

THE SCROPES OF BOLTON AND OF MASHAM,
C. 1300 - C. 1450: A STUDY OF A NORTHERN NOBLE FAMILY WITH
A CALENDAR OF THE SCROPE OF BOLTON CARTULARY

TWO VOLUMES
VOLUME I

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that I am responsible for the work submitted in this thesis, that the original work is my own except as specified in acknowledgements or in footnotes, and that neither the thesis nor the original work contained therein has been submitted to this or any other institution for a higher degree nor published.

Brigette Vale

ABSTRACT

The first volume of this thesis explains the development, success, and careers of members of Scrope of Bolton and of Masham families over the period c. 1300-1450. Volume Two is a calendar of the late fourteenth century Scrope of Bolton Cartulary, containing over 800 property deeds. A discussion of the origins of the Scrope family prior to 1300 provides an opportunity to consider the debate on the fortunes of the knightly class in the thirteenth century. A major factor in the 'rise' of the Scrope family was the legal careers of Henry and Geoffrey Scrope, chief justices, who developed the family position in the North Riding. The economic and political context of the honour of Richmond, the territorial base for both families, assisted their growth. The generation which succeeded the lawyer brothers achieved promotion to the ranks of the Parliamentary peerage, a distinction which recognised the military and political service of Henry, first lord Masham and Richard, first lord Bolton. The development of the Scrope of Bolton estates has been reconstructed from the Scrope of Bolton cartulary. A hallmark of the family's position was the elevation of Richard Scrope of Masham to the primacy of York. His rebellion in 1405 indicated the difficulties which the family faced with the change of dynasty. Henry IV presided over the executions of two members of the family and his son condemned a third member to death in 1415. The fifteenth century brought problems for the family both dynastically and politically and meant that they were to play a less significant part in politics than their predecessors. Nevertheless, John fourth lord Masham recovered his family position and subsequently the family enjoyed a brief revival of importance under Richard III. The period under consideration ends with the Scropes' pragmatic acceptance of Henry VII and their winning and justifying his confidence.

ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Add.</u>	Additional
<u>Annales</u>	<u>Annales Ricardi Secundi et Henrici Quarti</u> in J. de Trokelowe et Anon., <u>Chronica et Annales</u> ed. H.T. Riley (Rolls Series London, 1886)
<u>B.I.H.R.</u>	<u>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</u>
<u>B.J.R.L.</u>	<u>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</u>
<u>B.L.</u>	British Library
<u>C.Ch.R.</u>	<u>Calendar of Charter Rolls</u>
<u>C.C.R.</u>	<u>Calendar of Close Rolls</u>
<u>C.F.R.</u>	<u>Calendar of Fine Rolls</u>
<u>Cal.I.M.</u>	<u>Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous</u>
<u>Cal. I.P.M.</u>	<u>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem</u>
<u>Complete Peerage</u>	<u>The Complete Peerage</u> , 12, vols. ed. G.E. Cokayne (London, 1910-59).
<u>D.K.R.</u>	Deputy Keeper's Report
<u>D.N.B.</u>	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u>
<u>Econ. H.R.</u>	<u>Economic History Review</u>
<u>E.H.D.</u>	<u>English Historical Documents</u>
<u>E.H.R.</u>	<u>English Historical Review</u>
<u>Emden, Cambridge</u>	<u>Emden, A.B., A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500</u> (Cambridge, 1963)
<u>Emden, Oxford</u>	<u>A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to 1500</u> (Oxford)
<u>E.Y.C.</u>	<u>Early Yorkshire Charters</u>
<u>Foedera</u>	T. Rymer, <u>Foedera, Conventiones, Literae etc.</u> , (London, 1704-35)
<u>I.P.M.</u>	Inquisition Post Mortem
<u>J.E.H.</u>	<u>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</u>
<u>J.M.H.</u>	<u>Journal of Medieval History</u>
<u>J.R.H.</u>	<u>Journal of Religious History</u>

