

Local Society and the Defence of the English Frontier in Fifteenth-Century Scotland: The War Measures of 1482*

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Despite a growing body of research on political society in late medieval Scotland, and on Anglo-Scottish war, truce, and frontier administration, exactly how local border society responded to the threat of warfare with England is not well understood. Source materials lend themselves to analysis of the military careers of great magnate dynasties,¹ but not to an investigation of the roles performed by the lesser nobility of the borderlands whose fortified residences offered the first line of national defence, and who constituted that social group which conveyed royal and magnate power in the localities.² The late medieval Anglo-Scottish frontier is the subject of two outstanding recent monographs. In 1998, Cynthia Neville examined the development of international border or 'march' law, illuminating the judicial role of those royal officials known as wardens of the march and truce conservators and the influence on law and on administration of Anglo-Scottish diplomacy from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. Whereas Neville expanded on the legal dimensions of the region's history,

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1 The most important study of this type, concerned with far more than military matters, and related to this region, is Brown, *The Black Douglases*; on organization for war, see esp. 132-56.

2 On the lesser nobility, see Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, 137-43, 147-62, and Wormald, *Court, Kirk, and Community*, 3-40.

especially from an English governmental perspective, in 2000 Alastair J. Macdonald adopted a Scottish governmental perspective to explain Anglo-Scottish warfare in the late fourteenth century. Macdonald shows how Anglo-French conflict allowed the Scottish Crown to pursue a concerted offensive foreign policy towards England, drawing on wide national participation and relying on cooperation between Crown and nobility in military campaigns.³ These studies are by no means alone in their concern with the late medieval Anglo-Scottish frontier, and other work has tended to focus on warfare, usually from the English viewpoint and mostly concerned with the fourteenth century.⁴ This paper offers an examination of the role of the lesser nobility in Scottish defensive arrangements in the later fifteenth century, when Scotland faced an English neighbour which was now mostly shorn of its military preoccupations in France. The Scottish realm was no longer able to sustain the sort of offensive strategy apparent in the period studied by Macdonald; territory formerly lost to English control had now been reconquered, and there was far more security to be had in courting peace. Apart from exploiting English civil strife in the 1460s (thereby regaining Roxburgh and Berwick-upon-Tweed), Scotland reverted to an overall strategy of avoiding major military engagements which in some ways resembled that of the early fourteenth century.⁵ Yet open war was to come again, and a new generation of leaders had to face the old problem how the Scottish-controlled border zone, now restored to its pre-1296 dimensions, was to be defended against major invasion. The following study pays close attention to the preparations for hostilities with England in 1482, the conflict which is best known for the arrest of James III at Lauder and for the final loss of Berwick to English control. The relatively detailed evidence brings into clear view the local and regional networks of power by which Scottish marchers governed and defended themselves and by which

3 Neville, *Violence, Custom and Law*; Macdonald, *Border Bloodshed*.

4 A selection includes: Hay, "Booty in Border Warfare"; Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots*; Goodman, "The Anglo-Scottish Marches," "Religion and Warfare," "La Frontera Escocesa," and "Border Warfare and Hexhamshire"; Goodman and Tuck, eds., *War and Border Societies*; Summerson, *Medieval Carlisle*, esp. I, 190-28, 309-26, II, 417-19, 428-31, 434-37, 446-48; King, "According to the Custom Used in French and Scottish Wars," "Pur Salvation du Roiaume," and "Bandits, Robbers and Schavaldours"; King and Penman, eds., *England and Scotland in the Fourteenth Century*; Brown, "The Development of Scottish Border Lordship" and "War, Allegiance, and Community in the Anglo-Scottish Marches." Further material is cited in the notes below.

5 See Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, 33-35, and "Richard III and Scotland," 118-19, 148. On the decades around 1500, see Goodman, "The Impact of Warfare on the Scottish Marches."

a ‘periphery’ — albeit not a remote one — was linked directly to the political ‘core’ of the kingdom.

From at least the 1340s, the borderlands were divided into three distinct marches, each with its own warden, to whom fell the primary responsibility for leadership in war and for the defence of the fluctuating frontier. Michael Brown’s research has demonstrated the pre-eminent role of the ‘Black Douglas’ earls of Douglas as wardens and war-leaders in the reconquest of territory under English domination. In the fifteenth century, however, the decrease in warfare with England removed the justification for the regional supremacy of the Black Douglasses in the marches and allowed an aggressive James II to drive the dynasty out of the realm in the 1450s. After the fall of the Douglasses, the wardenships were held among a wider range of lords who, unlike their predecessors who had held the office in heredity, began to draw modest annual salaries from the Crown, in the range of £133 to £200. Prominent among these later wardens were the ‘Red Douglas’ earls of Angus, based at Tantallon Castle on the Lothian coast.⁶

To defend the border, the wardens needed men to fight. The army of late medieval Scotland consisted of two elements: first, the feudal levy, which, unlike in England, remained a major component of the Scottish army into the sixteenth century; and, second, the common army, in which all men (not already serving in a noble retinue) between sixteen and sixty years of age were liable to serve. The common army was drilled by royal sheriffs and the officers of regalian lords who were to hold *wappenschaws* (weapon-showings, or arrays) at least once a year, although the frequency was increased from time to time.⁷ Lesser officers known as vinteners — four “worthy men” in each parish — actually mustered the local forces. It was by this means that the common army was raised in wartime, upon royal writs issued to summon the host, upon the ‘cry’ of the warden, or upon the alarm of lit beacons to signal an invasion.⁸ The common army was primarily a defensive force, to be put at the disposal of the wardens or a superior royal lieutenant. Service was unpaid, and men had to bear the

6 Brown, *The Black Douglasses*, 47-49, 244-45; Armstrong, “Local Conflict,” 85-86. The east march consisted of Berwickshire and part of the constabulary of Haddington, the middle march of Roxburghshire, Selkirkshire and Peeblesshire, and the west march of Dumfriesshire and Galloway.

