p. 655. He is subsequently referred to as Queen Isabella's secretary, Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, III, p. 34, n. 3.
  - 4 The famous spire of Salisbury Cathedral was built during his episcopate. A short account of Wyvil is to be found in a pamphlet, H.W. Rogers, Bishop Robert Wyville, The 14th Century Memorial Brass, published by The Friends of Salisbury Cathedral.

Bishop Burghersh had been involved at the centre of government from the moment of Isabella's return in 1326. He had subsequently served as treasurer between 25 March 1327 and 2 March 1328. He had been appointed Chancellor on 12 May 1328 and retained that position for the remainder of Isabella and Mortimer's tenure of power. He had been closely identified with the most publicly unpopular act of the regime, the peace with Scotland and seems to have secured some benefit in the way of patronage though perhaps less than might have been expected.<sup>1</sup> The least therefore that he might have expected was to have been placed under ecclesiastical restraint; yet within a week of Mortimer's arrest orders were issued that certain of the Badlesmere manors which had been in Isabella's hands should be delivered to the bishop.<sup>2</sup> He presumably continued to be responsible for the issuing of orders under the Great Seal, orders involving the arrest of former associates and the seizing of their property and the summoning of the parliament which was to sentence Mortimer. In mid-November reports had reached the Papacy of attacks on Burghersh and Pope John XXII wrote to Bishop Stratford of Winchester urging him to intervene in 'the whirlwind excited in the realm touching the bishop of Lincoln and to check those who were sharpening their tongues'. Montagu received a similar letter encouraging him to defend the bishop against 'envious whisperings'; while in a letter to the king, the Pope referred

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1 C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 58, 249; C.C.R. 1327-30, p. 387. For the Scottish peace, above, pp. **226-30**. The most notable favours he received were the acquisition of the wardship and marriage of Giles de Badlesmere, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 20; C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 226, 244; and the wardship of John de Mohun, C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 554. He also received some of the property forfeited by the earl of Kent, C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 22.

2 C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 72.

to Burghersh as a likely victim of envy and recommended him as having more good in him than all the other prelates.<sup>1</sup>

Burghersh, however, only retained the Great Seal until 28 November 1330 when he surrendered it to the king at Westminster in the presence of Montagu, Clinton, Ufford and others. Bishop Stratford of Winchester was appointed Chancellor and carried the Great Seal to his lodgings at Southwark where he began issuing writs de cursu the next day.<sup>2</sup> Since this was the day of Mortimer's execution, it would appear that one of Burghersh's last duties as Chancellor was to supervise the sealing of the orders for Mortimer's execution. A suitable irony.<sup>3</sup>

The leniency and generosity shown to the principal supporters of Mortimer were extended to Isabella herself. She was kept under some restraint<sup>4</sup> while steps were taken to deal with the vast amount of property which she had accumulated during her years in power. The counties of Montreuil and Ponthieu were surrendered on 1 December 1330 and Gerard de Orons was subsequently appointed keeper there.<sup>5</sup> On the same day, Isabella surrendered all the lands which had been assigned to her in dower and received in return an exchequer grant of £3,000 per annum.<sup>6</sup> Two days later the surrendered land was committed to

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1 Cal. Pap. Reg. II, p. 498.

2 C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 166.

3 Burghersh did not remain in the wilderness. He returned to serve as Treasurer between 1334 and 1337 and played a significant part in Edward III's diplomatic negotiations in the Low Countries where Burghersh died in 1340. Knighton, II, p. 2; Le Baker, pp. 72-73.

4 Above, p. 317.

5 C.P.R. 1330-34, pp. 24, 34.

6 C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 48.

keepers appointed by the king and the process continued through the following weeks.<sup>1</sup> The bailiffs of a number of towns, Yarmouth, Norwich, Ipswich and Colchester became answerable for the farm of their towns from the same 1 December.<sup>2</sup> Eventually some part of these lands was restored to Isabella. On 15 November 1331 she received a grant, back-dated to Michaelmas, of castles and lands to the value of £2,000 in lieu of part of the Exchequer grant. This returned to her such substantial holdings as Clitheroe, Macclesfield and Hertford and favourite property such as Leeds in Kent. She also received the render of the farm of towns like Hereford, Derby, Portsmouth, Winchester and Southampton.<sup>3</sup>

A further grant followed a week later on 20 November 1331 which covered the £1,000 outstanding on the Exchequer grant. This included some manors and the castle of Haverford in Wales, but was chiefly made up of the renders from the farm of a number of towns.<sup>4</sup> Various adjust-

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1 On 3 December eleven keepers were appointed, one on 12 December, two on 13 December and a block of twenty four on 14 December which included the bishop of Ely who became responsible for the castle and town of Hertford. Other places involved in these transactions were the castles of Clitheroe, Tickhill, Knaresborough, Wallingford, Rockingham, Devizes, Marlborough and Porchester; the manors of Havering, Isleworth, Cricklade, Leeds, Eye and Pevensey; and the castle, town and honour of High Peak. C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 201-02, 207, 213-15. Two further keepers were appointed on 19 December covering the Welsh border areas of the castles of Ellesmere and Hanley and the manor of Tewkesbury while Richard de Ridling became keeper of the castle and town of Hadleigh in Essex on 20 December. C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 212, 215. The grants were all made during the king's pleasure.

2 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 211.

3 C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 195.

4 The towns included Worcester, Malmesbury, Cambridge, Colchester, Rochester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Penrith, Carlisle and Ipswich, C.P.R. 1330-34, pp. 225-26.

ments were made to the grants in the following years, chiefly because Isabella was obliged to surrender some of the individual manors like King's Langley and Eltham to the king. But the overall value of her dower did not change.<sup>1</sup> Some property she did not regain. On 14 December 1330 the mayor and burgesses of Bristol were granted the keeping of the town which Isabella had surrendered. She had in fact previously demised the town to them for a term that had not fully expired. In extending this the king made it clear that he intended to keep Bristol Castle in his own hands.<sup>2</sup> The towns of Winchelsea and Rye also remained in Edward's hands.<sup>3</sup> Despite this generous treatment, however, all does not seem to have run smoothly in Isabella's relations with her son for in March 1332 orders were issued for the constable of Windsor Castle to be paid his expenses for keeping Isabella at the castle in accordance with the king's instructions<sup>4</sup> while the greater part of the remainder of her life seems to have been spent at a distance from her son's court, at Castle Rising in Norfolk and at Hertford where she died in August 1358. She was buried at the Greyfriars in

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1 Changes took place on 29 March 1332, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 271; 11 May 1332, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 280; 4 November 1332, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 367; 1 March 1334, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 529; 13 December 1334, C.P.R. 1334-38, p. 60; 26 May 1344, C.P.R. 1343-45, p. 263; 23 November 1348, C.P.R. 1348-50, p. 217.

2 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 207-08. Bristol Castle contained an important prisoner in the person of Hugh Despenser who had been taken at Caerphilly Castle in 1327. He was released in July 1331, C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 326. See above, p. 132.

3 They had been committed by Isabella to Robert and Gervase Alard of Winchelsea to whom King Edward granted an extension, 20 December 1330; but it quickly appeared that there had been sharp practice and they were soon called to answer, 1 January 1331, for arrears of account and to answer charges of extortion, C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 209, 213.

4 C.C.R. 1330-34, p. 434.



Newgate in London where Mortimer's remains had rested for a short period, and she carried to her grave the heart of Edward II which had been brought to her at Worcester thirty years before.<sup>1</sup>

The treatment of the leaders of Isabella and Mortimer's regime was comparatively lenient and is an indication of the king's determination not to alienate potentially useful supporters like Ingham and Burghersh. At the same time there are real signs that while Edward wished to reward his own friends and supporters and to restore those who had been despoiled by Mortimer, he wished to do these things in such a way that a new start could be made by binding together under his own rule and patronage those who during the previous ten years had been at odds with each other. He showed that he intended to be master by the way he reorganised the government and settled outstanding differences.

The process began at once during the parliament which met at Westminster at the end of November 1330. The parliament had to deal with a number of petitions from those who had been wronged in earlier years. Archbishop Melton, Bishop Gravesend of London, William la Zouche and others were freed on petition from the charges which had been laid against them and which were still outstanding in connection with the Kent affair. Since their property had been impounded they were obviously suffering considerable loss and an end was put to this situation. Lancaster and his supporters at Bedford in 1329 had fines and recognisances cancelled and their property restored. Kent's heir, Edmund, a boy some four years old petitioned for a review of the case against his father while his mother advanced a similar petition on behalf of