L.R.S.	Lincoln Record Society
N.R.A.	National Register of Archives
N.Y.C.R.O.	North Yorkshire County Record Office
P.O.P.C.	<u>Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council</u> , ed. Sir N.H. Nicolas (London, 1834-7)
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
<u>Rot. Parl.</u>	<u>Rotuli Parliamentorum</u>
Scrope Cartulary	Calendar of the Scrope of Bolton Cartulary, present thesis volume II.
<u>Scrope v Grosvenor</u>	<u>The Controversy between Sir Robert Grosvenor</u> , ed. Sir N.H. Nicolas, 2 vols. (London, 1832)
<u>Test. Ebor.</u>	<u>Testamenta Eboracensia</u>
<u>T.R.H.S.</u>	<u>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</u>
<u>V.C.H.</u>	<u>Victoria County History</u>
<u>Y.A.J.</u>	<u>Yorkshire Archaeological Journal</u>
Y.A.S.	Yorkshire Archaeological Society
Y.A.S. Rec. Ser.	Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series.

INTRODUCTION

Although the lay magnates of later medieval England have never lacked attention from their posthumous critics and admirers, it was the pioneering work of the late Mr. K.B. McFarlane which returned them to their place at the centre of the political and social life of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. For McFarlane, this was the period in which 'a nobility of a type peculiar to England, having little in common with the French noblesse and German Adel, first came into existence and established itself in that position of dominance in English society which it was to retain and exploit for centuries to come'.⁽¹⁾ Under the stimulus of McFarlane's Ford Lectures at Oxford in 1953, and long before they were eventually published as The Nobility of Later Medieval England twenty years later, a succession of medieval historians have explored many of the issues raised by the ascendancy of the nobility at this time.⁽²⁾ Such issues include not only the economic fortunes of the nobles but also their recruitment of retainers and affinities as well as their attitudes and relationship with the English Crown. In particular, the royal government's dependence upon the magnates for political support has been increasingly studied as has been the disastrous consequences for both king and magnates when that relationship turned sour.⁽³⁾

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1. K.B. McFarlane, The Nobility of Later Medieval England (Oxford, 1973), p.268.
 2. G. Holmes, The Estates of the Higher Nobility (Cambridge, 1957), C. Rawcliffe The Staffords, Earls of Stafford and Dukes of Buckingham, 1394-1521 (Cambridge, 1978), R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the March of Wales (Oxford, 1978), A. Goodman, The Loyal Conspiracy (London, 1971), A. Tuck, Richard II and the English Nobility (London, 1973).
 3. J.R. Maddicott, Thomas of Lancaster (Oxford, 1970); J.R.S. Philips, Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, 1307-24 (Oxford, 1975); R. Griffiths, Henry VI (London, 1981); A. Goodman The Loyal Conspiracy (London, 1971).

Especially relevant to this study of the Scrope family has been the recent work of Dr. J.A. Tuck, who has argued that the Anglo-Scottish wars inaugurated in the 1290s gradually fostered the emergence of distinctively northern English nobility, replacing the clannish groups of inter-related Border families which had previously co-existed on both sides of the Tweed. By the middle of the fourteenth century it was English baronial families with estates in the northern counties who were normally entrusted with the defence of the Border and the keeping of the peace.⁽⁴⁾ The most famous of these families were of course the Percies, made earls of Northumberland in 1377, and the Nevilles, created earls of Westmorland twenty years later: the contributions of these two aristocratic dynasties to the political stability, and often instability, of late medieval England is one of the best known features of the later middle ages.

By contrast the power and influence of the Scropes of Masham and Bolton, who similarly emerged into the forefront of English political life during the course of the fourteenth century, has been much less thoroughly investigated. This thesis seeks to explain the entry of the Scrope family into the ranks of the late medieval nobility and to study the roles they played not only as royal servants and officials but on occasion as opponents of royal authority. The varying fortunes of the family will be studied mainly during the century and a half between 1300 and 1450, for the obvious reason that whereas it was during the fourteenth century that the family achieved its distinction, during the first five decades of the subsequent century they were also closely involved in national politics. A study of the Scropes would however be incomplete without some reference to the early history of the family before 1300. It will emerge that far from being of completely obscure origins, the Scropes had been a knightly family for at least a century before they achieved the