7 RPS, records 1425/3/24, 1426/20, 1430/15-18, 1456/4, 1458/3/7, 1471/5/6, 1481/4/8, 1482/3/44, 1482/12/77, 1484/2/30; Dickinson, “Some Notes on the Scottish Army,” 133-34, 137, 144 n. 10; Barrow, “The Army of Alexander III’s Scotland,” *passim*; Duncan, *Scotland*, 378-85.

8 TA, I, 49, 269, 337-38, 352-53; TA, IV, 417; RPS, records 1430/34, 38, 44. Cf. APS, I, 714-16, app. IV, pp. 351-52.

expense of victualling themselves for periods of up to forty days. In 1456, it was felt necessary to legislate that no poor man (neither his poverty nor the element of the army in which he served was defined) should be charged to “cum till ony radis in Inglande,” which implies that men of greater means might be asked to serve outside the realm.⁹

The best surviving sources for late medieval frontier defence come from parliament.¹⁰ The ancient custom of service in the common army was first subject to legislation in 1318. Thereafter, further enactments regulated the host, chiefly in matters of behaviour and armament.¹¹ The first evidence for more detailed military statutes comes from the mid-fifteenth century. In 1448, the earl of Douglas, as warden, held a council at Lincluden and compiled a set of statutes of the marches in wartime, which were an elaboration of parliamentary legislation on the same subject dating from 1430. Following the Crown’s elimination of the Black Douglases, parliament passed further laws for war in 1455-1456. All of these more extended regulations were especially concerned with obedience, punishment for assisting the enemy, and the handling of prisoners and ransoms.¹² While they form, in part, a competitive dialogue over the military authority of the Crown and the Black Douglas dynasty,¹³ they also reflect a sharpening focus on defensive organization.

It is the Scottish parliament’s war measures laid down in the spring of 1482 that provide the clearest view of arrangements for frontier defence in the fifteenth century. The political circumstances of conflict in the period from 1480 to 1482 may be briefly summarized: strong Anglo-Scottish rapprochement had led to a truce extension in 1474, its preamble expressing concern for the wealth and prosperity of “this Nobill Ile, callit Gret Britanee.”¹⁴ Over the next five years two marriages were planned between the families of Edward IV and James III.¹⁵ Yet shifting European diplomatic alignments meant good relations collapsed in 1479, the same year when James drove into exile his brother Alexander, duke of Albany and earl of March, who was also one of the wardens. Anglo-Scottish raiding by sea and land occurred in 1480-1481, and, by March

9 RPS, record 1456/4. I am grateful to Aly Macdonald for discussion on this point.

10 These have recently been made widely available in the landmark online publication of the *Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707* [RPS] at <http://www.rps.ac.uk/>

11 RPS, records 1318/6-7, 22, 26, 29; 1385/6/4.

12 APS, I, 714-16, app. IV, pp. 351-52; RPS, records 1430/32-53, 1455/10/2a-15; 1456/2-5, 12.

13 Brown, *The Black Douglases*, 276-77.

14 *Foedera*, V, iii, 48.

15 RPS, records 1475/35; *Foedera*, V, iii, 22, 48-51, 75, 123, 126; *Rot. Scot.*, II, 429, 443-45, 456-57.

1482, the Scottish government was expecting a major invasion led in person by the “revare Edward.” Indeed, in late July, the duke of Gloucester, the earl of Northumberland, and the exiled Albany (now claiming the Scottish throne for himself) crossed the border with an English army of considerable size, possibly as large as 20,000 men. On 22 July, a coup at Lauder seized James III as he assembled the Scottish host, its leaders allowing the army to disband, thus averting a full-scale battle. The king was taken to Edinburgh Castle and detained there. The invaders marched to Edinburgh in early August, Albany negotiated a compromise for his return to Scotland, and the English army returned south, capturing Berwick by the end of the month.¹⁶

These events raise three main questions: first, what shape did the Scottish war measures take, and what were their objectives; second, who led these preparations, and what was their relationship to the Lauder conspirators; and third, what do these measures reveal about local society in the Scottish marches towards England?

The preparations enacted before the invasion of 1482 were highly specific. Parliament, which sat for ten days from 18 to 28 March, ordered the frequency of *wappenschaws* to be raised to once every fifteen days and the coastline to be divided into six-mile (9.7 km) stretches, each under the watch of a captain “to gadir the cuntre and to awayte thareuppoune quhen thare is na grete hoistingis be land.”¹⁷ However, a land attack was anticipated. While the king undertook to pay for a garrison of five hundred soldiers to defend Berwick for three months from the first day of June, the estates agreed to pay for a further six hundred “wageouris” to garrison other castles and towers for three months from the first day of May. Thus, during June and July, a total of 1,100 hired “men of were” were positioned along the border, half of them spearmen and half of them archers.¹⁸ This was unusual in that these fighting men, separate from the common and feudal levies of the army, were to be waged. They received a very reasonable rate of 2s 6d a day for each spear, and 2s a day for each bow, amounting to a projected outlay exceeding £11,000 Scots currency.¹⁹ By comparison, English bowmen in the 1470s commanded a rate of 6d English currency a day. Calculating

16 RPS, record 1482/3/44 (quotation); Macdougall, *James III* (1982), chaps. 7, 8, and App. A, p. 312; Nicholson, *Scotland*, 475-80, 487-514, esp. 490-94, 497; Tanner, “‘I Arest You, Sir,’” 115; Ross, *Edward IV*, 278-95.