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1 Above, pp. 150-51

herself and her children. This was granted and the Kent title and lands were restored to the family though the wardship and marriage of the young Edmund was retained by the king. At the same time all peers, presumably members of the Winchester parliament, were exonerated of blame for Kent's death saving Mortimer, Bereford, Mautravers, Deverell and the elusive Bogo de Bayeux. Richard Arundel sought a reversal of the process against his father and the return of his lands. This, however, created a complication as some of the Arundel lands had passed to the Kent inheritance. In the event Richard Arundel received his father's inheritance, excluding any grants made by Edward II, but including Arundel Castle for which the widowed Countess of Kent was to receive compensation for loss of dower from other Kent properties.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Rot. Parl. II, pp. 54-56. The implementation of these decisions was not delayed, C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 286-87, 291-93. Edward of Monthermer, John de Aspale, Ingelram Berenger, Robert de Taunton, George Percy, Fulk FitzWaryn and John of Bedford were all covered by orders issued between 3 and 12 December. In addition an order forbidding John of Bedford to come within two leagues of London was also revoked. C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 74-77; C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 30. A royal writ under the Privy Seal was issued on 12 December acquitting Lancaster, Wake, Beaumont and Roscelyn of their recognisances and orders under the Great Seal relating to Lancaster's £30,000 and Wake's £10,000 were issued the same day. Two days later John Engayne was pardoned his 1,200 marks, William le Blount £500 and Henry de Ferrars £5,000, C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 530-31; C.P.R. 1330-34, pp. 26, 28. Other recognisances were withdrawn in January 1331, David, Earl of Athol £5,000, Hugh Audley £10,000, Thomas de Monthermer 1,000 marks, C.P.R. 1330-34, pp. 33, 35. The southern escheator, the Justice of Chester and the mayor of London were ordered on 14 December to secure Arundel's lands and deliver them to Richard Arundel, C.C.R. 1330-34, p. 81. The settlement of the problem of the Kent lands took a little longer. On 15 December the king assigned certain of Kent's lands to his widow as dower to a total value of £1,123 16s. 7½d. C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 85. Further land to the value of £627 7s. 4d. were granted to her in lieu of the Arundel lands which she had handed over, C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 191. The Countess subsequently received custody of all the Kent lands, 21 March 1331, to hold during the minority of her son. Edmund, however, was dead before Michaelmas 1331, though the Countess subsequently received a new grant relating to her younger son John. C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 99; C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 351, 449; C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 246.

While petitioning for the legal restitution of his property, young Arundel was taking illegal action to settle personal wrongs for he had to be restrained from raising armed men in the Welsh march to attack John Charleton who had arrested his father in 1326.<sup>1</sup> He seems to have obeyed for he received subsequent grants relating to outstanding debts on his father's property which had passed into Mortimer's hands, while his final triumph over the Mortimers came on 22 September 1334 when he was granted the castle and lands of Chirk which Mortimer had forfeited.<sup>2</sup>

Another enemy of Mortimer who benefitted at this time was Bishop Stratford of Winchester, the new Chancellor. The king suspended the case due to be heard in the King's Bench relating to the bishop's absence from the Salisbury parliament and also gave him quittance of the £2,000 recognisance which he had entered into in the reign of Edward II and which Isabella had exploited by levying a £1,000 of this sum.<sup>3</sup> Wake, Beaumont and Roscelyn were also released from their recognisances and steps had been taken before 10 December to restore their lands to them and to Rhys ap Griffith. Steps were also taken to secure for Wake and Beaumont the restoration of their Scottish holdings in accordance with the terms of the treaty of Northampton.<sup>4</sup> Edward therefore gave the Scots warning that the question of the disinherited was not to be allowed to lie dormant; but there was no immediately favourable response to his letters.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Rot. Parl. II, p. 60.

2 C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 191; C.Ch.R. 1327-41, p. 319.

3 C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 171; Rot. Parl. II, p. 60.

4 C.C.R. 1327-30, pp. 530-31; C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 77, 79, 174.

5 The position of the disinherited is discussed above, pp. ~~231~~-33.

In response to restoring the rights of those wronged by Mortimer, parliament also requested that those who had brought about his fall should be rewarded. In particular they singled out William Montagu for special treatment, emphasising his loyalty to the King and the realm. The king wisely sought further guidance from parliament with regard to the nature of this reward. So that others might be encouraged to serve the king well a £1,000 worth of land was deemed by them to be a suitable grant and they made special mention of the castle and honour of Denbigh and its outlying cantreds and commotes which valued at 1,000 marks had been held by Mortimer. A grant was accordingly made and dated 18 January 1331. To help make up the outstanding amount Montagu also received the grant of further manors in the Isle of Wight, Hampshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Kent.<sup>1</sup> He was granted the keepership of Corfe Castle and the manor of Woodstock, the latter at a rent of £100 per annum.<sup>2</sup> Parliament also singled out for reward three others who had been associated with Mortimer's arrest. A grant of 400 marks worth of land was to be made to Edward de Bohun, 300 marks worth to Robert Ufford and 200 marks to John Neville of Hornby. Bohun received land in Wiltshire that had been forfeited by the elder Despenser while Ufford received a number of manors in Kent, Essex and Norfolk. Neville received an interim grant in May 1331 but this was consolidated into a grant to the full value of 200 marks two months later.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 Rot. Parl. II, p. 56; C.Ch.R. 1327-41, p. 210. The grant included the castle of Sherborne which was to be the cause of dispute between Montagu and Bishop Wyvil of Salisbury, above, p. 339.
  - 2 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 211, 215. Woodstock was part of the land surrendered by Isabella.
  - 3 Rot. Parl. II, p. 57; C.Ch.R. 1327-41, pp. 200, 210-11. Neville's grant was made up of manors forfeited by Mautravers and Bereford in Berkshire, Dorset, Leicestershire and Shropshire. C.Ch.R. 1327-41, pp. 230-31.

The lands which Isabella had surrendered and which were surplus to her £3,000 grant<sup>1</sup> were used to benefit other members of the royal family. On 4 December 1330 the king's brother, John of Eltham, received grants to the value of 2,000 marks which included the important castles of Berkhamsted and Wallingford and the manors of Eye in Suffolk and Risborough and Cippenham in Buckinghamshire. A month later Queen Philippa received grants towards a dower of £4,000 per annum which included the castles of High Peak, Knaresborough, Pontefract, which she had held since February 1330, Tickhill, Devizes, Marlborough and Southampton.<sup>2</sup> The castle and town of Bristol was also included, thereby reversing the king's decision to keep it in his own hands.<sup>3</sup> Provision was also made for the king's sister Eleanor and for his son Edward of Woodstock by allocating for their maintenance the issues of the county of Chester.<sup>4</sup>

The need for the reallocation of Crown resources to cater for the needs of the whole royal family, the need to restore lands to their original owners and the request from parliament that Edward's supporters should be adequately rewarded had led to yet another re-ordering of land grants.<sup>5</sup> The fall of Mortimer also marks a more substantial change in the personnel of government than had taken place

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1 Above, p. 341-42.

2 C.Ch.R. 1327-41, p. 198; C.P.R. 1330-34, pp. 55-56.

3 Above, p. 343.

4 C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 78.

5 For a discussion on land grants, above, pp. 91-94.

in 1327.<sup>1</sup> Bishop Stratford replaced Bishop Burghersh as Chancellor and Archbishop Melton was appointed to succeed Robert Wodehouse as Treasurer on 28 November 1330. Wodehouse was subsequently appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer in place of Adam de Herewynton.<sup>2</sup> Certain Mortimer appointments were revoked in the course of December, Richard de Hawkeslowe was replaced by John de Shoreditch as chirographer of the King's Bench.<sup>3</sup> Henry le Scrope who had occupied the place of Chief Justice of the King's Bench during the Michaelmas Term 1330, restored the office to Geoffrey le Scrope on 19 December 1330 and himself took up the position of Chief Baron of the Exchequer.<sup>4</sup> A month later Robert de Mabelthorpe, John de Cantebrigge and John Inge were appointed justices of the Bench, while the appointment of William Trussel as escheator south of Trent in place of the stop-gap Robert Selyman marks the return of a well-tried civil servant.<sup>5</sup>

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- 1 Some of these are discussed by Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, III, pp. 35-40. However, Tout talks of the appointments in party terms and especially in terms of the Lancastrian element. Yet it was clearly Edward's intention to do away with party labels and to assert his own authority. The new men, Montagu, Ufford and Clinton can hardly be termed Lancastrian although Bishop Stratford's appointment brought to the fore a keen supporter of Lancaster's 1328-29 venture. But Stratford had also been opposed to the Despenser regime and was clearly opposed to the advance of any over mighty subject.
  - 2 Stratford from Burghersh, above, p. 341; Melton from Wodehouse, above, p. 296; C.P.R. 1330-34, pp. 20, 28.
  - 3 C.P.R. 1330-34, pp. 29, 36.
  - 4 The reason for Geoffrey le Scrope's absence is not known. E.L.G. Stones, 'Sir Geoffrey le Scrope (c.1285-1340) Chief Justice of the King's Bench', E.H.R., lxix (1954), pp. 1-17; C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 83; C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 29.
  - 5 C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 43; C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 222.

The greatest upheaval undoubtedly came in the removal of the sheriffs. There had been a similar change after Mortimer's assumption of power in 1327.<sup>1</sup> The first change after Mortimer's fall had been made on 24 October 1330 when Roger de Aylesbury had replaced Roger la Zouche in the counties of Warwick and Leicester. But parliament demanded a more general removal of the sheriffs while pressure for the appointment of commissions of oyer and terminer to hear complaints suggests that under Edward II and subsequently under Mortimer the sheriffs had been guilty of oppression and extortion.<sup>2</sup> On 5-6 December nineteen sheriffs embracing twenty six counties were replaced and a further two appointments in Nottinghamshire and Derby and in Cornwall were made on 15 and 18 January 1331.<sup>3</sup> In accordance with parliament's request these were all new men. These changes also meant changes in the keepership of castles in the county towns which were usually in the custody of the sheriffs.

