Canterbury Research and Theses Environment

Canterbury Christ Church University's repository of research outputs

http://create.canterbury.ac.uk

Please cite this publication as follows:

Flodden 1513: Re-examining British Warfare at the End of the Middle Ages

☆

David Grummitt

Abstract

On 9 September 1513 a Scottish army led by King James IV was decisively defeated by an English army, led by Thomas Howard, earl of Surrey. Most recent scholarship on the battle has concentrated on new European-style tactics of the Scots, part of James's ultimately futile effort to introduce a "Renaissance-style" of kingship. This article re-examines the battle from the English perspective, arguing the English army was more "modern" in terms of its weaponry, tactics, and military organization and, second, that in the person of Thomas Howard they benefitted from the leadership of Britain's first "Renaissance general."

It is something of a cliché to state that Flodden remains one of the most poorly documented and misunderstood of late medieval, or perhaps even "Renaissance," battles. Despite a flurry of publications to coincide with the five hundredth anniversary and a great deal of public interest spurred on by generously funded local projects, there are still many misunderstandings and errors that have come to be commonplaces when discussing the levying, composition, and equipment of the two armies and the course of the battle that took place on 9 September 1513.[1] These assumptions have led to a generally accepted narrative

---

1. George Goodwin, *Fatal Rivalry, Flodden 1513: Henry VIII, James IV and the Battle for Renaissance Britain* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2013); Peter Reese, *Flodden: A Scottish*

David Grummitt is Head of the School of Humanities at Canterbury Christ Church University, having previously held positions at the Universities of Kent and Oxford and with the History of Parliament Trust. He is the author of *War, State and Society in England and the Habsburg Netherlands, 1477–1559* (2007) with Steven Gunn and Hans Cools; *The Calais Garrison 1436–1558* (2008); *A Short History of the Wars of the Roses* (2013); and *Henry VI* (2015).

of battle which is only partly grounded in fact and owes much to supposition and imaginative reconstructions of the fighting itself. This article will first examine the ways in which the two armies were recruited, before moving on to discuss how they were armed and equipped, and, crucially for our understanding of the battle itself, the way in which they may have fought. It will argue that the tendency for recent scholarship to concentrate on the Scottish experience of the battle has led to an underestimation of the innovative and effective leadership, military organisation, and tactics of the English.

The obstacles to understanding the composition and fighting abilities of the English and Scottish armies are many. Principal among these, of course, is the relative paucity of the documentary record.[2] The lacunae in the Scottish sources, the unfortunate gap in the treasurer of Scotland's accounts among other things, are well known, but the English sources are also uncharacteristically meagre. In contrast to his counterpart, Sir John Daunce, treasurer of war for Henry VIII's campaign in France, Surrey's treasurer, his brother-in-law Sir Philip Tilney, has left only his final declared account.[3] Paradoxically, the speed and efficiency with which the king's lieutenant in the north gathered, deployed, and disbanded his army probably resulted in a shorter paper trail than its rather more cumbersome counterpart across the Channel. Thus scholars and popular writers alike have based their narratives of the campaign largely on a motley collection of post-battle reports, later chronicles, and imaginative interpretations conjured from what was happening in much better documented contemporary European battles.[4] Equally,

---

Tragedy (Edinburgh: Berlinn, 2013); Rosy Serdiville and John Sadler, *The Battle of Flodden 1513* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, U.K.: History Press, 2013). The way in which the quincentennial anniversary of Flodden captured the popular imagination is evident by a rash of imaginative interpretations (Rosemary Goring, *After Flodden* [Edinburgh: Berlinn, 2013]; Noel Hodgson, *Heron's Flight: Battle of Flodden 1513* [Galashiels, Selkirkshire, U.K.: Reiver Press, 2013]) and the funding of projects such as the Flodden ecomuseum and a host of other community-driven initiatives (www.flodden1513.com).

2. A more optimistic assessment of the documentary record is expressed in Patrick J. Parsons, "Flodden Field: the sources and archaeology of a 'marvelouse greate conflicte,'" in *Fields of Conflict: Progress and Prospect in Battlefield Archaeology*, ed. P. W. M. Freeman and A. Pollard (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2001), 51–60.

3. E101/56/27, The National Archives (PRO), United Kingdom [hereafter TNA]; and Egerton MS 2603, f. 30, British Library, London [hereafter BL], both printed in J. D. Mackie, "The English Army at Flodden," *Publications of the Scottish History Society*, 3rd ser., 43 (1951): 35–85. For the mass of documentation relating to the 1513 French campaign on the other hand, see *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, ed. J. S. Brewer, R. H. Brodie, and J. Gairdner, 23 vols. (London, 1862–1932), vol. 1, pt. 2.

4. The most important contemporary accounts of the battle are: 1) *The Articles of the Batail bitwix the Kinge of Scottes and therle of Surrey in Brankestone Feld, the ix day of September* (SP49/1, ff. 17–19, TNA); 2) a letter from Brian Tuke, Henry VIII's clerk of the signet, to Cardinal Bainbridge dated 22 September 1513 (*Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs, existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and other Libraries in North Italy*, vol. 2,

recent attempts to rehabilitate the fighting reputation of both the English and Scottish armies in the light of the "Military Revolution" and the development of a distinctive style of warfare in the early sixteenth century, informed in part by wider European cultural and intellectual changes, have actually obscured the real dynamic of what occurred on the Anglo-Scottish border in September 1513.[5]

<div align="center">

I

</div>

The first question asked of any medieval or early modern battle is the size of the forces involved. Yet this simple enquiry is often the most difficult to answer. Chroniclers were notoriously prone to exaggeration, while even documentary sources (if they survive at all) tell us more about the number of men raised and paid for than the numbers actually involved in fighting. These problems are acute for the battle of Flodden, particularly for the Scottish army. Nevertheless, the methods for raising men for war were ostensibly similar in England and Scotland and had changed little over the course of the fifteenth century, even if the potential military resources of the two kingdoms were significantly different. Both James IV and Henry VIII relied on their subjects' long-established obligations to assist them in the defence of their realms, and both kings augmented the numbers raised in this fashion by individual agreements with their leading subjects. In 1285 the Statute of Winchester had ordained that each able-bodied Englishman between the ages of sixteen and sixty should be able to serve for forty days a year and have arms and weapons appropriate to his wealth and social status. By the 1290s the oversight of this system was in the hands of specially appointed commissions of array, usually led by the leading nobleman of the county and comprising prominent landowners. Throughout the fourteenth century the commissioners also developed a system of quality control, checking the war-readiness of the county levies and enforcing the statutory requirements. The alternative practice of raising armies by contracting with individual captains meant that the importance of the commissions of array for assembling expeditionary forces diminished during the later fourteenth century, but they continued to be issued frequently, especially in the coastal and border counties, and were vital in maintaining English society at some degree of military preparedness. The Statute of Winchester was reissued in

---

1509–1515, ed. Rawdon Brown [London: HMSO, 1867], 133–35); 3) the newsletter entitled *The Trewe Encountre or . . . Batayle lately don between Englande and Scotlande* (London: R. Faques, ?1513), STC 11088.5; 4) a printed newsletter, *Thorde and behauyoure of the right honourable Erle of Surrey tresour and Marshal of Englande ayenst the kynge of Scottes and the Inuasions howe the same kynge at the Batayle of Brakston was slayne by the sayd erle*, now surviving only in manuscript (Additional Manuscripts 29506 [hereafter Add. MS], BL); 5) a letter from Thomas Ruthal, bishop of Durham, to Thomas Wolsey (SP1/5, ff. 47–48v, TNA; *Letters and Papers*, vol. 1, pt. 2:4461).