17 RPS, record 1482/3/44.

18 RPS, record 1482/3/44. Macdougall, *James III* (1982), 149-50 and 161.

19 That is, £11,137 10s 0d Scots (£5,062 10s paid by the king, and £6,075 paid by the estates). This assumes 90 days’ service and the same rate of pay for the estates’ and the king’s troops. See Nicholson, *Scotland*, 494.

at an exchange rate of 1:3.5, the Scottish archers were taking at least as much as their English counterparts could expect to be paid.²⁰

No mounted troops were provided since, apparently, they were already abundant. Landed men serving in the feudal levy were expected to be well-horsed according to their means, thus comprising a heavy cavalry. Lesser men might also offer mounted service in the retinues of local lairds, riding unarmoured hobbies or nags. The presence of such a numerous light cavalry is suggested by the statute of 1448 which allowed the “chieftain of the host” to *restrict* the number of mounted troops. It seems that the additional garrisons of 1482, providing extra archers and spearmen to guard certain towers, would have concurrently allowed other borderers to serve on horseback in private retinues.²¹

Such defensive ordinances and funding from on high were novel. The details of border defence were normally left to the wardens, as illustrated by the statutes of 1430 and 1448.²² Garrisons had been mentioned only in general terms in the legislation of 1455, and Crown payments for military service were offered only in extraordinary circumstances, like the reimbursement made to Sir Walter Scott for a force of one hundred Teviotdale men whom he hired to serve the king against the Douglasses in 1452.²³ Even in 1481, when parliament had ordered castles on the border and the coast to be repaired and provisioned, this was to be done at the owners’ expense. Part of the explanation for the innovations of 1482 is to be found in the proclivities of James III, for whom the possession of Berwick (which had been regained in 1461, during his minority) was an important symbol of Scottish sovereignty.²⁴

The exceptional nature of these ordinances notwithstanding, they are valuable for the clear picture of Scottish border defence which they afford. They reveal that only

20 *PROME*, October 1472 (First Roll), item 8; *PROME* (Third Roll, June 1474-March 1475), item 43. For exchange rates, see Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, 240.

21 *RPS*, records 1430/15, 16, 33, 47; *APS*, I, 715, app. IV, 351, item 3. On hobelars, see McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces*, 23-24.

22 *APS*, I, 714-16, app. IV, pp. 351-52; *RPS*, records 1430/32-53.

23 *RPS*, record 1455/10/15; *ER*, V, 607. Cf. *ER*, IV, 115 (reimbursement for gaining and demolishing Jedburgh, 1409).

24 *RPS*, records 1481/4/9, 18 (a tax for the victualling of Berwick granted “for the plesance of the kingis hienes”). Cf. Nicholson, *Scotland*, 492; Macdougall, *James III* (1982), 149-50. In 1481, Edrington (not mentioned in the ordinances of 1482) was also to be victualled. The latter belonged to Robert Lauder of Edrington, keeper of Berwick from January 1477 till January 1482 (*RMS*, II, no. 1276, p. 259; *ER*, VII, 144, 293, 314, 398, 491, 578; *ER*, VIII, 118, 119, 188).

a thin strip of land close to the frontier was subject to these additional military preparations.²⁵ In the east march, two hundred of the soldiers at Berwick were constantly to be at the disposal of the warden, Archibald Douglas, earl of Angus (nicknamed ‘Bell-the-Cat’ in the seventeenth century for his fictionalized role in the Lauder coup).²⁶ Three eastern strongholds were entrusted to James, the son of William, Lord Borthwick. As “capitane,” Borthwick was to choose one hundred men, two “gentilmen” as deputes, and to base himself with sixty soldiers at Hume, while his deputes were to hold Blackadder and Wedderburn, each with twenty men.²⁷ In the middle march, where the warden was James Stewart, earl of Buchan, three lairds were selected as captains. Sir John Edmonstone of that Ilk was to choose one hundred men and two deputes under him and take responsibility for the strongholds of Cessford, with sixty men, and Ormiston and Edgerston, each holding twenty. John Cranstoun of that Ilk was likewise to choose one hundred men and two deputes and to put sixty men in Jedburgh (presumably in the town’s defensive towers) and a further twenty each in the towers of Cocklaw and Dolphinston.²⁸ Sir William Baillie of Lamington was given custody of Hermitage Castle in Liddesdale with one hundred men, chosen as above, to be “redy to support baith the Myddil and the West Bordouris [i.e., marches] in tyme of nede and as thai salbe warnit and chargit.”²⁹ In the west march, where John Stewart, Lord Darnley, was the newly-appointed warden, Thomas Kirkpatrick of Closeburn was made captain of Lochmaben Castle in Annandale, with one hundred men of his choice.³⁰ The final captaincy went to Robert Charteris of Amisfield who, with his chosen one hundred men and two deputes, was to command garrisons of forty each at Castlemilk and the town of

25 RPS, record 1482/3/44. For the appointment of the wardens listed below, see RPS, record 1481/4/3 (Angus, 1481); *ER*, VIII, 208; *RMS*, II, no. 1418, p. 292 (Buchan, 1474, 1479); RPS, record A1482/3/1 (Darnley, 1482).

26 Patrick Hepburn of Dunsyre (to succeed as second Lord Hailes in 1482-1483) was keeper of Berwick Citadel from January to August 1482; *ER*, IX, preface, xlii, 433, and Macdougall, *James III* (1982), 158-68. David Hume of Godscroft (1558-1629x31), seems to have been the first to attribute the sobriquet to the 5th earl of Angus, in his *History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus*.