The opportunity was also taken to make changes in other castles and positions important to the king. Custody of the important castles of Windsor, Corfe, Wallingford, Rockingham, Marlborough, Porchester, Caerphilly, Abergavenny and Careg Cennen amongst others all changed hands. William de Clinton was appointed keeper of Dover Castle and Warden of the Cinque Ports; Robert Ufford became keeper of the forests

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- 1 There is some comment on this in Nigel Saul, 'The Despensers and the Downfall of Edward II', E.H.R., xcix (January 1984), p. 21. He seems to underestimate the extent of change. Twenty sheriffs embracing thirty counties in England and Wales were replaced in February 1327, C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 13, 15-17.
  - 2 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 193; Rot. Parl. II, p. 60; C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 287.
  - 3 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 199-200, 203, 222.

south of Trent, and John de Lisle keeper of the forest and park at Windsor.<sup>1</sup> In Cheshire, the chamberlain Simon de Rugeley was replaced, having only held the office for two months, by John Paynel who had previously held office between December 1326 and March 1328.<sup>2</sup> This willingness to employ former servants of Isabella and Mortimer thus runs at all levels of the administration. It is a clear indication of Edward III's determination to secure continuity of administration and to make use of efficient servants drawn from as wide a range of people as possible. He was determined to end the factionalism of the past decade and assert his own authority.<sup>3</sup>

The king's generosity even extended to Mortimer's widow. Orders had gone out to the shires for the seizure of Mortimer's property on 22 October 1330, closely following his arrest.<sup>4</sup> Joan Mortimer with her children and their attendants were at her own castle of Ludlow. Since her dower lands were in Mortimer's name, her property too was seized; but within days a commission was appointed to survey her family expenses and orders issued for those expenses to be defrayed

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- 1 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 209, 211, 213-16, 223, 230. Clinton, op. cit., p. 204, Ufford, p. 206, Lisle, p. 209.
  - 2 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 207. Whether Paynel was an efficient administrator is not entirely clear. In March 1330 he had been imprisoned in the Fleet since there was a remainder outstanding on his Chester account for December 1326-March 1328. P.H.W. Booth, The Financial Administration of the Lordship and County of Chester, 1272-1377, pp. 46-47, n. 85.
  - 3 We should note that no special position was found for Lancaster, Surrey or Wake whose names had been prominent during the preceding years, although all are stated to have co-operated closely with Edward III. Lancaster's role may have been limited by increasing blindness.
  - 4 C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 57.



out of her husband's property.<sup>1</sup> Her personal jewellery and other possessions were secured to her when the receivers appointed to deal with Mortimer's property were ordered to differentiate clearly between Joan and her husband.<sup>2</sup> By the end of December lands held at Mansell Lacy and Wolferlow in Herefordshire had been returned to her and this was a prelude to the return of her full inheritance in January 1331.<sup>3</sup> Joan's Irish inheritance was also included in these orders and the issues of the Irish lands since they had been taken into the king's hands were also restored.<sup>4</sup> She was thus treated as if she had been widowed by natural circumstances and not as if she were the widow of a traitor. Further signs of customary treatment followed for following the death of her son Edmund in December 1331, she received the wardship of two thirds of his land to hold till his heir, three year old Roger Mortimer should come of age.<sup>5</sup> At her death in October 1356, Joan is revealed as being in full possession of her English inheritance.<sup>6</sup>

Mortimer's own lands, however, had rapidly passed into the control of the king's servants. On 22 October orders were issued to the sheriffs to take two knights and to go in person to Mortimer's towns,

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- 1 26 October 1330, C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 13. Between 26 October 1330 and 12 January 1331, £202 2s. 11d. was paid out to meet these expenses. E.159/107, m.304.
  - 2 C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 65.
  - 3 C.C.R. 1330-33, pp. 99, 105, 111. Specific reference is made in these orders to Ewyas Lacy and Ludlow.
  - 4 C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 110.
  - 5 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 339.
  - 6 Inquisitions Post Mortem, X, (Edward III), No. 307.

castles and manors. There they were to seize the goods they found and keep them; indentures were to be drawn up with the knights and the king appointed his own representatives to supervise this process of checking carefully all that belonged not only to Mortimer but to his son Geoffrey, to Simon Bereford and to Ingham. In the midland and northern counties the survey was to be watched over by Thomas de Gayregrave who was also to supervise the drawing up of the indentures; Ralph de Wylingham was sent to the eastern counties, James de Kingston to the home counties and the south east, John de Staunford to the south and south west and John de Piercebridge to the key western counties on the Welsh march. The sheriffs of all the counties were ordered to provide wages of 2s. a day for the surveyors.<sup>1</sup>

William de Brom and Thomas Ace were instructed to seize Mortimer's lands in South Wales, Pembrokeshire and Abergavenny regardless of whether they were held in fee, for a term of years or in wardship. As elsewhere indentures had to be drawn up with two knights and Gilbert Talbot, the justice of south Wales, was ordered to give his full support to the process. Brom and Ace were to receive 3s. 4d. a day as their wage. Further north Roger Pickard, Thomas Chaundos and Thomas de Blaston were ordered to take steps to secure Wigmore, Clun, Oswestry and Shrawardine while Roger Corbet and William de Transhale moved in on Denbigh and north Wales. Nor was Mortimer's Irish property overlooked. The judiciary there were instructed to seize his castles, goods and valuables.<sup>2</sup> Three days later on 26 October special instruc-

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1 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 193-94; C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 66.

2 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 194-95; C.C.R. 1330-33, p. 66. These instructions were issued on 23 October 1330.

tions were given to John de Kingston, John de Camera and John de Watenhull to secure Mortimer's treasure and keep it safe.<sup>1</sup>

The latter wasted little time. In accordance with a writ issued by the king on 15 November 1330 they handed over what they had found to John de Hinckley, sheriff of Shropshire, who was amongst those relieved of his post on 5 December 1330, but who subsequently accounted for a total of £787 received with a further £17 13s. 2d. owed by Kingston and his associates. Of this sum, £726 7s. 6d. had been found at Wigmore, £50 was in the keeping of Ralph de Coggeshall, the receiver at Chirk, a further £15 in the hands of Roger le Clerc of Wigmore, receiver of Maelienydd and £13 6s. 8d. held by Richard Shour, receiver of Dolforwyn. An inventory attached to the account suggests that Mortimer lived at Wigmore in some style. In addition to cups of silver and gilt, a number of beds with a variety of hangings as well as wall coverings are listed. Mortimer's wardrobe also reveals a fine taste. Amongst the items found were a scarlet tunic embroidered with silver thread, two others, one of velvet and one of silk bearing the arms of Mortimer of Chirk and caps one of velvet, another bearing a pattern of lilies and roses, as well as a yellow padded tunic bearing the heads of leopards. There were old swords, banners and cuirasses bearing Mortimer's arms, helmets, protective armour for arms and legs and sets of tournament armour. All this and more besides was handed over to John de Hinckley.<sup>2</sup>

A number of other items of Mortimer's plate were found by the sheriff of Middlesex in the keeping of John de Hynxton, a London

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1 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 195.

2 E.372/181.

goldsmith. This haul included standing cups, a large dish and smaller goblets of fine workmanship. One was engraved with a design of foliage, several bore enamelled versions of the Mortimer arms or of the Joinville arms of his wife. The dish was valued at £24 while a salt cellar with a silver lid was valued at £9 6s. 8d. By an order of 21 December 1330, Hynxton was instructed to keep these items in his custody until the king should send for them.<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere the machinery of seizure and appraisal of land went on. Henry de Fauconberg, sheriff of Yorkshire, had reported before his removal in the 5 December purge that no lands or tenements were held in his jurisdiction by Mortimer, his son Geoffrey, Ingham or Simon Bereford.<sup>2</sup> At Chipping Norton in Oxfordshire, Mortimer's bailiffs were held to account for his manor there; at his manor of Compton Valence in Dorset goods worth £9 7s. 2d. had been seized, while not so far away at Charlton Mackrell in Somerset a sub-escheator of William Trussel had taken possession even of the corn sown on the land formerly belonging to John de Perham whose heir was Mortimer's ward.<sup>3</sup> Inquests thus continued to be held in several English counties but it was on Mortimer's property on the March and in Wales that the government concentrated. There the bulk of his wealth was to be found; that area had been the basis of his power. The government's investigations were thorough and in depth.

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1 'Certain Chattels of Roger Mortimore of Wigmore', Notes and Queries, Eleventh Series, X, July-December 1914, p. 126.

2 E.101/507/10.

3 E.142/35. The total value of the land and its contents at Charlton Mackrell was £4 18s. 4d.

Fresh instructions had been issued on 1 December. They were directed to Robert de Harleye in South Wales and William de Ercalowe in North Wales with further orders to Gilbert Talbot and his fellow justice for North Wales, John Wysham to assist them in their work of seizure. Harleye and Ercalowe were now to answer for all issues and goods connected with Mortimer's property.<sup>1</sup> Harleye in particular did not have an easy task for the king was soon making grants of Mortimer lands to others and this meant that when Harleye submitted his accounts relating to Mortimer's lands in South Wales he had to do so for variable periods.

Thus he accounted for Builth Castle only until 12 December when it was granted to Gilbert Talbot and for the castle and town of Haverford until 4 January 1331 when the custody was granted to Guy de Briane. The castle and land of Narberth were committed to the Bishop of St. David's on 15 January and Harleye's responsibilities ended that day.<sup>2</sup> In the case of Abergavenny, Harleye had only received his instructing writ on 7 January. On 4 February the keepership of the castle was granted to William de Aune. In the intervening period, as had been the case at Builth the previous month, nothing had been removed from the castle and the new owner took over all that was there

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1 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 202.