    5. Gervase Phillips, *The Anglo-Scots Wars 1513–1550* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 1999), 117–33; Niall Barr, *Flodden 1513* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, U.K.: Tempus, 2001); James Raymond, *Henry VIII's Military Revolution: the Armies of Sixteenth-Century Britain and Europe* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), esp. 36–39.

Henry VIII (left), from Frank Arthur Mumby, The Youth of Henry VIII: A Narrative in Contemporary Letters *(Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1913), frontispiece; James IV (right), from Grant R. Francis,* Scotland's Royal Line: The Tragic House of Stuart *(New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1929), facing page 22.*

1437 and 1442, while Henry VIII signalled his bellicose intentions by reissuing the statute in 1511.[6] In Scotland the king's subjects had been required to present themselves at "wappinschaws" since at least the thirteenth century, and the arms and armour each man was required to provide had been set by statute since 1318. In 1457 and 1491 the frequency of "wappinschaws" was set at four times a year. Like their counterparts across the border, Scotsmen were expected to serve for a maximum of forty days at their own expense.[7]

Alongside this system of national levies, both the English and Scottish kings relied on their landowners to provide men. In England during the fourteenth century this had been formalised through indentures for war, a process whereby individual captains contracted with the crown to bring a certain number of men, fully furnished for war, to the muster and to serve for royal wages for a fixed period of time (usually six months or a year). The indenture system had

6. Jeremy Goring, "Social Change and Military Decline in Mid-Tudor England," *History* 60 (1975): 185–97; Steven Gunn, David Grummitt, and Hans Cools, *War, State and Society in England and the Habsburg Netherlands, 1477–1559* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 20–21.

7. Gervase Phillips, "Scotland in the Age of Military Revolution, 1488–1560," in *A Military History of Scotland*, ed. E. M. Spiers, J. A. Crang, and M. J. Strickland (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 184; Gladys Dickinson, "Some Notes on the Scottish Army in the First Half of the Sixteenth Century," *Scottish Historical Review* 28 (1949): 133–45.

furnished the vast majority of men who had fought in the Hundred Years War (1337–1453). Yet, despite its ostensibly mercenary nature, the English indenture system relied on lordship and the chivalric bond between the lord and his servant for its effectiveness. The most successful military retinues of the Hundred Years War, such as those of John of Gaunt in the 1360s and 1370s and of Henry V, were brotherhoods-in-arms, where ties of loyalty through household service reinforced bonds forged on campaign. During the Wars of the Roses (1455–1487) military indentures continued to be sealed by both the crown and its rivals, but the reciprocal obligations they enshrined said more about contemporary ideals of loyalty and service than mere monetary transactions.[8] In Scotland, on the other hand, by the mid-fifteenth century the reciprocal obligations of lords and men in both peace and war were formalised in bonds of manrent. It is difficult to see how these differed in practice from the informal, but still clearly binding, obligations that enabled the Douglasses and other great Scottish families to put armies numbering in the thousands in the field in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries; nevertheless, the bonds provided Scottish lords with sizeable followings that could be used to pursue private feuds, as well as providing the king with a much more reliable source of military manpower than the traditional levy.[9]

In both England and Scotland, however, the cultural assumptions and political circumstances that determined the balance of power between the king and his subjects had undergone important changes in the decades before Flodden. In England the essential reciprocity of obligation that had underpinned the indenture system of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries was being replaced by a system that increasingly stressed the subjects' obligations to provide exclusive military service to the crown. This development was evident from the 1470s. Instead of relying on the essentially private power of individual lords, the crown relied on a combination of household service and exploiting the manpower resources of the burgeoning royal lands: for example, William, Lord Hastings, Edward IV's household chamberlain, was also chief steward of important Duchy of Lancaster lands in the north midlands, as well as being lieutenant of the English garrison at Calais.[10] Similarly, Steven Gunn has shown the importance of Sir Thomas Lovell, one of Henry VII's most important household servants,

8. Simon Walker, *The Lancastrian Affinity 1361–1399* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 39–80; Anthony Goodman, *The Wars of the Roses: The Soldiers' Experience* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, U.K.: Tempus, 2005), 78–125.

9. Jenny Wormald, *Lords and Men in Scotland: Bonds of Manrent, 1442–1603* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1985), 13–20, 34–51; Michael Brown, *The Black Douglases: War and Lordship in Late Medieval Scotland 1300–1455* (East Linton, East Lothian, U.K.: Tuckwell Press, 1998), 132–56.

10. David Grummitt, "The Court, War and Noble Power in England, c.1475–1558," in *The Court as a Stage*, ed. Steven Gunn and Antheun Janse (Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 2006), 145–55; Grummitt, *The Calais Garrison: War and Military Service in England, 1436–1558* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 2008).

in mobilising the military resources of the midlands for the first Tudor king. Indeed, Henry VII appears to have had a policy to replace the private power of the aristocracy with the public authority of the king's officers, the stewards of royal lands and other office-holders, to raise men for war. In 1487 the king reserved the sole right to muster royal tenants for war and later granted licences to individuals to retain men from the crown lands, tying individuals tighter within the nexus of royal service. Other military institutions developed in the king's favour: in 1491 Parliament passed an act requiring captains to provide exactly the number of men contained within their indentures on pain of forfeiture and imprisonment. Henry VII's two major military campaigns, his invasion of France in 1492 and the army he assembled against the Scots five years later, exemplify these trends. Less than a third of the nearly 13,000 men assembled in 1492 were from noble retinues (and of that proportion a third or so were assembled by five lords closely associated with the king himself), while in 1497 some 70 percent of the 7,000-strong vanguard were provided by men commanding contingents from crown lands in Wales, the palatinates of Chester and Lancaster, and the duchy of Cornwall. The inevitable result of these developments was the disappearance of the reciprocal indenture of war in favour of a system whereby the crown raised men primarily from its own lands, led into battle by lords and knights tied to the king through personal service and membership of his household.[11]