27 RPS, record 1482/3/44. In the previous year, Tantallon, Dunglass, Hailes, Hume, and Edrington had been singled out in the east (RPS, record 1481/4/9).

28 For Jedburgh’s towers in 1523, see *Henry VIII, Letters*, III, ii, no. 3364, pp. 1399-1400. Cf. the ports and walls of Peebles, mentioned in 1468: *Peebles Chrs.*, 157.

29 RPS, record 1482/3/44.

30 Hermitage and Lochmaben had been singled out in 1481 (RPS, record 1481/4/9).

Annan, and of twenty at “Bellis Toure” (Bell’s Tower), the latter being apparently Kirkconnel Tower, now Springkell, in Annandale.³¹

The numbers provided for each fortification were not large, and the leading historian of the period has colourfully dismissed them as “pitiful [. . .] penny numbers,” worthless against the invading army.³² It is true that the extra ten archers and ten spearmen sent to Blackadder would have made scant difference in the path of thousands of Englishmen, and during the invasion, the fortalice, house, barmekin, orchard, yard, and park of Blackadder were destroyed.³³ Nevertheless, it should be made clear that the numbers provided were not totals but, in all probability, additions to existing private forces. What is more, the size and strength of the Scottish garrisons were comparable to their English counterparts. For example, Norham Castle was garrisoned with a minimum of thirty men in March 1482. A century earlier, English-held Lochmaben had been defended with twenty men-at-arms and forty archers, fewer than the garrison of one hundred for which Closeburn was now being paid.³⁴ Numbers in this range were considered adequate to equip border castles and less spacious towers. Only at major centres like Berwick or Carlisle were great investments of manpower ever made, by either side.³⁵ In the end, Gloucester used a force of 1,700 men to capture the citadel of Berwick.³⁶

Long-standing Scottish strategic policy was to deny England its military advantages. In part this meant that major castles were demolished once captured (like Jedburgh in 1409 and Roxburgh in 1460) in order to forestall English re-occupation.³⁷ In 1482, with the glaring exception of Berwick in the east, so personally important

31 *RPS*, record 1482/3/44. For the Bells of Kirkconnel, see *RMS*, II, no. 85, p. 16 (1409); *NAS*: AD 1/81 (1495). However, it is also possible that this tower was Kirkconnell, at the mouth of the Nith (Fraser, *The Book of Carlaverock*, no. 43, pp. 435-36). Another Kirkconnel is in upper Nithsdale, near Sanquhar. See also Gifford, *The Buildings of Scotland: Dumfries and Galloway*, 364-67, 525-26.

32 Macdougall, *James III* (1982), 154.

33 *ADC*, II, 305; *Acta Concilii (Stair)*, nos. 218, 583, pp. 53, 153. A barmekin is an outer wall enclosing a tower, affording protection to livestock from raiders.

34 Macdonald, *Border Bloodshed*, 76.

35 Raine, *North Durham*, 10-11. For other English garrisons, see *PPC*, I, 124-26; *PPC*, II, 145-48, 338-39; *CDS*, IV, nos. 567-68, pp. 118-19; Goodman, “The Defence,” 163-65; Summerson, *Medieval Carlisle*, I, 311, 320, and “Carlisle and the English West March,” 97-99; King, “Pur Salvation du Roiaume,” 18-19.

36 Macdougall, *James III* (1982), 169.

37 Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, 33-35, and “Richard III and Scotland,” 116-17. This strategy had also been applied in the twelfth century; see Strickland, “Securing the North,” 188.

to James III, and the royal castle of Lochmaben in the west, Scottish strategy was focused on augmenting a thinly spread line of smaller private fortalices. For instance, the king's castles of Newark, in Ettrick Forest, and Dunbar, on the Lothian coast, were not mentioned.³⁸ This chain of augmented fortifications was almost entirely within nine miles (14.5 km) of the border. Only Cocklaw at 10.6 miles (17 km), Castlemilk at 13.7 miles (22 km), and Lochmaben at 18 miles (29 km) were beyond this distance.³⁹ English evidence reinforces the impression given here that only a narrow strip of territory, perhaps not deeper than twelve miles (19.3 km) from the border line, was ever given major consideration by either side in preparation for defence against attack by land.⁴⁰

The Scottish arrangements of 1482 should not be seen as a futile effort to stop the English army. Instead, they are best understood as an attempt to put up a network of defences against relatively smaller *chevauchées* that might precede, accompany, or follow the invasion — the sort of hit-and-run raiding most famously practised in the days of Robert I.⁴¹ Major invasions were rare in the fifteenth-century marches, but organized raiding was a regular occurrence during periods of diplomatic breakdown. In 1480, the earl of Angus had led such an assault on Bambergh, and the earl of Northumberland had raided Roxburghshire, the latter with such success that he paused on the mains of Cessford to dub to knighthood members of his retinue.⁴² Exactly this sort of smaller incursion could be countered effectively by armed men distributed at points close to the frontier. If these ready

38 Patrick Murray of Fallahill was royal keeper of Newark in 1479 and 1482 (*ER*, IX, 31, 137, 184). Lochmaben and Dunbar had been singled out in 1481 (*RPS*, record 1481/4/9), when John Murray of Touchadam was keeper of the latter (*ER*, IX, preface, liv, 431).