2 Builth was valued at £113 6s. 8d., C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 205, 216, 220. Harleye accounted for no issues relating to the land for these periods mainly because they were so short. SC.6/1236/1. However, there was £18 4s. 11½d. in cash at Haverford and £8 was owing there for the sale of 2,000 rabbit skins to the chamberlain of South Wales, the prior of Carmarthen. At Narberth, the bishop of St. David's paid £12 12s. 1d. for some of the goods found there; while Llewellyn-ap-David held £82 0s. 7½d. of Mortimer's cash and a further £7 13s. 4d. of prizes which had been taken at Haverford. E.372/179, m.40.

with the responsibility of accounting for stock and chattels alike.<sup>1</sup> The same applied to Richard Simond who received custody of Pembroke Castle and the Mortimer manors there on 18 February 1331.<sup>2</sup> Yet another nil return was submitted with regard to Bwlchyddinas Castle and the lordship of Blaenllyfni which was transferred to the king's yeoman Hugh Tyrel on 30 December 1330. Tyrel bought the contents of Blaenllyfni for 117s. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., a sum still owed by John de Chaundos, chamberlain of South Wales when Harleye's accounts were submitted. Tyrel paid rather more at Bwlchyddinas. For animals which included cows and oxen he paid £20 13s. 6d., which sum also remained outstanding in the chamberlain's name.<sup>3</sup>

The remaining property which appears on Harleye's accounts is Cefnlllys in Maelienydd. This castle was granted to Thomas de Clun on 4 February 1331. No issues were accounted for and the castle seems to have escaped the damage suffered on some of Mortimer's other properties for its contents were reported to be in the safe custody of Henry de Wigmore the janitor. Thomas de Clun seems particularly to have benefitted from Mortimer's fall. He was the parson of the church at Hopesay, a village not far from Clun and the total value of the

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1 C.F.R. 1327-30, p. 230; E.372/179, m.40. There seems to have been some confusion about Abergavenny. Although Aune's appointment is dated 4 February and Harleye so accounts, Harleye was instructed on 18 February to deliver the castle and town to Roger Chaundos who had been appointed its keeper. C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 235. On 16 March, Chaundos in his turn was ordered to deliver the castle and its lands to William de Aune who had been appointed its keeper during the minority of Hastings' heir. C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 243.

2 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 235; E.372/179, m.40.

3 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 220; E.372/179, m.40. At Bwlchyddinas, Tyrel paid £17 5s. for 55 cows and 49s. 6d. for 17 oxen.

grant made to him was 200 marks. Thus he also received the castle of Dolforwyn and lands in Cydewain as well as the castle of Chirk. These were handed over by William de Ercalowe. As a guarantee that the 200 marks would be paid, Fulk Fitzwaryn, John Pyard and seven others went surety for Thomas de Clun.<sup>1</sup>

Further instructions regarding the property of Mortimer and Simon Bereford had been issued by the government on 6 January 1331. County by county Mortimer's affairs were to be thoroughly investigated. All estates were to be valued by extent and view of accounts; all outstanding debts and arrears of rent were to be identified. Sufficient stock was to be retained on each estate to provide sustenance for its dependants, but the residue together with the goods found there were to be sold and the moneys thus raised were to be transferred to the Exchequer. Goods illegally withdrawn were to be traced and reclaimed, illegal trespass was to be investigated and proper indentures drawn up relating to goods retained or sold. In North Wales the investigation was to be carried out by Roger Corbet, Nicholas Acton and a former steward of Denbigh Castle, Thomas de Hampton. In south Wales the responsible officers were Robert de Penros, William de Weredale and Richard de Southorp. All the counties of England were covered by these instructions with Hereford, Worcester, Gloucester, Shropshire, and Stafford in charge of Adam de Herewynton, Richard Aston and John

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1 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 230-31; E.372/179, m.40. A list of the contents of Chirk handed to Thomas de Clun by the commissioners is to be found, E.142/36/1. They involve tables, chairs and an ebony statue of the Virgin Mary. A further grant relating to Chirk was made on 2 December 1331, C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 290, when the castle and honour were committed to John Inge and Thomas de Wednesbury.

Piercebridge.<sup>1</sup> In the event there were some changes. Within a fortnight Herewynton was replaced by John de Mershetton who due to infirmity was in his turn replaced on 24 February by William de Staunton who is described as having a better knowledge of the premises to be investigated.<sup>2</sup> Sheriffs were reminded to co-operate for the commissioners had no easy task, finance was involved and seemingly some of those to whom property had been granted were not reliable. The sheriff of Hereford had to take control of Mortimer's former manors of Maudryn, Bredwardine and Winforton within weeks of their having been committed to Hugh de Freyne.<sup>3</sup>

Late in February 1331, William de Weredale and Richard de Southorp began their inquisition in south Wales. By 6 March they were at Abergavenny where they found that crops had been damaged and some of the contents of the outlying manors and tenements were missing. No-one, however, was able to throw any light on the missing items. In an effort to ease their task Thomas de Hampton was ordered to hand over to them the bailiffs' rolls and receivers' accounts, but as they moved from

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- 1 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 217-18. The comprehensive nature of the commissioners' powers is set out in a royal mandate dated 11 January 1331: *ad plenam informationem habendum per inquisitiones vel extentas inde si necesse fuerit faciendum et per visum comptorum aut aliis viis et mediis quibus expedire viderint de valore castrorum, villarum, maneriorum, terrarum et tenementorum praedictorum et pro quanto per annum pro maiore commodo nostro dimitti possint pro informatione predicta habenda et inspectione rotulorum comptorum de exitibus divisarum terrarum et tenementorum que fuerant dicti comitis ... vobis mandamus quod omnes huiusmodi rotulos penes vos existentes dicto Nicholo librari facietis ... E.142/36/7.*
  - 2 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 218; C.C.R. 1330-34, p. 207. Staunton's wage was 18d. per day. In this last entry Richard Aston's name is substituted by that of Adam Lucas.
  - 3 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 218, 235, 237.



Blaenllyfni to Pembroke, to Haverford, Narberth, Careg Cennen and Builth the tale was the same. They finished at Ewyas in July with reports of forests, chases and parks being damaged. As had been the case at earlier inquests it seemed impossible to identify those who were responsible.<sup>1</sup>

By the middle of February Corbet, Acton and Hampton had begun their inquiries further north. They started at Chirk where they were confronted with a very unsatisfactory situation. A local jury was sworn and they testified that rents had not been paid either at Michaelmas 1330 or at the following feast of the Purification nor had fines levied at a court held before Mortimer's fall been paid and at least 20s. was outstanding from the previous Easter.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps more alarmingly they reported that when the news of Mortimer's arrest had reached the area one Griffith Lloyd of Molverley had arrived at Chirk with an unknown number of Englishmen who had broken into the castle from which they had stolen a number of beds, some hangings and some other goods which could not be identified. Another group, apparently incited by Griffith Lloyd, had broken into the park where they had hunted free from any interference until Corbet's arrival. They had been joined by a second group whose dogs had pursued hares all over Mortimer's parks and chases. The jury was able to identify some of these people and in particular the blacksmith who had broken down the doors of rooms in the castle and a group of men from Nanheuel who had seized the estates' account rolls and burned them, thus effectively destroying any record of outstanding debts. So only a few items

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1 E.142/74; C.C.R. 1330-34, p. 215.

2 At Cefnlllys the amount owed for the Michaelmas Term was £8 6s. 8d. E.142/36/5.

were left to be included in the indenture made between the commissioners and Richard de Haston, the constable of the castle. It is a sad list, five tables and five pairs of benches, two broken springalls, three smashed crossbows, three lengths of lead and a few diseased animals left in their stalls. Some of the missing items were listed but could not be found. The inquest, however, was not entirely abortive. Richard de Coggeshall, who had been Mortimer's receiver at Chirk, was able to enumerate some of the debts outstanding at Michaelmas 1330. These amounted to £33 5s. Since Michaelmas there was a further £84 12s. 10¾d. owing. Coggeshall was able to account for £42 4s. 3¼d. outstanding from the year 1328-29 and was given quittance.<sup>1</sup>

The tale of the inquest held in Cydewain on 19 February 1331 concerning Dolforwyn is much the same. Crops there had been damaged by wind but more serious damage had been done by a group of twelve named men from Montgomery who, together with a number of unidentified companions, had arrived with horses, carts and wagons and systematically removed fencing of which almost nothing remained. They had also cut down the woods, a vandalism quickly imitated by a group of local men. Furthermore they had effectively hunted and killed hares in the park. As to Mortimer's goods and chattels, they would have to be answered for by Richard Shore, Mortimer's receiver. For the term ended at Michaelmas 1330, Shore answered for debts amounting to £25 3s. 4d.<sup>2</sup>

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1 E.142/36/4-6.