In Scotland similar pressures manifested themselves in different ways. While James IV lacked the landed resources enjoyed by Henry VII and could not afford to disregard the private resources of his greatest lords, the balance of power between the Scottish crown and its subjects appears to have been shifting in favour of the former. From 1495 James had set about re-asserting royal authority in a manner not that different from his future father-in-law across the border: he attempted to curb the independent power of his nobility; he had set about strengthening royal control over the Scottish church; and he began to exploit the crown lands both financially and politically by enforcing the feudal obligations of his tenants-in-chief.[12] More importantly, perhaps, with regard to the ability of the crown to wage war, James oversaw a redefinition of the chivalric bond between the king and his subjects. As Katie Stevenson has shown, knighthood was an important tool in the armoury of the Stewart kings eager to enhance the prestige and authority of the crown. James IV self-consciously asserted his role as the patron and champion of

---

11. Grummitt, "Court, War and Noble Power," 146–47; Steven Gunn, "Sir Thomas Lovell (c.1449–1524): a New Man in a New Monarchy?," in *The End of the Middle Ages?*, ed. John Watts (Stroud, Gloucestershire, U.K.: Sutton Publishing, 1995), 117–54; Sean Cunningham, "National War and Dynastic Politics: Henry VII's Capacity to Wage War in the Scottish Campaigns of 1496–1497," in *England and Scotland at War, c.1296–1513*, ed. Andy King and David Simpkin (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 297–328; Steven Gunn, *Henry VII's New Men and the Making of Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 88–109.

12. Jane E. A. Dawson, *Scotland Re-Formed 1488–1547* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 31–58.

chivalric values, dubbing men in the field and subsequently bestowing upon them positions of military responsibility, while cultivating a chivalric ethos at court through jousts. By tying men directly to his service, through the development of personal chivalric bonds of loyalty, James may have been attempting to cultivate a military class dedicated to the fulfilment of his ambitions as a Renaissance prince on both the domestic and the European stage.[13]

The effect of these developments both north and south of the border was that both realms could put in the field in 1513 armies much larger than had been the norm for much of the fifteenth century. In 1400 Henry IV of England had marched north with an army of 1,771 men-at-arms and 11,314 archers, and two years later, at Humbleton Hill, the English army numbered some 15,000. In 1482 Richard, duke of Gloucester, may have assembled as many as 20,000 men for the campaign that ended in the capture of Berwick-upon-Tweed, while in 1497 Henry VII sent an army of some 10,000 to the Scottish border (albeit part of a much larger mobilisation of manpower in England in that year).[14] These armies, however, were exceptional and represented the might of an "army royal" sent against Scotland. Usually English armies raised for service in the north appear to have been small affairs, with the forces at the disposal of the various English wardens of the marches and lieutenants normally numbering in the hundreds rather than the thousands. For example, the English forces mustered under the command of the wardens of the East March in 1435 and in 1448 were little more than large-scale raids.[15] In 1513, however, the earl of Surrey's army, as we shall see, numbered well in excess of 20,000. Moreover, this was not an "army royal"; it represented a traditional mobilisation of the north for defence against the Scots while the bulk of the kingdom's military resources had accompanied Henry VIII to France. Indeed, as Surrey marched north from Pontefract, some 30,000 of his fellow countrymen (including the premier northern nobleman, Henry Percy, 5th earl of Northumberland) were encamped with their king in northern France.[16]

13. Katie Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland 1424–1513* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 2006), 185–92.

14. Anne Curry, Adrian R. Bell, Andy King, and David Simpkin, "New Regime, New Army? Henry IV's Expedition of 1400," *English Historical Review* 125 (2010): 1382–1413; Sean Cunningham, "The Yorkists at War: Military Leadership in the English War with Scotland 1480–1482," in *The Yorkist Age*, ed. Hannes Kleineke and Christian Steer (Stamford, Lincolnshire, U.K.: Shaun Tyas, 2013), 175–84; Ian Arthurson, "The King's Voyage into Scotland: the War that Never Was," in *England in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. D. Williams (Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 1987), 1–21.

15. David Grummitt, "A Military Revolution in the North? The Impact of Gunpowder Weaponry on the Anglo-Scottish Marches in the Fifteenth Century," in King and Simpkin, eds., *England and Scotland at War*, 290–91.

16. Charles Cruickshank, *Henry VIII and the Invasion of France* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, U.K.: Alan Sutton, 1990), 30–34; Helen Miller, *Henry VIII and the English Nobility* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 133–43.

Equally, the size of James IV's army, although notoriously difficult to estimate with any degree of certainty, probably exceeded that of previous Scottish hosts with a strength of perhaps 30,000 men on the eve of the battle.[17]

While the lack of records precludes any detailed analysis of the size or composition of James IV's host, the English records do allow us to see how Surrey's army exemplified some the developments outlined above. To begin with, Thomas Howard, earl of Surrey, demonstrates himself how the public authority of the crown had superseded the private power of individual noblemen in raising men. Surrey, of course, had fought alongside his father, the duke of Norfolk, for Richard III at Bosworth in 1485, and had only slowly been incorporated back into royal favour. In 1489 he had been restored to the earldom of Surrey and sent north following the murder of the 4th earl of Northumberland. He had no lands in the north, but was clearly a skilled soldier and administrator. His performance as king's lieutenant in the north had underlined how loyalty to the crown and good service conferred personal status and power. While the earl may have been out of pocket for his years of service in the north from 1489, it certainly gained him prestige and power both at court and in the localities.[18] As king's lieutenant Surrey drew upon the full public authority of the crown to raise his army in 1513: in August 1512 he had been commissioned to take musters of the northern counties and for the campaign he had access to the royal treasury at the abbey of St. Mary's, York. He also received funds directly from John Heron, treasurer of the king's chamber, as well as the proceeds of ecclesiastical taxation collected in the East Riding. It is clear that about half of his army, 9,512 men, had been mustered through the commissions of array in the northern counties and led by "dyverse lordes, knyghtes, squyres, gentlemen and yomen . . . frome sondrie places of the North parties." Another 8,500 men came from the Palatinates of Lancashire and Cheshire, under the command of Sir Edward Stanley, fifth son of the 1st earl of Derby (d. 1504), and his brother James, bishop of Ely. It is interesting to note that the young Thomas Stanley, 2nd earl of Derby, had accompanied the king to France,

17. The best discussion of the size of the Scottish army remains Fitzwilliam Elliot, *The Battle of Flodden and the Raids of 1513* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1911), appendix ii. The truth is, however, that given the absence of documentary records on the Scottish part, the size of James's army will never really be known. English reports made immediately after the battle made no mention of any notable discrepancy in size between the two armies, so the figure of "slightly under thirty-five thousand fighting men" suggested by Elliot (p. 11) is a sound, if perhaps generous, estimate. The estimate of 42,000 made by John Sadler (*Flodden 1513: Scotland's Greatest Defeat* [Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006], 28) is based wholly on conjecture; the extant sources simply do not allow the Scottish host to be reconstructed in such detail. Barr's figure of 29,000 (*Flodden 1513*, 149) is also simply conjecture based on a reading of the evidence presented by Elliot. Perhaps the best we can say about James's army at Flodden is that it included a wider array of the Scottish nobility than previous Stewart kings had achieved, drawing together men from the length and breadth of the kingdom. This in itself was testimony perhaps to James's success at state building.