4. A. Tuck, 'Richard II and the Border Magnates, Northern History, III (1968) pp 27-52; A. Tuck, 'The Emergence of a Northern Nobility, 1250-1400; Northern History, XXII (1986) pp. 1-17, J.M.W. Bean, 'Henry IV and the Percies, History, 44 (1959)

summit of their fortunes and their fame. After a detailed investigation of the period (c. 1350 to 1450) when the Scropes were at the height of their power and influence, this thesis will close at the point when the family's position was restored during the reign of Richard III. After the accession of Henry VII the Scropes were never again to play a really prominent role in national politics.

An obvious reason for the sustained influence of the Scrope family during so long a period was their genealogical good fortune. They were not themselves the victims of the often mentioned weakness of the late medieval English nobility in failing to produce male heirs.⁽⁵⁾ In fact successive generations of the Scropes produced so many sons and daughters that the family became a highly ramified and numerous group of blood relations. However, it has not been the intention of this study to produce a full prosopographical account of all the members of the family. In seeking to explain the prominence of the family only its most successful members have been discussed in detail, for these after all best illustrate the methods whereby the Scropes achieved and retained their exalted position. For this reason too, as well as because of the deficiencies of the surviving evidence, the attention paid in this thesis to the various Lords Scrope of Masham and Bolton may at times appear somewhat uneven, but not one hopes unjustifiably so.

In the period under consideration the Scropes of Masham and Bolton produced no less than two chief justices, a chancellor, three treasurers, an earl and an archbishop of York; no less significantly, between 1399 and 1415 three members of the family were executed on the orders of an English king. Despite such obvious testimony to their influence, and to the dangers which rest with that influence, there has been no previous study of the family as a whole. However, the legal career of Sir Geoffrey Scrope, Chief Justice of England from 1324 to 1338, was studied in detail by the late Professor

5. McFarlane, Nobility of Later Medieval England, p.15.

Lionel Stones in his Glasgow Ph.D. thesis of 1950.⁽⁶⁾ The late Professor Charles Ross also surveyed the fortunes of the Scropes, if somewhat briefly, between 1399 and 1433 in his doctoral dissertation on the Yorkshire Baronage of 1950.⁽⁷⁾ However no detailed attention has been paid to the Scrope family during the last thirty years. When one considers that the Scropes are frequently cited as a prime example of upward social mobility in fourteenth-century England within general surveys of the period, it is perhaps surprising that they have received less attention than they seem to deserve. The most obvious reason for this comparative neglect is of course the lack of an extensive family archive. In common with the Nevilles, Bourghchiers and the great majority of late medieval English magnates, if not of the Stafford and Mowbrays, the personal documents of the Scrope family have long since disappeared. However, one original source which has helped to redeem this absence of records - and a source which has indirectly made this thesis possible - is the lay cartulary of the Scropes of Bolton, a fourteenth-century register of deeds to property in Wensleydale, which was re-discovered in the Cheshire County Record Office ten years ago.⁽⁸⁾ To some extent at least the survival of this cartulary, now among the archives of the Cholmondeley family, has compensated for the absence of other family records. So important is this cartulary for the estates history of the Scropes, and so rare is such a document in its own right, that a calendar has been presented as the second volume of this thesis. A detailed description of the cartulary, discussing its usefulness to the historian, forms the introduction to that volume.

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6. E.L.G. Stones, 'Sir Geoffrey le Scrope, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, 1324-1338' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 1950).
 7. C.D. Ross, 'The Yorkshire Baronage, 1399-1433' (D.Phil thesis, Oxford University, 1950).
 8. Cheshire County Record Office, DCH/X/151.