2 E.142/36/2, 3.

Further accounts were examined by Nicholas Acton at Denbigh where a number of Mortimer's servants were declared quit of sums varying between £251 13s. 5½d. and 60s. 2d.<sup>1</sup> Particular attention seems to have been paid to amounts outstanding for the year which ran from Michaelmas 1328 to Michaelmas 1329 and receivers at Oswestry, Shrawardine, Clunton, Upton and Stretton were all able to gain quittance. Similar returns were made for the area around Ludlow and Wigmore for the same period.<sup>2</sup> But the more recent situation on these estates had also to be examined and for much of this Roger Chaundos, the sheriff of Herefordshire was answerable. We find, however, that here too the Mortimer estates were the subject of fresh grants and consequently Chaundos, like Harleye, was answerable for variable periods.

The king's yeoman, Hugh Tyrel, had received additional benefit when Mortimer's manors at Oakes Hill and Bredwardine were assigned to him on 30 January 1331. The grant was for a period of seven years at a yearly render of ten marks. Mortimer's goods there had been sold for a total of £22 13s. 2d. Lands at Mansell Lacy and Wolferton had been returned to Joan Mortimer before the end of December 1330, but not before the goods there had been disposed of for £28 5s. The contents of Winforton and Maudryn fetched £31 19s. 4d. and £43 3s. 10d. respectively before the property was granted to Maurice de Berkeley for life on 30 May 1331 as the fulfilment of a promise of the grant of £100 worth of land.<sup>3</sup>

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1 E.142/36/8.

2 Amounts were, Oswestry, £39 15s. 4d.; Shrawardine, £154 14s. 9½d.; Clunton, £25 12s. 10½d.; Upton, 61s. 5½d.; Stretton, £14 19s. 1d. These places in the Ludlow and Wigmore area are also accounted for on the same account. E.142/36/8ff.

3 C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 229; E.372/177, m.46.

The main attention, however, was focussed on Wigmore itself and the surrounding area. This remained in Chaundos' hands until 17 October 1331 when it was restored to Edmund Mortimer, a further sign of the king's generosity, though Edmund can have gained but little benefit since he was dead before the end of the year. The property, however, included the castle and manor of Wigmore as well as the town, and the outlying manors of Leinthall Starkes and Leinthall Earls, Elton, Burrington, Yatton and Leintwardine. Returns from the burgh for the period from October 1330 to October 1331 amounted to £16 18s. 9d. which included 100s. from market tolls and 36s. 8d. from hundred pleas. Returns from Wigmore castle and manor amounted to £28 8s. 5d. and included the farm of the mill at Aymestre worth £4 15s. 5d. Wages had to be met from this total to pay the two watchmen and a janitor at the castle, the local bailiffs and a man and a woman involved in the repair of the roof of the grange and other buildings. The outgoings totalled £15 10s. 6d. A fair amount of money had also been raised by the sale of hay from land at Leinthall Starkes, Elton, Gorton and Yatton.<sup>1</sup> The total of the sheriff's accounts relating to Mortimer's Hereford estates for the 360 day period from October 1330 to October 1331 amounted to £222 15s. 8½d.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the instructions given to sheriffs concerning the investigation of Mortimer's estates on the March by William de Staunton and John Piercebridge, little was heard until the middle of May.<sup>3</sup> Then

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- 1 E.372/177, m.46. The sale of hay fetched £71 5s. 11½d., but costs amounted to £15 3s. 3½d., presumably including wages for the haymakers.
  - 2 E.372/177, m.46. £9 of this had been accounted for as wages for the constable of Wigmore over the same period.
  - 3 Above, p.359. The orders of January were superceded by new commissions, C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 217-18.

fresh orders were issued. On 12 May 1331 the sheriffs were instructed to aid William de Shaldeford and his deputies as he had been appointed surveyor and keeper of Mortimer's castles and land with power to depute constables and keepers. This commission was formalised the following day when Shaldeford and John de Piercebridge received instructions to audit the accounts of all Mortimer's lands and to make a final return to the Exchequer drawing particular attention to all arrears.<sup>1</sup> Shaldeford made use of his powers to depute and his deputy, Richard de Dulverton of Ludlow, subsequently accounted at the Exchequer for the period 1 July to 17 October 1331. Receipts for the period from Wigmore and the bailiffs, reeves and receivers of other manors amounted to £90 14s. 1½d.<sup>2</sup>

Piercebridge's responsibilities began on the day the commission was issued, 13 May 1331. On that day he left London for Ludlow and from that date his wages of 3s. 4d. a day were paid.<sup>3</sup> He joined Shaldeford at Ludlow for an examination of the affairs of the bailiffs of Stanton Lacy, Cleobury and Ludlow before moving on at the beginning of June to Winforton and Maudyn. At Leominster in mid-June the Welsh lands of the lordship of Chirk were investigated before the auditors returned to Wigmore. There at the end of June the bailiff of Wigmore appeared before them, together with the bailiffs from Dolforwyn, Montgomery, Ludlow, Blaenllyfni and Bwlchyddinas. The auditing of these

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1 C.F.R. 1327-37, pp. 255, 257. At the same time Robert de Nottingham, a baron of the Exchequer, was ordered to audit the accounts in Denbigh. C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 258.

2 E.372/177, m.46.

3 E.372/181, m.34. Piercebridge's accounts also enable the auditors' itinerary to be traced.

accounts continued into the first week of July. The remainder of the month was spent dealing with the affairs of Earnley, Hugeley, Oddingley, Oak Hill and Saltwith. During this period renewed instructions were sent from Westminster in a writ dated 23 July 1331. Shaldeford and Piercebridge in association with John de Hinckley were instructed to arrange for the conveyance of Mortimer's jewels, arms and goods to the treasury in London.<sup>1</sup> The hearings meanwhile continued at Hereford where the affairs of Elton, Burton, Leinthall Earls, Leinthall Starkes, Yatton, Leintwardine and Cowerne came under scrutiny. In the middle of August the audit moved north to Shrewsbury where the accounts of the most northerly estates were audited, Oswestry, Shrawardine, Ruyton, Stretton, Acton, Clun and Ouddington. Mortimer's affairs disposed of, Piercebridge returned to Ludlow where between 2 and 7 September he was engaged in the disposal of Ocle's property.

Then the round began again as Piercebridge retraced his steps, this time to levy the debts outstanding on the accounts. Then the items to be sent to London had to be sorted out and Piercebridge spent some time at Wigmore and Ludlow supervising this operation. Finally on 8 November the loaded carts set off for London. They arrived there on 25 November 1331 when Mortimer's possessions were consigned to the Tower and the care of the chamberlains of the Exchequer. By indenture Piercebridge handed over the items now to be found listed on his enrolled account;<sup>2</sup> his responsibilities were ended. His total expenses

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1 The writ is referred to, E.372/179, m.22, the account of Shaldeford, Piercebridge and Hinckley. As early as 13 January 1331 the Exchequer had been ordered to levy money from the sale of Mortimer's goods and to deliver the cash to the treasury. C.F.R. 1327-37, p. 219. This also covered the property of Bereford, Mautravers, Gurney, Deverell and Ocle.

2 This account may be found on the Pipe Roll for 8 Edward III. E.372/179, m.22. See, Appendix III.

for over six months work, including 66s. 8d. for the eighteen day journey to London, amounted to £35 14s. 4d.<sup>1</sup>

Inevitably this was not the end of the story. By no means had all the outstanding debts been paid. A year later in July 1332, Montagu was ordered to recover moneys owing to Mortimer in the lordships of Ros and Rywynok, on the manor of Denbigh and in the cantred of Kaermer in the commote of Dymmael. Two months later a renewed instruction concerning the levying of these debts granted what he raised to Montagu as a royal gift.<sup>2</sup> Further difficulties were also experienced in south Wales where items of Mortimer's property had fallen into the wrong hands. In November 1331 fresh inquiries were ordered with regard to goods formerly held by Mortimer in Glamorgan, Usk, Newport, Goodrich, Abergavenny and Wigmore. The complexity of the task of tracing misappropriations is illustrated by the fact that the order also required inquiries into the affairs of the younger Despenser and Robert Baldock.<sup>3</sup>

But complaints did not only come from the government. Echoes of Mortimer's oppressive rule continued as men sought redress from personal injustices. In the course of 1332 at least two commissions were appointed to hear the grievances of men in south Wales and Cardigan who claimed that they had been compelled to do suit and custom contrary to law when Mortimer had been justice of Wales. It is noted that King Edward took a personal interest in the outcome of the investigations.<sup>4</sup>

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1 E.372/181, m.34.

2 C.P.R. 1330-34, pp. 351, 336.

3 C.P.R. 1330-34, p. 236.

4 C.P.R. 1330-34, pp. 346-47.

But Edward had not shown vindictiveness in his dealings with the Mortimer family. Mortimer's widow had obtained her lands within months of her husband's fall even though it was nearly a quarter of a century before Mortimer's grandson, another Roger, the heir of Mortimer's short-lived son Edmund, regained the family estates. Some of his Welsh lands were restored, despite the young Roger's minority in 1341 and 1346, but it was not until the 1350s that the bulk of the Mortimer estates were restored to the family. In 1354, perhaps in an attempt to remind the Black Prince that the main authority on the March was the Crown, King Edward granted young Roger Mortimer the estates which his grandfather had held at the time of his fall in 1330.<sup>1</sup> It was a remarkable revival and yet another example of the unpredictable and transitory nature of the fortunes and power of the great Marcher families.

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1 The restoration of the Mortimer estates is dealt with in Holmes, The Estates of the Higher Nobility in Fourteenth Century England, pp. 14-17; R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, 1282-1400, pp. 42, 51, 55, 272. The success of the Mortimers of Wigmore in regaining their inheritance should be contrasted with the strange failure of the heirs of Mortimer of Chirk to obtain theirs. Above, p. 104-05.