39 Moving east to west, rounded approximate distances are: Blackadder (4 miles / 7 km), Wedderburn (6 miles / 10 km), Hume (6 miles / 10 km), Cessford (7 miles / 11 km), Ormiston (8 miles / 13 km), Cocklaw (11 miles / 17 km), Edgerston (3 miles / 5 km), Jedburgh (9 miles / 14 km), Dolphinston (5 miles / 9 km), Hermitage (6 miles / 10 km), Lochmaben (18 miles / 29 km), Castlemilk (14 miles / 22 km), Annan (9 miles / 14 km), Bell's Tower/Kirkconnel (7 miles / 11 km). Amisfield (24 miles / 39 km) and Closeburn (31 miles / 50 km) were both further up Nithsdale.

40 *CDS*, IV, no. 286, p. 62; *CPR 1377-81*, 455; Hardyng, *Chronicle*, 373; Goodman, "The Defence," 167; Lomas, "The Impact of Border Warfare," 149, 159, 163-64, 167; King, "Pur Salvation du Roiaume," 15.

41 On Bruce's tactics, see Scammell, "Robert I," 385-403; McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces*, 72-122; Grant, *Independence and Nationhood*, 33-35; and Brown, *The Wars of Scotland*, 211-12, 216, 221.

42 Macdougall, *James III* (1982), App. A, p. 311 ("The Short Chronicle of 1482," from London, British Library, Royal MS 17 DXX, fols. 299-398); Metcalfe, *A Book of Knights*, 6.

reinforcements caused a light cavalry normally in private retinues to become available, such mobile forces would also have been able to respond to a raiding party. This interpretation of the Scottish objectives is reinforced by the provision that larger units, of two hundred men at Berwick and one hundred at Hermitage, were to be flexibly deployed as needed. Indeed, from limited evidence it seems probable that in late May 1482 the duke of Gloucester led just such an incursion into south-west Scotland, burning Dumfries and forty-four other unnamed towns and villages. Records shed no further light on the extent of the attack or the response, but, if it in fact occurred at this time, then several of the western garrisons ordered by parliament almost certainly earned their wages in meeting and driving out the English raiders.⁴³

The question of leadership is vital to an understanding of the war measures of 1482. If raising an army was an established means of asserting royal authority and compelling practical service from subjects of all ranks, then James III failed dismally, even in the defence of the realm. The springtime parliament in which these defensive arrangements were laid down was not controlled by the king but by those who were soon to sideline him at Lauder during the July invasion. The twelve-member Committee of the Articles, which set the parliamentary agenda, included all three wardens (Angus, Buchan, and Darnley), the earl of Huntly, and four others later involved in or associated with the Lauder affair.⁴⁴ Of the different analyses of the conspiracy, Roland Tanner's emphasis on the Lords of the Articles as the main party influencing the challenge to the king at Lauder is most compelling for the purposes of this study. It does not conflict with Norman Macdougall's view that the chief conspirator was Buchan, one of the king's half-uncles, or with his view that the conspirators' motives were to control a dangerous king and avert a potential military disaster.⁴⁵ Recent events gave particular cause for concern. In 1479, James III had exiled his own brother Alexander, duke of Albany, and in the following year, he had seen to the death of his other brother John, earl of Mar. Albany's elimination provoked serious turbulence in

43 See Ross, *Edward IV*, 287 n. 3, and sources cited therein; CDS, IV, App. 1, no. 31, pp. 415-16 (letter of c. 1482).

44 RPS, record 1482/3/3. On royal leadership, cf. Curry, *Agincourt*, 64.

45 Macdougall, *James III* (1982), 128-33, 165-67, and "'It is I, the Earle of Mar,'" 44; Tanner, "'I Arest You, Sir,'" 114-17. Boardman's view of a coup from within the royal household may still be consistent with Tanner if Buchan 'turned' disgruntled senior household members before Lauder; Boardman, *The Campbells*, 217-18.

the marches.⁴⁶ This was a volatile and defensive king with a track record for rash decisions, and his fixation on the possession of Berwick was a potential liability.⁴⁷

It seems probable that the wardens themselves, all members of the Committee of the Articles, drafted the war measures and put them before the parliament. Darnley was newly appointed to the office; in fact, the parliament of 1482 appointed him to the west march in place of the king's associate, Alan, Lord Cathcart. Angus, now the dominant magnate in the south-east and also lord of Liddesdale, had been warden of the east march for a year.⁴⁸ Buchan, however, had two decades of experience in Anglo-Scottish diplomacy and had been warden of the middle march since the early 1470s.⁴⁹ It was these three men who were left to make realistic plans in the face of the expected invasion. Open battle such as the king seemed eager to seek was uncertain and risky,⁵⁰ and military commanders across medieval Europe were reluctant to engage in it unless circumstances weighed heavily in their favour. Avoiding full-scale engagement with English armies had been part of Scottish strategy for centuries,⁵¹ and the cost of defeat — most recently the English loss at the Sark in 1448 and the even more devastating Scottish loss at Humbleton Hill in 1402 — doubtless loomed in the collective memory. In order to face these risks, a commander's basic necessity was the trust and confidence of his followers.⁵² James III had lost these, and the unity of his subjects, especially in the marches, had been undermined by Albany's removal. The worst possible scenario was for the king to lead the Scottish host to defeat in a vain attempt to relieve Berwick. In all probability, Buchan and the other wardens

46 Armstrong, "Local Conflict," 148-52.

47 See note 24 above. With a hint of aloof condescension, parliament acknowledged the "curageous opin-ioune of oure soverane lord in the halding up of the toune of Berwik" and the great cost he had undertaken in fortifying its defences: *RPS*, record 1482/3/44. See his attention to Berwick at *RMS*, II, nos. 1165, 1275, 1280-82, 1285, 1293, 1379, pp. 237, 259, 260-62, 281.