In other respects too the student of the Scrope family in the later middle ages is more generously furnished with property deeds than any other form of original evidence. A very large collection of charters relating to the estates of the Scropes in the North Riding of Yorkshire has recently been purchased by North Yorkshire County Record Office.⁽⁹⁾ Some of these charters are the originals of those copied into the surviving cartulary mentioned above, but the majority relate to the descent of Yorkshire property before it came into the possession of the Scropes. A smaller collection of charters and estates documents relating to the Scropes of Masham, largely dating from the 1320s and 1330s, are now to be found among the muniments of Westminster Abbey.⁽¹⁰⁾ A much more interesting and celebrated source for the study of the Scropes of Bolton is the unique document recording the proceedings of the famous heraldic dispute between Sir Richard Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor in 1385.⁽¹¹⁾ Since their publication by N.H. Nicolas in 1832, these proceedings have been well known to historians; but comparatively little attention has yet been paid to the wealth of material they provide on the early history of the Scropes of Bolton themselves as well as to the insights they offer on the practical workings of a late medieval affinity. Of major importance to this thesis in a very different way have been the registers of the most famous of all members of the family, Richard Scrope, first as bishop of Coventry and Lichfield (1386-98) and then as archbishop of York (1398-1405).⁽¹²⁾ These have formed the basis of an account of the unique career of a Scrope who became primate of England, an account which concentrates both on the administration of his two dioceses and on Richard Scrope's own

9. North Yorkshire County Record Office, Bolton MSS.

10. Westminster Abbey Muniments.

11. The Controversy between Sir Richard Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor in the Court of Chivalry (London, 1832).

12. Lichfield Record Office, B/A/1/6; A Calendar of the Register of Richard Scrope Archbishop of York, 1398-1405, 2 parts, ed. R.N. Swanson, (Borthwick Texts and Calendars 8 and 11, 1981 and 1985).

political attitudes and final rebellion, as well as the implications of these for the other members of his family. For the great majority of the latter the surviving sources are much less informative than one would ideally wish; but it has nevertheless been possible to form a comparatively detailed impression of their careers, offices, places of residence, estates and financial revenues from the administrative records of the royal government at the Public Record Office. Most of the pertinent classes of Exchequer and Chancery records between 1350 and 1450 have been searched for references to members of the Scrope family.

In seeking to describe and explain the 'rise' of a family as prominent as the fourteenth-century Scropes, the historian is inevitably drawn into a variety of different fields. Thus the legal careers of Henry and Geoffrey Scrope in the early and mid-fourteenth century from c.1300-1340 have deserved special attention, because those careers undoubtedly provided the family with the financial capital which allowed it to invest in a large landed estate in the North Riding. Moreover the social, economic and political history of Richmondshire itself clearly warranted separate treatment, precisely because it provided the context within which the Scropes established their most important 'power base'. So spectacular was the place held by the Scropes in north-western Yorkshire at the end of the fourteenth century that neither a great magnate like John of Gaunt, nor even the king himself, could ignore their claims to patronage and influence, not least perhaps because they had established themselves in an area where the Nevilles and Percies were in danger of too exclusive a monopoly of political power.⁽¹³⁾ However, the comparatively steady success characteristic of the Scropes throughout much of the fourteenth century received the first of a series of severe checks in 1399 on the accession of Henry IV and the death of the earl of Wiltshire. After

13. A. Tuck, 'Richard II and the Border Magnates', Northern History, III (1968), pp. 27-52; A. Tuck, 'The Emergence of a Northern Nobility, 1250-1400', Northern History, XXII (1986), pp. 1-17.

several tumultuous years of crisis under the first two Lancastrian monarchs, the resilience and pragmatism of the family nevertheless ensured that they weathered the vicissitudes of the mid-fifteenth century more happily than most of their aristocratic counterparts. So was ensured the survival of late medieval Yorkshire's most fortunate magnate family until dynastic good fortune finally deserted them, the Scropes of Masham in 1515 and the Scropes of Bolton in 1630.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIGINS OF THE SCOPE FAMILY

A: From the Domesday Book to 1300

In 1385 the question of the Scrope family's origins became a matter of direct concern for themselves. In a dispute famous in the annals of English aristocratic history, Sir Richard Scrope's right to bear the arms azure a bend or was challenged by Sir Robert Grosvenor, a knight from Cheshire. In the litigation that followed one of the main issues to be clarified was the nature of Scrope's ancestry. How far into the past could he trace his family descent, and had the family always descended in direct male line? Such were the questions put to those called as witnesses in the case⁽¹⁾.