- 7 -

Conclusion

The regime of Isabella and Mortimer lasted almost exactly four years from 26 October 1326 when at Bristol in the presence of Mortimer and his mother, Prince Edward was declared keeper of his father's realm until, with Isabella standing near, Edward III arrested Mortimer at Nottingham on 19 October 1330. The circumstances which permitted the Queen and her lover to assume the governance of the realm, shielded by her son's name, had been brought about by the failure of the Despensers and Edward II to win any approval in the country for their policies.

Thus Isabella and Mortimer were able to call upon the widest possible measure of support for their invasion and seizure of power in September-October 1326. Playing an important role in the revolution were leading bishops of the Church like Stratford of Winchester, Hothum of Ely, Airmyn of Norwich and Orleton of Hereford, while events soon brought another, Burghersh of Lincoln, into prominence. Side by side with the bishops stood the magnates, Edward II's half-brothers the earls of Norfolk and Kent, the earls of Lancaster and Surrey, those with vested interests in the north like Thomas Wake, Henry Beaumont and Henry Percy, lawyers like Geoffrey le Scrope and William Trussel and amongst the commons the Londoners. By contrast Edward II was unable to raise any support in the counties, and those who had set out from London with him in October 1326 gradually drifted away until he was left physically and politically in total isolation.

Buttressed by a formidable coalition of all the significant elements in the country, Mortimer with some skill was able to use his supporters in the City of London to press demands for the removal of Edward II. Under threat from the mob churchmen like Archbishop Reynolds of Canterbury and those who still felt loyalty to the anointed king, Archbishop Melton, bishops Hethe of Rochester and Gravesend of

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B

London yielded, as did the members of parliament who were intimidated into taking an oath safeguarding Isabella and her son. Yet the first hints that all was not unanimous were already appearing and when Trussel, speaking for the people of the realm, renounced allegiance to Edward II at Kenilworth in January 1327, it is by no means certain that all who had approved the fall of the Despensers were so eager to bring about the removal of Edward II.

It is obvious that Mortimer could not permit even a token reconciliation between Isabella and her husband, even presuming that such a course would have been welcome to the Queen; neither could there have been any possibility of Mortimer through Isabella ruling in Edward II's name. Only with a minor occupying the throne could a kind of regency be justified and the king had so forfeited his people's confidence that that remained the only course open. The threat that unless Edward agreed to renounce his crown it might be allowed to pass to someone not of royal blood must surely have been an idle threat if it was ever made at all. Yet that such a suggestion could have been thought at all possible does imply that right from the beginning people felt that Mortimer was looking not merely to exercise royal authority but to assume a royal state, for who else could have been meant in the circumstances of the time?

Parliament's ideas did not, however, coincide with Mortimer's. Parliament was prepared to allow the deposed King to live in restricted retirement in Lancaster's custody at Kenilworth while it required that the government of the realm should be carried on with the advice of a nominated council representing Church and magnates. Confronted with reports that Edward might be abducted from Kenilworth, Mortimer removed the former King and placed him in the custody of his own circle, Thomas

Berkeley his son-in-law and John Mautravers, Berkeley's brother-in-law. This undoubtedly facilitated Edward's murder and there can be no doubt that it is Mortimer personally who must carry the ultimate responsibility for that deed. How far Lancaster willingly renounced his custody of the unfortunate King cannot be certain. The claims that he felt the pressures were too great for him to continue may well have been put about by Mortimer as a justification for the switch from Kenilworth to Berkeley; on the other hand if Edward had been or were to be abducted from Lancaster's keeping then Lancaster would have found himself open to charges of connivance which might have been difficult to rebut. But this may well mark the beginning of a rift between Lancaster and Mortimer. Lancaster's presence at court as attested by his witnessing of charters, shows that while he may have attended council meetings fairly regularly until the summer of 1328 thereafter he was present only on rare occasions. These years also see an increasing emphasis on the presence of Mortimer's own associates at court. Bishop Burghersh of Lincoln, John Mautravers, Oliver Ingham become increasingly prominent while those who formed the original coalition of 1326-27 fade into the background, many of them to emerge in open opposition to Mortimer at the time of Lancaster's abortive coup of 1328-29 and Kent's death in 1330.

The broadly based council demanded by parliament therefore clearly did not function effectively. This suggests an ever increasing concentration of authority in Mortimer's hands as his equals who alone could seriously rival him fade into the background or move into opposition thwarted in their attempts fully to regain their lost rights and natural role in government.

Mortimer's part in the Weardale Campaign of 1327 supports the idea that his was the authority which directed the government even from the earliest days. It has been argued, most recently by P.C. Doherty,<sup>1</sup> that it was only later that Mortimer assumed dominance over Isabella and the government. It is difficult to agree. It was Mortimer's supporters in London who orchestrated the demand for Edward II's fall; it was Mortimer who arranged Edward II's murder; it was Mortimer who holds a leading place at court throughout 1327 and it was Mortimer who accompanied the young king in Weardale while Isabella remained at York.<sup>2</sup> Isabella's history suggests a much more passive role, submitting to the treatment she received as her husband showed a preference for Gaveston and the younger Despenser, and in the years intervening between 1312 and 1321 doing her duty as Queen by producing royal children. Only when she reached France and Mortimer in March 1325 does she appear to gain authority, a strength no doubt drawn from the adulterous relationship which was soon notorious. There is plenty of evidence of understandable hatred of the Despensers and their supporters who had encouraged the king to exploit her dower lands and treat her with insolent disdain; but there is little evidence of direct responsibility for decisions of policy or political involvement even though after 1326 she was often present when political action was initiated. After Mortimer's fall in 1330 she was obliged to withdraw

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1 P.C. Doherty, *Isabella, Queen of England, 1296-1330*, p. 321.

2 It would have been unusual for the Queen to have accompanied a military campaign of the Weardale type; it would not have been completely beyond the bounds of possibility for Isabella to have done so. She was reported as riding through the night in full armour at the time of the government's confrontation with Lancaster at Bedford in January 1329.

at her son's command into a long and silent retirement. Only during those five hectic years between 1325 and 1330 when Mortimer was at her side does she really emerge into prominence and even then her personality and influence are largely concealed from us with regard to the political arena.

For the policies of the regime, while they could have emanated from Isabella, are equally compatible with their having been initiated by Mortimer. A successful military campaign against the Scots would have distracted possible opposition to the regime and gained it support especially from the northern magnates like Wake and Percy and from those like Beaumont and Wake who had been disinherited of Scottish lands. On the other hand the financial burdens of such a campaign have to be considered and the possibilities of simultaneous conflict over Gascony borne in mind. The error the government made, having embarked on a military campaign, was not to press that campaign with all the vigour at its command. Edward III experienced similar posturings in the campaign in Flanders in 1339 and incurred even greater expense for little or no return. Mortimer and Isabella compounded their error in 1327 by following an abortive campaign with an agreed peace which could only be seen as humiliating when so much was conceded and so little gained. However justified the peace of Northampton may have been, given the financial problems of the government, the way in which peace was secured only served to irritate the war-like magnates who, disappointed at the failure to bring the campaign to a successful outcome, were now frustrated in their hopes of winning back what they believed were their legal land rights in Scotland. The marriage celebrations at Berwick, attended by Isabella and Mortimer in July 1328 but boycotted by the young King who was

already showing a sympathetic awareness of his barons' hopes, were seen as a symbol of the country's humiliation.

There was similar indecisiveness and a willingness to concede to foreign demands in the government's attitude over Gascony and the problems of homage. Perhaps here the hand of Isabella did play a restraining part. The financial restrictions are again evident, but Isabella may well have been reluctant to provoke a conflict with France, her native country, though the death of her brother, Charles IV, and the accession of a Valois cousin could well have lessened that reluctance. Nevertheless the government temporised and this must have created endless uncertainties for those Gascon nobles who saw their first loyalty as being to the English Crown. They must have felt abandoned or at the very least unable to rely on English support if they were to resist the feudal demands which came from Paris. The persistent argument over homage continued right to the end of Isabella and Mortimer's tenure of power and of course continued long beyond the events of 1330. It was an intractable problem and the failure to resolve it is not therefore to be held as a disastrous condemnation of government policies. Where the government was at fault was in its failure, as it also failed in England, to build up and retain the loyalty of those who wished to support it but felt inhibited from doing so by a lack of a determined and constructive lead from the government. They hoped a firm line would be taken. It was not.

It has already been argued that the one area where the government did feel a real sympathy for the peoples' demands was in the area of law and order. England had long been subject to disorder. The previous reign had seen breaches of good government in 1311-12, 1317 and

1321-22. With magnates preoccupied with their own affairs, lesser men suffered; but in attempting to tighten up in this sphere the government of Isabella and Mortimer merely seem to have introduced measures which served only to centralise the judicial power. The General Eyre was not the solution and had to be fairly swiftly abandoned. It seemed, as in the case of the London eyre of 1321, to be a threat to the liberty of individuals in the counties. However much Mortimer, as his period in Ireland as justiciar suggests he was, was interested in the administration of justice, there is little doubt that the changes made between 1327 and 1330 would only, if they had been allowed to continue, have helped to build still further the authority which Mortimer was increasingly trying to concentrate in his own hands.