18. Gunn, Grummitt, and Cools, *War, State and Society*, 133, 177, 190–92.

underlining the fact that the Lancashire and Cheshire contingents marched under Surrey's authority as king's lieutenant, not as a Stanley retinue.[19]

Surrey's army was also bound, however, by personal ties to the lieutenant himself. His sons Thomas (who as Lord Admiral brought 1,000 men to the field) and Edmund were present, while the earl's treasurer of war was his brother-in-law Sir Philip Tilney, and his step-son, John Bourchier, Lord Berners, served as marshal of the army. Moreover, Surrey's own household and servants provided 500 men for the lieutenant's retinue. These men probably formed the core of the English battle commanded by the earl that met James IV's charge. It comprised five captains, five petty captains, one spear or "man-at-arms," forty-three demi-lances, and 446 soldiers. We do not know the names of those present in Surrey's retinue but it was, in all probability, a Howard warband recruited primarily from their East Anglian servants and tenants.[20] The household accounts of Surrey's father show how extensive the Howard military affinity was: in 1481 John Howard could equip 1,000 men from his estates for service at sea. When Lord Thomas Howard had gone to Guienne the previous year he had taken a retinue of 400 men drawn from his father's East Anglian lands and Norwich, from the family estates in Sussex, and, possibly, from his wife's estates in Humberside.[21] Surrey's connexions to northern families, fostered during his long lieutenancy in the north, also served him well in 1513. Thomas, 2nd Lord Dacre of Gilsland, the English warden of the marches in 1513, served in Surrey's army with 1,500 border horsemen, as might be expected, but a more important contribution was that of the Yorkshire knight Sir Marmaduke Constable, who commanded the left wing of the English army. The Constables of Flamborough had a long association with the Percy family in the fifteenth century and in 1483 they had transferred their service to Richard, duke of Gloucester, King Edward IV's brother and the lieutenant of the north. Sir Marmaduke was probably not present at the battle of Bosworth, but, like Surrey, he accommodated himself to the new regime in 1485 and served as one of Henry VII's knights of the body. From 1489 he became a follower of the earl of Surrey, one of his key servants in the north, and in 1509 his new patron nominated him to a Garter stall. Constable served at Flodden alongside his sons Robert, Marmaduke, and John (the youngest two of whom were knighted by Surrey in the wake of the battle), as well as his brother William, two cousins, and his son-in-law.[22]

19. Mackie, "English Army," 73–84; E101/56/27, TNA; *Letters and Papers*, vol. 1, pt. 2:3358, 4434; Miller, *English Nobility*, 141.

20. Mackie, "English Army," 75, 82–83; E101/56/27, TNA; Susan Vokes, "The Early Career of Thomas, Lord Howard, Earl of Surrey and Third Duke of Norfolk, 1474–1525" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, 1988), 89–90.

21. E405/69, rot. 1d, TNA; *The Household Books of John Howard, Duke of Norfolk, 1462–71, 1481–83*, ed. Anne Crawford, 2 vols. (Stroud, Gloucestershire, U.K.: Alan Sutton, 1992), 2:4–9; Vokes, "Thomas, Lord Howard," 91.

22. E. B. de Fonblanque, *Annals of the House of Percy*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Clay and Sons, 1867), 1:341; M. A. Hicks, "Dynastic Change and Northern Society: the Career of the

The English army at Flodden exemplified the early Tudors' successful adaptation of the existing medieval forms of raising armies. Edward Hall's estimate of 26,000 men arrayed with the earl of Surrey at Bolton in Glendale was probably not far off the mark.[23] Like the English armies at Neville's Cross, Otterburn, and Humbleton Hill, it consisted mainly of a levy from the northern counties, exploiting the obligations enshrined in the Statute of Winchester and the existing patterns of local lordship. Yet there were important changes. The efficiency with which the early Tudors executed commissions of array led to larger and better equipped armies and, indeed, the county levies would become increasingly important in providing the manpower for Henry's armies as the reign progressed.[24] The army's commander owed his position not to his private resources, either in terms of men or land, in the north of England, but to the status and power he derived from his service to the king. It was the public authority that Surrey commanded as king's lieutenant in the north that drew the traditional military class of the north to his banner, rather than his status as a great northern magnate.[25] Nevertheless, the strength of the English army rested, in part, upon the private relationships that Surrey had forged. His own person at the battle was protected by family members and household retainers, while his personal relationship with northerners such as Constable was built upon a shared martial and chivalric culture. The Scottish army too demonstrated the Stewarts' efforts to refine and improve existing medieval institutions. It also benefitted from James IV's efforts to increase the authority of the crown. More importantly, perhaps, the size of the Scottish host, and the willingness of the Scottish military class to die for their king, were testimony to James's success in redefining notions of chivalry and service to the king.

II

Much has been made in the recent literature of the effect of the European "Military Revolution" on Anglo-Scottish warfare in the early sixteenth century and, in particular, its impact on the armament and tactics of the respective armies. The English army, we are told, "looked decidedly second-rate and behind the times." James IV, on the other hand, took his pretensions to be a Renaissance prince seriously and equipped the Scottish army with a modern artillery train and pikes, employing French captains in an attempt to train his levies in the style of the fashionable Swiss infantry. These pretensions met the harsh reality of warfare at Flodden where the long-established English combination of the bill and the bow (not to mention the

---

Fourth Earl of Northumberland, 1470–1489," *Northern History* 14 (1978): 78–107; *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1509–1558*, ed. S. T. Bindoff, 4 vols. (Stroud, Gloucestershire, U.K.: Alan Sutton, 1982),

23. Henry Ellis, ed., *Hall's Chronicle* (London: Longmans, 1809), 559.

24. Grummitt, "Court, War and Noble Power," 150–55. For the earlier period, see Andy King, "A Good Chance for the Scots? The Recruitment of English Armies for Scotland and the Marches, 1337–1347," in King and Simpkin, eds., *England and Scotland at War*, 119–56.