48 Cathcart had been warden only since April 1481. Since 1475, Darnley had been the royal lieutenant in Galloway, Renfrew, Ayr, Clydesdale, Bute, and Arran: *RPS*, records 1481/4/3, A1482/3/1; *RMS*, II, no. 1487, p. 311; Boardman, "Stewart, John, tenth or first earl of Lennox"; Macdougall, *James III* (1982), 173; Tanner, *The Late Medieval Scottish Parliament*, 226 and 228.

49 Boardman, "Stewart, James, earl of Buchan."

50 James III appears to have insisted that, should Edward IV invade in person, then he was to resist him in person "withe the hale body of the realme to leyf and dee with his hienes in his defence": *RPS*, record 1482/3/44.

51 See Strickland, "Securing the North," and esp. the literature cited by him at 178 n. 5. See also Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare*, 186 and 198.

52 Cf. Phillips, "Strategy and Its Limitations," 396-97; Jones, "The Battle of Verneuil," 375-411.

already envisioned that an arrest of the king might become necessary. However, their immediate difficulty was in setting out a plan for defence that would keep the king content, be of practical value, and allow for a 'soft' coup if needed.

For the king's part, the three estates allowed him to spend his own money on the defence of Berwick. For a more practical plan of flexible defence against frontier raiding, especially if this conflicted with the king's emphasis on Berwick, the wardens indubitably sought wider support for their proposals than they might otherwise have felt necessary. They might also have valued parliamentary endorsement if they anticipated the need to move against the king. Certainly, Buchan and John, earl of Atholl (also one of the king's half-uncles and also to become embroiled in the aftermath of Lauder), saw fit to secure a remission during the same parliament for having seized Edinburgh Castle earlier in the reign.⁵³

A scattering of border lords came to the spring parliament, but none of these attendees had a direct role in the defensive plans.⁵⁴ Just one of the six appointed captains, John Cranstoun of that Ilk, was present. He was a Roxburghshire laird and the royal bailie of Etrick Forest.⁵⁵ All of the other captains had similar interests in the marches. Kirkpatrick of Closeburn and Charteris of Amisfield were Dumfriesshire lairds.⁵⁶ Edmonstone and Borthwick were primarily based in Edinburghshire but also had lands in the borders, and both had a history of march service.⁵⁷ Even the Lanarkshire knight who was given command at Angus's castle of Hermitage, Baillie of Lamington, had older lands at Hoprig in eastern Lothian and armorial links to the ancient Dunbar earls of March.⁵⁸ The wardens seem to have selected these men as captains not only because they could offer effective leadership but because they could

53 *RPS*, record 1482/3/7.

54 *RPS*, record 1482/3/2. The attendees included James Douglas, earl of Morton; Sir John Douglas, master of Morton; Robert Crichton of Sanquhar, sheriff of Dumfriesshire (cf. *ER*, VIII, 22); Robert, Lord Maxwell; George, Lord Haliburton; William, Lord Borthwick; and William Douglas of Drumlanrig.

55 For Cranstoun, see *HMC*, 7th Report, app., part II, nos. 9, 10, 12, p. 728; *RPS*, record 1479/3/17; *ER*, IX, 162, 552; X, 245-46.

56 For Closeburn, see *RMS*, II, no. 1007, p. 208. For Amisfield, see *ADC*, I, 95*; *RPS*, records 1484/2/76, 136.

57 For Edmonstone of that Ilk and Ednam, see *RMS*, II, nos. 61, 1644, pp. 11-12, 346; *RPS*, records 1482/12/19, 1483/10/74. For Borthwick, see *ER*, IV, 115, 224; IX, 317; *RMS*, I, no. 7, p. 246; II, nos. 650, 667, 937, 1130, pp. 143, 145-46, 195, 231.

58 For Baillie of Lamington and Hoprig, see *RPS*, record 1472/23; *RMS*, II, no. 2187, p. 461; Clouston, "The Armorial de Berry," 97.

be trusted to work together and, at least tacitly, to allow the restraint of the king. Indeed, Borthwick's father, Lord Borthwick, was among those involved in the king's captivity in Edinburgh after Lauder.⁵⁹

For the actual defensive plans to work, the wardens' chosen captains needed to command the resources of border society that were already in place, and it is here that the importance of local networks is apparent. This required close cooperation among all those who were involved. Each captain (except for Closeburn and Lamington) was instructed to choose two deutes. No evidence survives to show who was selected, but it stands to reason that the private owners of the fortalices which the captains were sent to command naturally filled these roles. This would result in some displacement. For example, at Hume Castle, Borthwick would have temporarily moved in with Lord Hume and his adult grandson, the proprietors. At their own residences, George Hume of Wedderburn and Andrew Blackadder of that Ilk would probably have acted as Borthwick's deutes. The Humes, engaged in their own private struggle with the king at this time, were not at parliament either, and would have been just the sort of potentially sympathetic candidates the wardens wanted on their side.⁶⁰ As it happened, the day before the seizure of the king, the Humes were in attendance on the earl of Huntly at Redpath, only 8.4 miles (13.5 km) from Lauder. At that meeting, the younger Hume gave his bond of manrent to Huntly (who was himself implicated in the coup) in exchange for land and continued private office.⁶¹

Local cooperation was equally necessary in the other marches. In order to facilitate this, networks of kin, friends, and allies were harnessed. In the middle march, Edmonstone, as an appointed captain, would have had to come to an arrangement with Andrew Ormiston of that Ilk⁶² and with two lairds whose families were linked by multiple marriages about this time, Walter Kerr of Cessford and James Rutherford of that Ilk, laird of Edgerston.⁶³ Also in this march, Cranstoun (another captain) regularly rendered the account for Jedburgh to the exchequer, and local deed transactions show that he was already very familiar with the Gladstones of Cocklaw and

59 Cf. Macdougall, *James III* (1982), 165-66.

60 Macdougall, "Crown *versus* Nobility," 257-58. Judicial proceedings involving Hume relations were heard in this parliament: *RPS*, record 1482/3/22.