The regime's financial policy did little to win support which was lost by failures in Scotland and Gascony and by the narrowing down of personnel in the council. The cost of the invasion of 1326 and the Weardale Campaign of 1327 was sufficiently large to swallow up all the reserves the regime inherited from the previous government. It was reluctant naturally to impose heavy taxation, indeed even its limited demands in this regard were resisted by the clergy and heavy purveyance was always a source of unpopularity as may be learned from some of the comments made about the earl of Kent's followers. Normal sources of revenue barely met the regime's expenditure and the result was a heavy recourse to borrowing which with interest to pay meant a self-perpetuating debt. In the face of this the government's demand for peace is understandable; but the need for borrowing was made all the greater by the selfish and extravagant attitude of Isabella in particular, though Mortimer cannot escape blame in this regard either.



The vast increase in Isabella's dower denied the Crown that source of revenue; Isabella's purchase of the Mohaut inheritance denied the Crown any benefit from that reversion while the payment of part of the £20,000 Scots' fine into Isabella's purse was a further restriction on government income. In the event Isabella's rapacity proved to be as great as that of the Despensers and the dower income she secured in 1327 was far greater than the income of the elder and younger Despenser combined. The regime's attitude to finance was improvident and in view of the dislike of Despenser mendacity it was the height of folly on Mortimer's part to emulate Isabella's greed.

So far as Mortimer was concerned, though his wealth was considerable, it was not so much the financial value of his estates which was resented as the fact that coupled with the offices he held, his land holding gave him a unique power base in Ireland and on the Welsh March. There he indulged in viceregal display, earning himself the title bestowed by his own son, King of Folly. In the end it was this exercise of an increasingly unfettered authority coupled with display of an unjustified kind which caused Mortimer to assume that arrogant attitude towards the King which ultimately led to his undoing. For it did increasingly look as if he were aiming at royal power. He had murdered an anointed king in 1327; he ignored the demand of parliament for a government advised by a broadly based council, so that by 1330 there were few regular attenders at court; he limited the exercise of patronage so that his own power base should not be rivalled; he alienated the earl of Lancaster the most influential of the magnates, restricting his access to the King and failing to return all the Lancastrian lands which had been confiscated in 1322; he assumed the title of earl of March as he extended his own direct authority over a

wide and sensitive area; he eliminated the king's uncle, the earl of Kent and he undoubtedly exercised an influence over the king's mother. In the end he began to threaten the young Edward III himself, distrusting his actions to the extent of spying on him and finally and openly saying that he could no longer trust the king's word.

This increasing personal arrogance linked to policies that produced ineffective and unpopular results, gradually and inexorably broke up the coalition which had helped bring Isabella and Mortimer to power. Clergy, magnates, judges and commons all found themselves increasingly distanced from Mortimer and Isabella who by the summer of 1330 were almost, though not quite, as isolated as Edward II had been in 1326. The men who died defending Mortimer at Nottingham in October 1330 were not new supporters, but those whose loyalty Mortimer had enjoyed since 1322-23, Monmouth and Turpington; others who had leant him support only since 1327, Burghersh, Surrey, Ingham were soon reconciled to the young king and serving him loyally and effectively. Of all his servants only Bereford suffered with Mortimer. He had taken little trouble to build loyalty and affection. The patronage which he and Isabella exercised was limited by the extent of the grants which they made to themselves; when news of Mortimer's fall reached his tenants they joyfully ravaged his estates.

Since he could no longer rely on Isabella to secure her son's support and the coalition of interests which had raised him up was no longer effective (so that there were no influential figures prepared to fight to prevent his going to the gallows, Mortimer had to face the consequences of his ambition almost alone. Only his deserted wife, living alone with her children in her castle at Ludlow, showed that she had kept a little respect for him when she took charge of his body and carried it to Wigmore for decent burial among his ancestors.

Thus the regime collapsed in the face of the desire of the young Edward III to assume the full burden of royal power. In 1321 the Despencers had usurped that function from Edward II. When he seized power in 1326 not even his alliance with Queen Isabella could prevent Roger Mortimer from embarking on the same course. He made the same mistakes with the same results as his enemies the Despencers had done and in the end he reaped the same reward.

## Appendices

Appendix I

A List of those witnessing Charters  
during the years 1327-1330

Sheet 1a

based on the Charter Rolls  
C.53/114, 115, 116, 117.

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	4 Feb 1327 7 Jan 1328	27 Jan 1328 14 Jan 1329	25 Jan 1329 16 Feb 1330
Bishop Airmyn of Norwich <sup>1</sup>	17	22	6
Hugh Audley			2
Robert de Arderne <sup>2</sup>			2
Ralph Bassett of Drayton	2	2	6
Henry Beaumont	12	2	
Maurice de Berkeley	2		
Thomas de Berkeley			1
John Beauchamp of Somerset	6		
Simon de Bereford			1
Bishop Burghersh of Lincoln <sup>3</sup>	27	70	48
James Butler, Earl of Ormonde		2	
Bishop Ros of Carlisle		2	
John de Charleton	1		
Bishop Charlton of Hereford <sup>4</sup>		19	8
Robert de Clifford			

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- 1 He handed the Chancellorship to Hothum on 28 January 1327.
- 2 A Justice of Forest Pleas. He was dead before October 1331.
- 3 Treasurer, 25 March 1327 - 2 March 1328. Chancellor, 12 May 1328 - November 1330.
- 4 Treasurer, 20 May 1328 - 16 September 1329. Appointed bishop of Hereford in the autumn of 1327.

Sheet 1a (cont.)

	4 Feb 1327 7 Jan 1328	27 Jan 1328 14 Jan 1329	25 Jan 1329 16 Feb 1330
John of Eltham, Earl of Cornwall		1	17
Hugh Courtenay	1	5	4
John Cromwell	16	5	
John Darcy le Cosyn		10	3

Sheet 1b

	27 Jan 1330 16 Oct 1330	25 Oct 1330 23 Jan 1331
Bishop Airmyn of Norwich	7	12
Hugh Audley		1
Robert de Arderne		
Ralph Bassett of Drayton	2	
Henry Beaumont		
Maurice de Berkeley		
Thomas de Berkeley		
John Beauchamp of Somerset		2
Simon de Bereford		
Bishop Burghersh of Lincoln	72	7
James Butler, Earl of Ormonde		
Bishop Ros of Carlisle		
John de Charleton		
Bishop Charlton of Hereford		
Robert de Clifford	2	
John of Eltham, Earl of Cornwall	66	13
Hugh Courtenay	1	13
John Cromwell	1	
John Darcy le Cosyn		

Sheet 2a

	4 Feb 1327 7 Jan 1328	27 Jan 1328 14 Jan 1329	25 Jan 1329 16 Feb 1330
Robert Darcy <sup>1</sup>	1		
Bishop Gravesend of London		1	
Richard de Grey	16	1	
John de Bohun, Earl of Hereford			
Bishop Hothum of Ely <sup>2</sup>	80	57	24
Oliver Ingham		5	17
Edmund of Woodstock, Earl of Kent <sup>3</sup>	33	26	9
Henry, Earl of Lancaster	51	37	7
William Latimer		3	1
Ebulo Lestrangle	3		
Robert de Lisle	1		
Roger Mortimer, Earl of March	55	56	48
Bishop Martival of Salisbury <sup>4</sup>		3	
John Mautravers <sup>5</sup>		25	42
Archbishop Melton of York <sup>6</sup>	35	45	4
Archbishop Meopham of Canterbury <sup>7</sup>		14	7

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- 1 Of Great Sturton in Lincolnshire, cousin of John Darcy. Died 1342.
  - 2 Chancellor, 28 January 1327 - 1 March 1328.
  - 3 Executed March 1330.
  - 4 Died early in 1330.
  - 5 Steward of the Household, 3 March-11 May 1328; 1 March 1329-29 July 1330.
  - 6 Superceded as Treasurer by Bishop Stratford of Winchester on 17 November 1326, he took over the office again 1 December 1330.
  - 7 Elected Archbishop in 1328.



Sheet 2a (cont.)

	4 Feb 1327	27 Jan 1328	25 Jan 1329
	7 Jan 1328	14 Jan 1329	16 Feb 1330
Robert de Mohaut <sup>1</sup>	5		4
William Montagu			12
Geoffrey Mortimer			

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1 Died, 26 December 1329.