25. Gunn, Grummitt, and Cools, *War, State and Society*, 161–92.

Northumbrian terrain) nullified the effects of James's Swiss-style pikemen. The terrain also nullified the effect of the Scots' new cannon and after the battle the guns were taken by the English, who had few such weapons themselves as the majority of their modern ordnance had been taken to France by Henry VIII.[26]

Fortunately, the English evidence allows us to reappraise this commonly held view and suggest some slightly different ways in which the weaponry and tactics used at Flodden reveal how warfare was changing in Britain in the early sixteenth century. Ostensibly, the few surviving muster rolls from around the time of the battle of Flodden suggest that little had changed between the battles of Humbleton Hill and Flodden. The most extensive and best known of these is the list of able men, tenants of Henry, 10th Lord Clifford, mustered in Staincliffe wapentake in the West Riding of Yorkshire in 1510–11.[27] It is not a complete listing of the men available to Lord Clifford, omitting several manors as well as his household officers and servants. The extant document, however, lists 324 men in thirty-one separate townships. Between them they mustered with some 220 bows and ninety-six bills (the remaining individuals were listed without weapons or noted as being able to provide a man rather than serving in person). The ratio of bows to bills (some 2:1) is interesting and suggests that efforts had been made to maximise the military potential of this part of Yorkshire. Indeed, some men were noted as "archers," rather than merely being in possession of a bow, while others were noted as being "able," perhaps suggesting a degree of expertise.[28] A comparison with the very few surviving fifteenth-century muster rolls suggests that the proportion of bows may have increased, perhaps testimony to the Tudors' enforcement of the obligatory longbow practice and a more frequent and efficient system of muster and array. In 1449, for instance, the 290 men mustered in Cumberland by Sir Walter Strickland had an almost equal distribution of bills and bows. Alternatively, of course, the relative wealth of Staincliffe wapentake compared to the border counties may account for the preponderance of more substantial yeomen who were able to muster as archers. Indeed, at least two of the townships mustered could afford to send their contingents to war horsed and harnessed at communal cost. Equally, we know from an analysis of muster rolls in

26. Barr, *Flodden 1513*, 35–58, quotation at 52; Phillips, *The Anglo-Scots War*, 42–103; N. A. T. MacDougall, *James IV* (East Linton, East Lothian, U.K.: Tuckwell Press, 1989), 274–76.

27. The erroneously named "Flodden Roll" is found in one of the Clifford household books preserved among the duke of Devonshire's archives at Chatsworth House (Bolton Abbey MS 1, ff. 36–44). It is printed accurately and analysed in *Early Tudor Craven: Subsidies and Assessments 1510–1547*, ed. R. W. Hoyle, Yorkshire Archaeological Society 145 (Leeds, West Yorkshire, U.K.: Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1987): 114–19.

28. Similarly, in York in the 1540s certain individuals were noted as "tried archers" by the commissioners, suggesting a degree of expertise in the use of the longbow: Gunn, Grummitt, and Cools, *War, State and Society*, 53. For the degree of expertise needed to effectively use an early Tudor war bow, see *Weapons of Warre: The Armaments of the Mary Rose*, ed. Alexzandra Hildred (Portsmouth, Hampshire, U.K.: Mary Rose Trust, 2011), 586–93.

the city of York in the first half of the sixteenth century that the men mustered as archers and sent to war were often recruited from men of sufficient means to be assessed on their incomes for payment of parliamentary subsidies.[29] Indeed, the most recent study of late medieval English armies has concluded that, in the main, "archers were drawn from those with some social standing and wherewithal," and the relatively high proportion of men listed as archers in Surrey's army may reflect the deep engagement of northern society with the defence of their country.[30]

The importance of the longbow to English armies of the late Middle Ages is a commonplace, but its role and importance to early Tudor armies should not be underestimated. Steven Gunn has done much to remind us of the position of the longbow within the Tudor imagination as a potent symbol of English military prowess, but, even amidst the developments of the "Military Revolution," it was also still a battle-winning weapon. As the ordinances made for the army of Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy, in the 1470s show, the longbow could be used effectively as a short-range missile weapon fully integrated in an all-arms infantry force that included pikes, shorter pole arms, and handguns.[31] Moreover, English commanders recognised the continued efficacy of the longbow, and it appears that efforts were made to maximise the potential of the English archery for the campaigns of 1513. In the previous year parliament had confirmed the requirement of English merchants trading in the Mediterranean to import "a grete nombre of bowstaves of Ewe . . . from those parties where they growe."[32] For the Flodden campaign Surrey had access to substantial numbers of war bows, presumably paid for by the crown and delivered to the north from the royal armoury at the Tower of London, designed to remedy any shortfall in the quantity and quality of bows provided by the contingents raised by the commissions of array. At the end of the campaign he had managed to recover no fewer than 5,143 longbows from his army and delivered them to Alnwick castle, along with 4,055 sheaves of arrows, for eventual return to the royal armouries.[33]

29. Joseph Nicolson and Richard Burn, *The History and Antiquities of the Counties of West-morland and Cumberland*, 2 vols. (London: Strahan and Cadell, 1777), 1:96–97; Gunn, Grummitt, and Cools, *War, State and Society*, 53–54. A comparison of the 1510–11 muster with the 1524 and 1525 subsidy returns for Staincliffe wapentake shows that a few of the wealthier tax-payers were among those mustered and may well have served at the battle of Flodden: Hoyle, ed., *Early Tudor Craven*, 48–63.

30. Adrian R. Bell, Anne Curry, Andy King, and David Simpkin, *The Soldier in Later Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 261. Some measure of the social status of those listed as archers in documents of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries can be seen from the fact that mounted archers and men-at-arms on foot received the same daily wage of 8*d*: Grummitt, *Calais Garrison*, 48n.

31. Steven Gunn, "Archery Practice in Early Tudor England," *Past & Present* 209 (2010): 53–81; Richard Vaughan, *Charles the Bold* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 2002), 207–11.

32. 3 Hen VIII, c. 3 (*Statutes of the Realm*, ed. A. Luders et al., 11 vols. [London: Record Commission, 1810–1828], 3:25).