61 *HMC, 12th Report*, app., part VIII, no. 169, pp. 138-39. See also Macdougall, "'It is I, the Earle of Mar'" 44, who does not comment on the bond of manrent.

62 For Ormiston and his son Robert, see *RMS*, II, nos. 792, 1057, 1523, pp. 169-70, 219, 318-19.

63 *SP*, VII, 330-31; *ER*, IX, 660; *RMS*, II, nos. 1511, 2121, pp. 316, 448-49.

the Ainslies of Dolphinston. He may well have chosen to base himself in the burgh, leaving his two lairdly deutes at their own residences.⁶⁴ Still other conjugal bonds are detectable among these families. By the mid-1480s, the Ainslies were joined to the Kerrs, and the Blackadders to the Edmonstones. In the next decade, the latter family were also to intermarry with the Humes of Wedderburn.⁶⁵ In the sphere of Anglo-Scottish diplomacy, many of these middle march lairds of the early 1480s had shared minor roles with their east march counterparts in the mid-1470s.⁶⁶

In Angus's own Hermitage Castle in Liddesdale, where one hundred men were to be placed under the command of Sir William Baillie of Lamington, the latter would have taken up quarters with the earl's incumbent keeper and brother-in-law, David Scott of Buccleuch. The Scotts, Humes, and Kerrs can all be linked at this time in a network closely associated with Angus. At some point before 1494, a Hume marriage tied Lamington into this nexus, too.⁶⁷ However, the extent of local control which these men commanded may have been seriously limited. Indirect evidence suggests that during 1482 Lamington and Scott had trouble with lesser lairds in the lordship, for certain Elwalds became rebels and, in November, Angus confiscated Thomas Armstrong of Mangerton's lands, re-granting them to Buccleuch. It is plausible that some of the Armstrongs and Elwalds had intrigued with Englishmen under the noses of Lamington and Buccleuch, thus provoking the earl's wrath.⁶⁸ The incentive was there for them to do so: in the previous year, Edward IV had promised rewards to Scottish turncoats, and in the spring parliament of 1482, James III extended a pardon to all borderers who had committed treason, bar those who had become sworn Englishmen.⁶⁹

64 *ER*, IV, 391; IX, 162 (Jedburgh); *HMC*, 7th Report, app., part II, nos. 9, 12, 20-21, pp. 728-29. For the Gladstones, see also Brown, *The Black Douglasses*, 168; Bower, *Scotichronicon*, book XV, chap. 16, 8:53.

65 *RMS*, II, nos. 1644, 2334, pp. 346, 496-97; *SP*, VII, 330-31; *HMC*, 14th Report, app., part III, no. 55, p. 28.

66 *TA*, I, 48 (1474); *Foedera*, V, iii (1477); V, iv, 193 (1478); *CDS*, IV, nos. 1438, 1451-52, pp. 292, 295 (1476, 1478).

67 Fraser, *The Scotts of Buccleuch*, II, nos. 72-74, pp. 70-73 (Scott-Angus); *HMC*, 14th Report, app., part III, no. 28, p. 17; cf. *RPS*, records 1482/12/43, 44; 1483/6/32 (Kerr); *HMC*, 7th Report, app., part II, nos. 15-16, pp. 728-29; *HMC*, 12th Report, app., part VIII, nos. 97-99, pp. 117-18 (Kerr-Angus); *RMS*, II, no. 2187, p. 461 (Lamington-Hume).

68 *ER*, IX, 295-96, 347, 454, 551; Fraser, *The Scotts of Buccleuch*, II, nos. 79, 81, pp. 77-80. One James Elwald was associated with the duke of Albany's treasons (of the early 1480s) in a case which appeared before the justice ayre at Jedburgh in 1493: *NAS*: JC1/1, fol. 14v.

69 *CDS*, IV, no. 1470, pp. 299-300; *RPS*, record 1482/3/44.

The local power to be reckoned with in Lord Darnley's west march wardenry was Robert, Lord Maxwell, of Carlaverock Castle. Darnley's widowed mother had taken Maxwell's father as her second husband and, as a result, these two lords shared five half-brothers. A list of Darnley's following in Edinburgh Castle, exonerated in October 1482 for their part in the royal detention, includes four Maxwells, three of whom were probably his half-brothers. Lord Maxwell himself attended the spring parliament and so at least would have had a say in Darnley's appointment as warden, and he was probably also consulted about the war measures. By 25 March 1482 at the latest, Maxwell's son and heir, Sir John, became the Crown's steward of the lordship of Annandale, which Albany had forfeited three years earlier. Kirkpatrick of Closeburn, as captain, was given his command at Lochmaben in the heart of Maxwell territory, for Annandale was centred on this castle.⁷⁰

The final captain, Charteris of Amisfield, probably based himself in the small town of Annan (a burgh of barony within Annandale) and elected as his deputies William Stewart of Castlemilk and Bell of Kirkconnel to command their own strongholds.⁷¹ Amisfield had received the manrent of one of Closeburn's kinsmen sometime before 1484, and both these lairds soon proved to be Maxwell allies when Lord Maxwell, and his son and grandson, came into strife with another west march family, the Murrays of Cockpool.⁷² As warden in this march, Darnley might have expected to be able to call on the support of another kinsman, Castlemilk, for both were closely related cadets of the Stewart family. For that matter, even Angus was a Stewart descendant, of the Bonkyll house.