For the most part, those who were interviewed could give few details. Many simply stated that Scrope's ancestry dated from the Conquest. For most of Sir Richard's contemporaries, it was the feats which members of the family had performed and their reputation for valour which earned them the right to bear arms, not necessarily a long and noble ancestry. In the absence of corroborating evidence the claims of ancestry stretching back to 1066 cannot be confirmed. The earliest extant genealogy of the family does not occur until the seventeenth century⁽²⁾. Indeed claims of a genealogy dating from the Conquest probably say more about expectations of a noble ancestry than the ancestry itself.

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1. The Scrope and Grosvenor Controversy, ed. Sir N.H. Nicolas, 2 vols. (London, 1832). The depositions of the witnesses are printed in volume one and biographical notices of the deponents on behalf of Scrope form volume two. A third volume comprising the biographies of Grosvenor's deponents was planned but never undertaken.
 2. BL Additional MS 28, 205. The volume entitled The History of the Family of Scrope, is dated 1697.

Historians, however, have had at least some success in elucidating the family's past. Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas in his edition of the Scrope and Grosvenor Roll of 1832 was the first scholar to attempt a detailed genealogy of the family. The task of identifying individual members of the family proved a hazardous one, mainly because both the Scropes of Masham and Bolton used the same first names, itself presumably evidence of a strong sense of family identity. Such repetition of christian names is one problem, but the sparsity of evidence is even more serious. Despite its merits Nicolas' work is flawed by one or two minor errors of genealogy, which resulted from an over-dependence on the testimony of some unreliable witnesses.

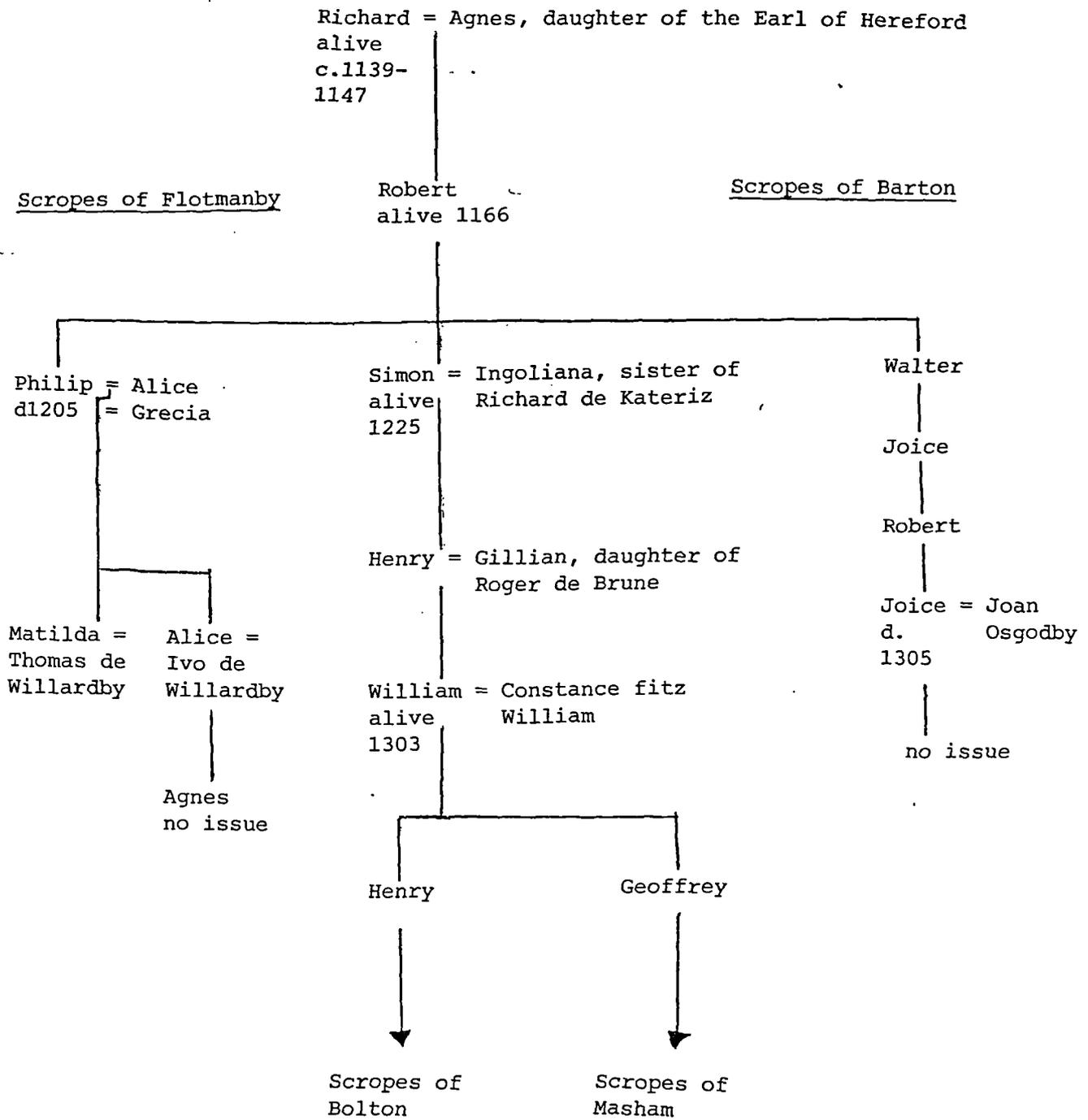
One such witness was the prior of Bridlington, whose monastery had been granted land in the East Riding by the Scropes in the thirteenth century. In theory the prior might have been expected to acquire, perhaps through charter evidence, a reasonable knowledge of the Scropes' early history. Certainly the prior claimed to have charters proving that a certain Walter Scrope was alive tempus Henry I. However, where the prior's evidence can be checked against other sources, it can be seen that he was an inaccurate witness. He claimed for example that the father of Robert Scrope, holder of a knight's fee in 1166, was a certain Hugh Scrope. In fact a charter dated 1184-5 clearly states that Robert's father was a certain Richard Scrope who had made a particularly fortunate marriage,