33. Egerton MS 2603, f. 30, BL.

The earl of Surrey recorded these bows in a list of "the provysions and artillery" he had "saved" through his "policie" which he presented to the royal auditors early in 1514. This document, now British Library Egerton MS 2603, f. 30, has been used by historians, principally J. D. Mackie, to help determine the size of the English host at Flodden, but it has not been exploited fully for what it tells us about the armament of Surrey's army. Rather than being an old-fashioned mixture of bows and bills, the product of locally sourced and maintained weaponry, the army was largely equipped by the crown and armed with a variety of weapons that gave it a degree of tactical flexibility. Alongside the thousands of war bows that Surrey had distributed among his soldiers, he also claimed allowance for 2,602 "marespikes" that he had left at Alnwick. The "marespike" or "Moorish Pike" was the English equivalent of the eighteen-foot-long pike that the Scots carried in emulation of the Swiss. The English had included such weapons in their inventory since the 1470s, and in Henry VII's invasion of France in 1492 several captains had included among their retinues men armed with "marespikes" or "long speres." The exact circumstances of their use in English armies remain obscure, but they had been used to good effect (albeit by French mercenaries) at the battle of Bosworth in 1485 when pikemen formed a defensive ring around Henry Tudor.[34] At Flodden, then, at least one in ten Englishmen was armed with a long pike. Equally, the Egerton document records the return of 145 sets of "almayne revettes," the mass-produced infantry half-armour consisting of breast and back plate, tassets to protect the thighs, and splints for the arms, articulated with rivets and internal leathers. This type of armour was commonly worn by pikemen on the continent and from the first years of Henry VIII's reign was imported in massive quantities to equip English soldiers.[35] There is the strong possibility, then, that the front ranks of Surrey's armies were armed with pikes, protecting the bowmen and billmen from the impact of the Scottish pikemen in the best tradition of contemporary all-arms infantry doctrine.

The English pole arm par excellence, and the battle-winning weapon at Flodden, was, of course, the Black Bill. Three contemporary sources—the letter written to Cardinal Pace by Brian Tuke, clerk of the signet; Bishop Ruthal's letter to Thomas Wolsey; and *The trewe encountre*—mention how effective the bill was against the Scottish pike and how it accounted for many more Scotsmen than the longbow. Indeed, the latter states that the Scots were "as well apoynted as wal possible at all poyntes with Armoure & harneys so that fewe of them were slayne with arrows howbeit the bylles dyd bete and hewe them downe woth some payne and daunger to Englysshemen."[36] Interestingly, the Egerton manuscript makes no mention of

34. For a discussion of early Tudor polearms, see Hildred, *Weapons of Warre*, 713–19. For pikemen at the battle of Bosworth, see Michael K. Jones, *Bosworth 1485: Psychology of a Battle* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, U.K.: Tempus, 2002), 165–69.

35. Charles Cruickshank, *Henry VIII and the Invasion of France* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, U.K.: Alan Sutton, 1990), 69.

36. *Calendar of State Papers, Venice*, 2:134; *Letters and Papers*, vol. 1, pt. 2:4661; *Trewe Ecountre*.

bills being stored after the battle at Alnwick. This is curious. We know that large numbers of munition-quality bills had been stored in royal armouries, such as that at Calais, during the fifteenth century, and that the bill continued to be the most important infantry polearm in English armies until at least the 1550s.[37] It may be that the bills carried by the English soldiers at Flodden were their own, brought to the battle in accordance with their statutory obligations. Less than a third, however, of those mustered in Staincliffe wapentake "Flodden Roll" were armed with a bill. Billmen have sometimes been seen as inferior to their bow-armed counterparts, but we should not make the mistake of assuming that those so armed were lesser in terms of military ability or social status to archers.[38] Although originally derived from an agricultural implement, by the sixteenth century bills had become symbolic of English military prowess and could be wielded by men of substance. In the Staincliffe muster several of those armed with a bill were of sufficient status to also have full harness and a horse. The billmen in Surrey's army, then, may have formed an elite minority, leaving the safety of the formations of bows and pikes to engage the first ranks of the Scottish columns and, as Bishop Ruthal observed, "dissapoint[ing] the Scots of their long spears wherein was their greatest trust." Significantly, earlier in the letter Ruthal described how the English beat the Scottish with "hand strokes of bills and *halberds.*" Large numbers of halberds were purchased for Henry VIII's armies during the course of the reign, but the halberd was also a weapon of status (and as such carried by the king's yeomen of the guard). Ruthal's reference here may have been to European-style halberds, but it may equally have been to the poleaxe, the traditional polearm used by English men-at-arms of gentle status throughout the fifteenth century.[39]

The Egerton manuscript also reveals something of the use of gunpowder artillery at Flodden. Surrey left some fifty barrels of gunpowder at Alnwick, while he recorded the capture of seventeen pieces of Scottish ordnance worth 1,700 marks (£1,166 13*s.* 4*d*). Recent histories of Flodden have made much of James IV's efforts to expand and modernise his artillery train and its revolutionary potential to "project military power where it mattered most." Indeed, James's swift capture of Norham castle after a five-day siege was testimony to the recent advances made in Scottish artillery. At Flodden itself, however, the Scottish artillery appears to have made little impact on the English lines, while the much smaller English artillery (twenty-three light pieces firing shot weighing between two and five pounds), commanded by the skilled gunner William Blackenhall, seems to have been effective in harrying the enemy. Niall Barr sees the failure of the Scots to win what has been called the "first British artillery duel" as a crucial factor in James's defeat. Yet we should not overestimate the novelty or importance of gunpowder.[40]

37. Grummitt, *Calais Garrison*, 121–22.

38. See, for example, Andrew W. Boardman, *The Medieval Soldier in the Wars of the Roses* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, U.K.: Sutton, 1998), 148–49.

39. Hoyle, ed., *Early Tudor Craven*, 115–17; *Letters and Papers*, vol. 1, pt. 2:4661; Hildred, ed., *Weapons of Warre*, 713–18.

40. Barr, *Flodden 1513*, 49–50, 91–96.

Flodden was not the first time rival armies, both armed with cannon, had faced each other on a British battlefield. Both sides employed gunpowder weapons during the Wars of the Roses, and the recent archaeology of Bosworth has confirmed the presence of guns of various calibres. The English advantage in artillery was the product of nearly four decades of investment in the use of gunpowder weapons by successive English kings. Nevertheless, despite their indisputable presence on British battlefields of the late fifteenth century, guns appear not to have had a revolutionary impact on battlefield tactics or determined the outcome of individual battles. Instead, battlefield tactics adapted slowly to accommodate the presence of guns, both cannon and by the 1470s hand-held firearms, on the battlefield.[41] At Flodden, it is argued, the unexpected ability of the English guns to cause casualties among the Scots at long range was one factor that prompted James to attack. Yet if this was the case then the Scots were remarkably ignorant both of the capability of artillery and the recent experience of Swiss, Spanish, and French armies in the Italian wars. It seems a nonsense to suggest, given the ubiquity of guns in both British and European warfare, that "the use of artillery was not fully understood by the gunners of the day." Indeed, the "chroniclers and commanders who wrote of the engagement" seemed fully aware of the proper tactical employment of guns and the skill with which the English used their advantage in artillery.[42]