Sheet 2b

	27 Jan 1330 16 Oct 1330	25 Oct 1330 23 Jan 1331
Robert Darcy		
Bishop Gravesend of London	1	
Richard de Grey		
John de Bohun, Earl of Hereford	3	
Bishop Hothum of Ely	12	2
Oliver Ingham	54	
Edmund of Woodstock, Earl of Kent		
Henry, Earl of Lancaster	5	24
William Latimer		
Ebulo Lestrangle		
Robert de Lisle		
Roger Mortimer, Earl of March	57	
Bishop Martival of Salis- bury		
John Mautravers	56	
Archbishop Melton of York		24
Archbishop Meopham of Canter- bury	5	4
Robert de Mohaut		
William Montagu	33	15
Geoffrey Mortimer	5	

Sheet 3a

	4 Feb 1327 7 Jan 1328	27 Jan 1328 14 Jan 1329	25 Jan 1329 16 Feb 1330
Ralph Neville <sup>1</sup>			
Bishop Northburgh of Coven- try and Lichfield <sup>2</sup>	18	5	
Thomas of Brotherton, Earl of Norfolk	34	8	4
Bishop Orleton of Hereford <sup>3</sup>	21	3	2
Henry Percy	4	40	28
Archbishop Reynolds of Canterbury <sup>4</sup>	23		
John de Ros <sup>5</sup>	86	21	
William de Ros	4	7	8
Bishop Blethyn of St. Asaph			2
John of St. John <sup>6</sup>	6		
Bishop Stratford of Winch- ester <sup>7</sup>	7	12	
John Warenne, Earl of Surrey	45	57	32
Geoffrey le Scrope		1	
Roger Swynnerton			4
Gilbert Talbot	22	28	20

- 
- 1 Became Steward of the Household, following Mortimer's fall some time before 25 October 1330.
  - 2 Treasurer, 2 March - 20 May 1328 though he didn't act.
  - 3 Treasurer, 28 January - 18 March 1327. Provided to the see of Worcester in September 1327.
  - 4 Died 16 November 1327.
  - 5 Steward of the Household, 4 February 1327 - 3 March 1328.
  - 6 Died before 4 April 1329.
  - 7 Treasurer, 17 November 1326 - 28 January 1327.

Sheet 3a (cont.)

	4 Feb 1327 7 Jan 1328	27 Jan 1328 14 Jan 1329	25 Jan 1329 16 Feb 1330
Hugh Turpington <sup>1</sup>			
Thomas Wake	41	29	1
John de Wysham <sup>2</sup>		50	11
Bishop Wyvil of Salisbury <sup>3</sup>			
William la Zouche of Mortimer	3	8	5

- 
- 1 Steward of the Household, 2 August - 19 October 1330.
  - 2 Steward of the Household, 12 May 1328 - 17 February 1329.
  - 3 Appointed Bishop of Salisbury, April 1330.

Sheet 3b

	27 Jan 1330 16 Oct 1330	25 Oct 1330 23 Jan 1331
Ralph Neville		33
Bishop Northburgh of Coven- try and Lichfield	15	3
Thomas of Brotherton, Earl of Norfolk	1	10
Bishop Orleton of Hereford	12	
Henry Percy	18	15
Archbishop Reynolds of Canterbury		
John de Ros		
William de Ros	2	
Bishop Blethyn of St. Asaph		
John of St. John		
Bishop Stratford of Winch- ester	3	30
John Warenne, Earl of Surrey	21	17
Geoffrey le Scrope		
Roger Swynnerton	3	
Gilbert Talbot	13	3
Hugh Turpington	17	
Thomas Wake		12
John de Wysham		
Bishop Wyvil of Salisbury	18	3
William la Zouche of Mort- imer		

# Appendix II

Table of Loans made to the Regime, 1326-1330  
referred to in the Text

<u>(a) Bardi</u>		£	s	d	
Dec 1326/Feb 1327	Loans to Isabella	1,300	00	0	Archaeologia xxviii. Extract clxvii, p. 312
		2,000	00	0	Foedera II, ii, p. 786
July/Aug 1327	Scots War	1,333	6	8	C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 140-41
Sept 1327	John of Hainault Interest	1,400	00	0	C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 168
Feb 1328	Bardi London House	700	00	0	C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 230
Jan 1328	King's Wedding	2,417	10	3	E.403/236
Sept 1327/Mar 1328	John of Hainault	8,000	00	0	E.403/232; E.159/105, m.59
May 1329	Interest	2,000	00	0	E.159/105, m.83
	King's French Visit	3,333	6	8	E.159/105, m.73
Aug 1329/Oct 1330	Bury/Garton King's Wardrobe	10,820	00	0	Fryde, 'Loans to the English Crown, 1328-31',
	On Garton's behalf	1,167	00	6	
	Queen's Household	2,312	14	5½	E.H.R. (70), pp. 198-211
	Government Compensation	52	00	0	
Mar 1330	Interest	4,000	00	0	C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 521
1329	Advances to Mortimer	1,260	6	6	E.159/105, m.54
	Gifts to Mortimer	1,000	00	0	C.81/169/3371
April 1330	Advance to Montagu and Burghersh	1,318	16	0	C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 515
TOTAL		£44,415	1	0½	

Appendix II

Table of Loans made to the Regime, 1326-1330  
referred to in the Text

(b) Richard and William de la Pole

		£	s	d	
Apr/Aug 1327	Wines for Household	2,000	00	0	C.62/104, m.8
	Wages for Scots War	4,001	5	11	C.P.R. 1327-30, pp. 137, 165
Nov 1327	Interest	1,333	6	8	C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 190
Dec 1327	Loan	1,200	00	0	C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 191
May 1328	Wines for Household	500	00	0	C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 269
May/June 1328	Household Expenses	600	00	0	C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 301
Dec 1329	Interest	666	13	4	C.P.R. 1327-30, p. 345
Aug 1328/Feb 1329	Household Expenses	2,840	00	0	E.403/249
June 1330	Household	1,333	6	8	E.403/249
	TOTAL	£14,474	12	7	

Appendix III

Account of William de Shaldeford and John de Piercebridge  
relating to the plate, goods and chattels  
of  
Roger Mortimer found at Ludlow and Wigmore  
dated 25 November 1331

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P.R.O. E.372/179, m.22

Compotus Willelmi de Shaldeforde et Johannis de Percebrigge  
pro se et Johannes de Hynkele nuper vicecomes Salopie et Staffordie  
assignati ad thesaurum iocalia armatura et omnia bona et catalla que  
fuerunt Rogeri de Mortuo Mari nuper comitis Marchie apud Lodelow et  
castrum de Wygemore capta et predicto Johanni de Hynkele liberata  
capienda et usque Westmonasterium sumptibus Regis ducenda et in  
thesauro Regis ibid liberanda per breve Regis patens datum xxiiij  
die Iulii anno quinto irrotulatum in memorandis de eodem anno vide-  
licet de huiusmodi thesauro iocalibus armaturis ac aliis bonis et  
catallis que fuerunt predicti Rogeri sicut inferior continetur.

Iidem reddunt compotum de una cupa argenti superaurata usitata  
ciphio inde infra punctuata et cooperculo non punctuata ponderis iiij  
marcas i cupa argenti superaurata usitata de opere de hautentaille  
braunche ponderis xlvij.s iiij.d i cupa argenti superaurata et plane  
sine opere cum uno babewkyn in fundo cum uno arcu in manu ponderis  
xxxiiij.s iiij.d i cupa argenti superaurata de apre infra et extra de  
una vinea ponderis xxx.s i cupa argenti cum tribus granis super cooper-  
culum et cum uno molette in fundo enaumaigle ponderis xxix.s ij.d i  
cupa argenti cum uno scuto in fundo de armis Anglie et Francie pond-  
eris xxx.s x.d i aquarius argenti superauratus sine pede diaspere de  
foillerie ponderis xvij.s vi.d i aquarius argenti superauratus diaspere



foillerie ponderis xv.s i aquarius argenti superauratus diaspere de  
folierie ponderis xvij.s iiij.d i magnum dorsorium de opere historie  
Desclades et Uwyus i lecte de serico unde le coverlit est operatus de  
uno castro amoris cum curtinis de serico veridi taffata raie cum iiij  
tapitis de viridi pulverizatis de albis et rubris rosis i albe lecte  
de bukeram pulverizatus de papillionibus cum uno coverlyt et iiij  
tapitis i lecto de rubro worsted cum uno coverlit et ij tapitis i aula  
de xvij peciis operatis de albis pervis pictis fugantibus papilionibus  
ij cotes de armis de Mortuo Mari de Chirk i de velvett et altera de  
camoca cooperti de iaune velvet et lineati de sindone rubro i boga de  
bloy frette et scaciate de iaune dealba pulverizatus cum floris de  
lits et rosis de iaune ix usus de cirtayn raye motule i pari de plates  
cooperti panno deaurato iiij veteres gladii i cote pro les justes de  
rubro velvet cum i frette deargento et cum papilionibus de armis de  
Mortimer cooperturis pro scuto de eadem setta i vexillo de sindone  
eiusdem sette i hernes pro justes de viridi velvet uno veteri vexillo  
de armis de Mortimer batu i altero de sindone ii paribus depaulers cum  
bracers et vanbraucers x cotes de pannis Wallie scaciatis qualibet cum  
una rubra manica i bascinet pro turnamentis i pari de kynebaus deaurati  
pulverizati de moletis pertes iiij galeis superauratis pro turnamentis  
i alia galea pro tourney iiij bascinetti pro turney iiij paribus de braces  
et paunz ij paribus despaulers iiij paribus de quisseaux de corio bull-  
iato ij paribus de chaousons i pari kynebaus superauratus i pari de  
plates coperti de rubro samite vj corcetti de ferro iiij galea pro guerra  
i capella ferra et une pari cooperturi de ferro inventis apud Lodelowe  
et castrum predictum de Wygemore in custodia predicti vicecomitis et ab  
eadem custodia captis sicut continetur in rotulis de particularis que  
liberatur in thesauro. Et omnia predicta liberata Willelmo Episcopo

Norwycensis thesaurario Regis et Johanni de Leycestre et Nicholo de Acton camerariis de scaccario pro indentura inde inter ipsos thesaurarium et camerarios et predictum Johannem de Percebrigge confecta cuius data est apud Westmonsaterium die Sancte Katerine anno regis Edwardi tertii quinto.

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