'Aliz de Gant Comitissa, filia Gileberti de Gant, omnibus amicis et hominibus suis tam Francis quam Anglis salutem. Sciatis me concessisse et hac mea presenti carta confirmasse Roberto Scrope de Barton, filio Ricardo Scrope et filio Agnetis matertere mee, totam terram quam antecessores suit tenuerunt in Barton'(3).

Nicolas unfortunately followed the error of the prior of Bridlington.

3. Early Yorkshire Charters, 4 vols, ed. W. Farrer (London, 1915) ff, p.492, no. 1217. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I. p.101.

The Scrope Family to c.1300



The prior of Bardny, Lincolnshire, gave a different line of descent in 1385. He argued that the family's first ancestor had been Richard fitz Scrob, a Shropshire and Herefordshire landowner in 1086, who gave his name to Richard's castle in Shropshire. Sir Charles Clay disposed of this theory in his article on the Scropes or Crupes of Gloucestershire. He demonstrated that the appellation 'Scrob' was not passed onto succeeding generations and that there seemed to be no ascertainable territorial links between this family and Scropes elsewhere. Clay proved in fact that the Scrupes or Crupes who held land in Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire, cannot, as Nicolas supposed, be linked with the branches in Lincolnshire and the East Riding⁽⁴⁾.

The most reliable genealogies for the earliest members of the family are those provided by the Complete Peerage and by Clay in Early Yorkshire Families. Neither source is confident, however, in making a direct connection between Simon Scrope, who was living in 1215, and preceding generations. According to Clay, 'Evidence is at present lacking to determine the parentage of Simon Scrope'⁽⁵⁾. This is perhaps rather over-cautious. Circumstantial evidence is strongly in favour of Simon being a younger son of Robert Scrope. Walter Scrope, known to have been a son of Robert, inherited half a knight's fee in Barton which represented only half his father's property. The other half went to Philip Scrope, presumably another son. Philip's daughters later conveyed their inheritance to their uncle Simon, who may safely be assumed to be their father's brother. Simon was presumably a younger son of Robert's who was given only a minor share

4. Scrope v. Grosvenor, 1, pp.229-30. C.T. Clay, 'The Family of Scrupes or Crupes of Whittington, co. Gloucs', Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucester Antiquarian Society, lxxv (1944), p.140.