The question of the effectiveness of gunpowder weapons at Flodden brings us to the thorny historiographical question of the "Military Revolution" and whether the emerging "Renaissance style of warfare" had any impact on the outcome of the battle. Where in terms of recruitment, organisation, weaponry, and tactics both armies appear to have successfully melded both "old" and "new" forms of military organisation, there is one aspect where the English appear to have enjoyed an advantage. In the person of Thomas Howard, earl of Surrey, and his son, also Thomas, the Lord Admiral, the English were commanded by one of the most experienced and capable battlefield leaders of the early sixteenth century. As Thomas Arnold has reminded us, changes in the art of war in the years after 1500 meant that "battlefield example mattered less, generalship more." The increasing size of armies, the greater length of campaigns, and the diversity of theatres of war put a greater emphasis on the logistical and intellectual disciplines of war. The successful commander was increasingly judged as much, if not more so, by his ability to marshal his "maps and city plans, muster receipts and detailed lists of stores."[43] In most ways the logistics of the Flodden campaign were unremarkable: Surrey used the traditional northern staging posts of Newcastle and Alnwick to supply his army, while Lord Thomas Howard dropped anchor at Hull to victual

41. For the importance of guns in fifteenth-century British battles, see Glenn Foard and Anne Curry, *Bosworth 1485: A Battlefield Rediscovered* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2013), 135–77. See also David Grummitt, "The Defence of Calais and the Development of Gunpowder Weaponry in England in the Late Fifteenth Century," *War in History* 7 (2000): 253–72.

42. Barr, *Flodden 1513*, 93.

43. Thomas Arnold, *The Renaissance at War* (London: Cassell and Company, 2001), 87–90.

his force. Indeed, the haste with which Surrey dismissed his army is testimony to his appreciation that the host could be kept in the field for only a short time. More crucially, it appears that Surrey ensured that the majority of the English army was mounted, allowing them to muster at Pontefract on 25 August and deploy ready for battle at Bolton in Glendale, near Alnwick castle in Northumberland, just ten days later.[44] We have seen how local communities paid for their contingents to be horsed, while earlier in the year special musters for "horses and mares" had been held in the border counties. The later chronicler Edward Hall describes how Surrey's army "kept array on horseback from fyve of the clocke in the mornynge tyll foure of the clocke at after none" on the day of the battle.[45]

Indeed, Surrey was a student of warfare. In 1519 he commissioned the family's elegist, Alexander Barclay, to produce a translation from the Latin of Sallust's *Jugurthine Wars*. As William Sessions points out, this was evidence of the Howards' interest in new Humanist thought and scholarship emerging in the early sixteenth century. It is important to note, however, that Howard commissioned a military title, thus joining the growing body of contemporary military commanders who looked to classical, as much as chivalric, models of military success.[46] While the commissioning of translations of classical military treatises was not unique to the sixteenth century, in Surrey's case the combination of academic interest and practical experience was important. His generalship, like that of James IV, may have been inspired by the spirit of the Renaissance, but unlike the Scottish king it was one tempered by the harsh experience of conflict. Surrey, of course, had fought and been wounded in the battle of Barnet in 1471, and he had seen action alongside his father (who had been killed) against the future Henry VII at the battle of Bosworth in 1485. He had also travelled to France as part of a royal army in 1475, while in 1497 he had personally led the successful resistance to the Scottish attack on Norham castle, raiding north of the border in retaliation and seizing, albeit temporarily, Ayton castle. Surrey, then, had an empathy with the men under his command and had earned their respect.[47] This was evident, as we have seen, in his provision for their material needs. Yet his first-hand experience of battle also gave him a deep respect for his comrades-in-arms, a trait evident in the way in which he took counsel

44. E101/56/27; E315/4, ff. 1–16, TNA; Barr, *Flodden 1513*, 69–70.

45. Ellis, ed., *Hall's Chronicle*, 561.

46. Alexander Barclay, *Here begynneth the famous cronycle of the warre, which the romayns had against Iugurth vsurper of the kyngdome of Numidy. which cronycle is compyled in latyn by the renowmed romayne Salust. And translated into englysshe by syr Alexander Barclay preest, at co[m]maundement of the right hye and mighty prince: Thomas duke of Northfolke* (1522), STC 21626; W. A. Sessions, *Henry Howard, the Poet Earl of Surrey: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 74–75.

47. For a summary of Surrey's career, see David M. Head, "Thomas Howard, second duke of Norfolk (1443–1524)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Surrey's relationship with his men, and his style of generalship as a whole, have similarities with that most successful of late medieval English commanders, Henry V: Michael K. Jones, *Agincourt 1415* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire, U.K.: Pen and Sword, 2005), esp. 86–93.

widely as king's lieutenant in the north. At Flodden he consulted widely among his captains; indeed, decisions of the council were in effect ratified by the whole army. As Edward Hall relates, concerning the English approach to the Scots' army, "it was concluded betwene the erle and hys counsayll, and most parte of the armye thereto agreed" where the English should cross the River Twizzle.[48]

This sense of fellowship was underscored by Surrey's chivalric self-fashioning and the way in which he manipulated his image in the years after Flodden.[49] "Thorde and behavoure of the right honourable Erle of Surrey . . . at the Batayle of Brankston," a pro-Howard account of the battle printed by Richard Pynson, and which now exists only in manuscript, emphasised the earl's skills as a general, but also his chivalric behaviour throughout the campaign.[50] However, unlike James IV's rash bravery, Surrey's was measured, tempering prowess with prudence. At Pontefract, he carefully made provision for his ordnance and for the payment of his men's wages and "the sayde Erle forgat nat to sende unto all Abbottes Pryours Lordes knyghtes Squyres and gentylmen rulers of Lybertyes and Townes of the sayde partyes commaunding them on the kynges behalfe to make theyr certyfycates unto hym with what nombre of able men theyr householde servauntes and tenauntes horsed and harnesede they wolde be redy vpon an houres warnynge to set forwardes at his ledynge."[51] Throughout the campaign Surrey endeavoured to present himself as a chivalric exemplar. As the king departed from Dover for Calais, the earl solemnly promised to make James IV sorry for preventing him from joining the royal expedition to France. On hearing of the Scottish siege of Norham castle, Surrey set forth from Newcastle, notwithstanding the foul weather which saw his guide almost drowned, "yet he letted no day but kept

48. Ellis, ed., *Hall's Chronicle*, 561.

49. The use of the term "self-fashioning" is a conscious one and draws on Greenblatt's contention that "in the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process": Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), 2. In privileging one aspect of generalship over another and doing so in contradistinction to the leadership of James IV, Surrey (and members of the wider Howard military circle) were staking claim to a particular identity as military leaders. Thirty years later Surrey's son, Thomas Howard, duke of Norfolk, would warn his own son, Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, of the dangers of rash generalship and how risking failure on the battlefield threatened to undermine the family's position at the Henrician court: Sessions, *Henry Howard*, 319–29; Gunn, Grummitt, and Cools, *War, State and Society*, 191–92.