All these inter-connections show how frontier society prepared to shield itself. Such ties of lordship, kinship, and friendship were the bedrock of border defence. Even when the Scottish parliament took the unusual step of making highly specific ordinances for war, these relied heavily on private networks of power. At the top of these overlapping groups were the wardens, whose role was to harness and direct them. It

70 *SP*, V, 348; *RMS*, II, no. 1217, p. 247. Named with Darnley were George of Maxwell, Master John of Maxwell, John of Maxwell, and David Maxwell. Sixty others including William Kerr and James Bell were also listed; Fraser, *The Lennox*, II, 121-23. For possible identification, cf. Fraser, *The Book of Carlaverock*, I, 138-40, 153; II, nos. 47-49, 57, pp. 438-40, 446-48. See also Macdougall, *James III* (1982), 173.

71 *RMS*, II, no. 1458, pp. 303-304 (Amisfield); *ER*, V, 520 (Annan burgh); *NAS*: GD 219/37; *ADC*, I, 60 (Castlemilk); *NAS*: AD 1/81 (Thomas Bell of Kirkconnel, 1495).

72 *ADC*, I, 35, 95*; Fraser, *The Book of Carlaverock*, II, no. 52, pp. 442-43; *RPS*, records 1482/12/38, 1483/10/101, 1484/2/83.

should be expected that the sixteen landowners named or implicated in the parliamentary ordinances represent only a fraction of the total network to be called into action from the beginning of May, albeit the fraction most important to the wardens. At least Angus and Darnley can be seen to be linked very closely to these local lairds. By contrast, Buchan is not so clearly associated with this milieu. Although he purchased the fortified house of Traquair in eastern Peeblesshire in 1478, and engaged in a long-standing liaison with a kinswoman of the border Murrays, he cannot otherwise be shown to be active in local affairs. If he was the most probable leader of the Lauder coup, as Macdougall suggests, then he appears to have depended heavily on the support of Angus's and Darnley's followings for backing in the marches.⁷³

The best-documented episode of border defence in the fifteenth century also illustrates that, despite James III's predilections, Scottish military strategy was not based on the establishment of garrisons in royal castles or on the concentration of forces to resist a single attack. Rather, the main objective was entirely pragmatic: to reinforce an organized defensive chain of smaller private fortalices along the frontier which were able to respond flexibly to repel the cross-border raids that were expected to coincide with the enemy's main assault. Insofar as the main assault was unavoidable, so was the risk of the loss of Berwick. But when the invading army returned across the border, the overall defensive integrity of the southern marches remained intact.

Of course, the big question is whether, given that they were innovative and exceptional, the war measures of 1482 should be dismissed as unrepresentative of Scottish arrangements for defence. Their real innovation was the payment of troops by the government. There is no reason to assume that the *aim* of this expenditure — to reinforce existing private garrisons linked by local social bonds — shows anything extraordinary. The wardens, sitting on the Committee of the Articles, had no cause to overturn time-tested strategy. In fact, if they were considering the need for a possible arrest of the king, as seems likely, then they should have been even more eager to trust in long-standing practice. Thus, it can be inferred that the mobilization of local networks to resist cross-border raiding, relying especially on private garrisons in towers close to

73 NAS: NRAS 1362: Traquair Charters, no. 25. Buchan's lover was Margaret Murray, ostensibly of the Murrays of Philiphaugh. They had one of their bastard children, James, legitimated in 1489, and later gave him Traquair: *SP*, VIII, 398-400. It may be that Margaret had a claim to the heritage of William Murray, sometime owner of Traquair, who was forfeited and dead by 1464; see *RMS*, II, no. 775, pp. 165-66. The Traquair Charters may provide further clarification.

the border, was a rehearsal of familiar procedure. But this was familiar not because it looked like the major wartime operations conducted under the first Bruce king and his heir, or indeed under the first Stewart king and his heir. Rather, it would seem that what was being rehearsed was a defensive response to raiding of the sort that had afflicted the borderlands for nearly two centuries, not just in wartime but in times of unstable truce: it was now being augmented and applied with central co-ordination to defend the length of the border when a major warlike threat emerged.⁷⁴

The Scottish marches towards England were not an isolated and peripheral province in the later fifteenth century. Even in the west march, the lesser nobles of the region were directly linked to those holding the reins of power at the highest levels.⁷⁵ When it counted most — when a foreign invader was expected — border landowners were ready to cooperate with greater lords and the central government in the defence of the realm. What is more, the wardens' networks that reached into the border localities were ready to support their leaders in sidelining a volatile king in time of war. As the news of the coup of 22 July spread from Lauder, most of the lairds mentioned above were probably not taken by complete surprise. By 1 August, when the paid garrisons disbanded and as the common tenantry returned home from the muster, the border lairds' practical concerns doubtless remained unchanged. With an ear to the events unfolding at Edinburgh, now more than ever the governmental 'core' of the kingdom, they would continue to rely on groups of kin, friends, and lords to guard the marches against raiders.⁷⁶

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74 See Armstrong, "Local Conflict," chap. 4 ("Cross-Border Activity and Conflict").

75 For a contrasting view, see Rae, *The Administration of the Scottish Frontier*, 4.

76 This paper went to press just as Norman Macdougall's revised biography *James III* was published in June 2009. On the Lauder affair generally (discussed in his chap. 7), Macdougall takes into account more recent studies, chiefly those by Tanner and Boardman cited in the present article. He no longer emphasizes the role of Buchan, but still characterizes the war measures of 1482 as "valueless"; Macdougall, *James III* (2009), 189.

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