50. The text now only survives in manuscript in Add. MS, 29506, BL, but printed texts were clearly circulated widely. One such edition was the cause of a tavern brawl between some Norwich men and a Lancashire priest in 1515: Gunn, Grummitt, and Cools, *War, State and Society*, 208–9. The text served as the source for Hall's account of the battle in his *Chronicle*: Nancy Gutierrez and Mary Erler, "Print into Manuscript: a Flodden Field news pamphlet (British Library Ms Additional 29506)," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, new ser., 8 (1986): 187–230. See also John Scattergood, "A Defining Moment: the Battle of Flodden and English poetry," in *Vernacular Literature and Current Affairs in the Early Sixteenth Century: France, England and Scotland*, ed. Jennifer Britnell and Richard Britnell (Aldershot, Hampshire, U.K.: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), 62–79.

51. Add. MS, 29506, f. 3v, BL.

forth his iourney unwardes to gyue example and tencourage them that shulde folow tyll he came" to Durham.[52] In their communications with James IV on the eve of the battle both Surrey and his son followed chivalric protocol, promising justification for the death of Andrew Barton (James IV's favourite privateer) two years earlier at the hands of Lord Thomas. Indeed, Lord Thomas stated that the Scottish king would find him "in the vangarde of the fylde by the grace of Gode and seynte George and as he was true knyght."[53]

Yet for all the Howards' chivalric bravado, they understood that the responsible commander had a duty to safeguard himself and thus the cause for which he and his men fought. "Thorde and behavoure" made it clear that James IV's conduct was rash, his death an example to all princes "how they shall here after put theyr owne persones in doyinge an enterpryse in the forefrounte of a batayle wherby suche befoure expressed daunger may ensue to thutter distruccyons of themselfe theyr Realmes and domynyons lyke as this is of the Realme of Scotlande now desolate and voyde of all noble men and ryght fewe or none lefte on lyve to Rule."[54] As such the Howards' behaviour exemplified the contrast between the "hardy man," one who rushes into battle to win glory regardless of the consequences to him and his comrades, and the "manly man," whose training and discipline enables him to triumph over his foe for a common cause. The distinction had been made by several English soldiers and writers during the course of the fifteenth century and may have had its origins in the Ciceronian concept of the *vir virtutis*. Indeed, it was central to a particular concept of knightly service that melded traditional chivalric virtues with the new Humanist learning which was well known among the East Anglian gentry community of which the Howards were part and was the defining ethos of the early Tudor aristocracy.[55] "Thorde and behavoure" thus served as notice of the Howards' military philosophy, one that tempered chivalric bravery and formality with the practicalities of effective generalship.

52. Ibid., f. 4v.
53. Ibid., f. 6.
54. Ibid., f. 10.
55. The distinction was most famously made by Sir John Fastolf, in a comment on his own behaviour at the battle of Patay in 1429, which had seen the English defeated and his companion John, Lord Talbot, captured, while Fastolf himself had made a timely retreat and lived to fight another day. It was recorded by his sometime secretary William Worcester in his *Boke of Noblesse* presented to Edward IV on the eve of the 1475 French campaign (in which Surrey had served as a young man). The same distinction had been employed earlier in the century by the poet John Lydgate: *The Boke of Noblesse*, ed. J. G. Nichols (London: Roxburgh Club, 1860), 56–57, 64–65, 76–78; Daniel Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 112. For the specific role of reading and Humanist literature in shaping aristocratic military culture in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century England, see Cath Nall, *Reading and War in Fifteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 2012), esp. 159–64; Steven Gunn, "Chivalry and the Politics of the Early Tudor Court," in *Chivalry in the Renaissance*, ed. Sydney Anglo (Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 1990), 107–28.

III

This essay started with one cliché and will end with another: there can be little doubt that Flodden stands on the boundary between the Middle Ages and the early modern period in the British Isles. There was much about the two armies that was recognisably medieval, drawing upon a centuries-old tradition of warfare between the two kingdoms. Both the English and Scottish armies were raised by calling upon the traditional obligations of the kings' subjects, while the traditional military classes provided the fighting backbone of both sides. Chivalric bonds between companions-in-arms, albeit couched in the relatively modern formality of the bond of manrent or the newly negotiated political relationship between the early Tudor kings and their subjects, undoubtedly accounted for the high casualty rates among the lords and knights present at the battle, as much as the proficiency of new weapons or tactics. On the face of it, even the weaponry and tactics look recognisably medieval: both armies still fought predominantly on foot, the Scots armed with long spears, while the English appeared to have put their faith in the archery that had served them so well at Dupplin Moor, Neville's Cross, and Humbleton Hill. However much James IV spent on pikes and French military advisors, it really seems highly unlikely that the Scottish army resembled the Swiss in anything more than their superficial appearance. The evidence the Scottish feudal levy had mastered the techniques of Renaissance warfare comes principally from the so-called "Articules of Bataill," the official English report of the battle, which describes how the Scots advanced "after the Almayns maner." The reference was repeated by Brian Tuke in his letter to Richard Pace. Yet the "Articules of Bataill" goes on to explain that the "Almayns maner" was to advance "withoute spekynge of eny worde."[56] No contemporary English observer explicitly compared Scottish tactics to those practised by the Swiss in the Italian Wars.

Yet there are ways in which Flodden provides glimpses of a new age. First, the composition of both the English and Scottish armies reflected the new political reality that had resulted from Tudor and Stewart attempts to strengthen royal authority. In terms of weaponry and tactics, however, it is the English army that appears much the more "modern." By successfully combining bows, bills, and pikes into an effective all-arms infantry force, the English demonstrated they had learnt the major lessons in the art of warfare as it had developed in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. Moreover, by integrating effectively light pieces of gunpowder artillery into their battleline (if not yet hand-held firearms) they were (unwittingly perhaps) emulating the successful tactics employed by the Spanish at Cerignola in 1503.[57] More importantly, perhaps, Flodden demonstrates a renewed emphasis on effective generalship, a search for perfection in the art of war driven, in part, by the intellectual dynamic of the north European Renaissance. In Thomas Howard, earl

---

56. SP1/49, f. 17v, TNA; *Calendar of State Papers, Venice*, 2:134; Barr, *Flodden 1513*, 97–99.
57. Michael Mallett and Christine Shaw, *The Italian Wars 1494–1559* (Harlow, Essex, U.K.: Pearson, 2012), 64–66.

of Surrey, the English enjoyed the talents of perhaps the first British Renaissance general. Yet paradoxically, the same cultural forces that empowered Surrey also drove James IV to fight and die in the front ranks of his army. In his desire to embody the ideals of Renaissance monarchy, James approached the battle with the same recklessness that inspired Francis I to victory at Marignano in 1515 but which also saw the French king narrowly escape death and end up captured at the battle of Pavia a decade later.[58]

58. Mallett and Shaw, *The Italian Wars*, 128–30, 150–52; David Potter, *Renaissance France at War: Armies, Culture and Society, c.1480–1560* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 2008), 42–43.