5. Complete Peerage, Xp.531 C.T. Clay, Early Yorkshire Families (Y.A.S. Record Series, CXXXV, 1973), p.131.

in the inheritance⁽⁶⁾. If this connection is accepted then the North Riding branch of the family could trace their ancestry directly to the first decades of the twelfth century. A descent from the Norman Conquest appears not to have been quite as far fetched as at first appears. Such an ancestry compares very favourably with that other great parvenu family of the fourteenth century, the de la Poles. They could not trace their ancestry beyond 1316, and their origins may be considered truly obscure⁽⁷⁾.

For many historians the most interesting feature of the Scrope family has been less their genesis than their apparent ability to rise to the highest ranks of society from its lowest rungs. Nevertheless even a cursory examination of the family's genealogy has revealed that, as soon as they began to be recorded, they were by no means particularly humble. A close scrutiny of the family's landed position reveals much the same picture.

Admittedly, no member of the Scrope family achieved knightly status until perhaps the end of the thirteenth century. However since less importance was attached to ranks denoting status before 1300 than after, and since knighthood could often be unattractive to many families who could afford that rank, this may say little about the relative fortunes of the family. In fact as early as the twelfth

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6. According to the Complete Peerage evidence is lacking for this connection, but it has been more recently accepted in V.C.H., East Riding, vol. 2, ed. R.B. Pugh (1974), p.168, based on the evidence of Cartulary of Bridlington priory, ed. W.T. Lancaster, (Leeds, 1912), pp.81,132; E.Y.C. II, ed. Farrer, p.490.
 7. R. Horrox, The De La Poles of Hull, (East Yorkshire Local History Society, no. 38, 1983).

century the Scropes should probably be included in the broad stratum of society known to modern historians as the knightly class. Their inclusion can be justified, for instance, by the fact that in 1166 Robert Scrope held one knight's fee. The fee was divided between two manors. One half lay in the manor of Barton on Humber in Lincolnshire, the point at which the Humber could be crossed by ferry, and the remaining half lay at Flotmanby in the East Riding, one of only three manors in Yorkshire belonging to the Gant fee. The tenant of the Gant fee, was a Gilbert de Gant, who in 1147-8 was created earl of Lincoln. In 1166 Robert Scrope was one of the major tenants of the fee. Land in these two manors formed the basis of the Scrope patrimony until the first few decades of the thirteenth century⁽⁸⁾.

Moreover, the Scrope family's connection with the earl of Lincoln was closer than purely tenurial. It appears that Richard and Hugh Scrope were attracted to the service of the earl and may have been members of his household. Evidence for this relies on the interpretation of several twelfth century charters. It has been established that Richard Scrope was married to Agnes, daughter of the earl of Hereford and sister in law to the earl of Lincoln. It may be argued that only a member of an earl's household could marry the daughter and sister in law of an earl. Richard was a witness to several of Gant's charters over a period of c. 1139-47, where he appears listed among the earl's brothers. Hugh Scrope, who may have been Richard's brother, was very likely a member of the earl's household; he himself held one carucate of land in Barton on Humber. Evidence that he was a household man comes from a charter of confirmation by Henry II dated c. 1155-7. The charter confirmed grants made to Bridlington priory by Henry I, Walter de Gant and Gilbert de Gant. The charter granted,

8. E.Y.C., ii, ed. Farrer p.430, no. 1139, - returns of knight's fees made in 1166.

"in eadem villa unam carucatam terre et servitia ministrorum comitis Gilberti qui terras de ipso tenebant scilicet Johannnis camerarii et Hugonis Escrop et Obbonis et Johel et Walteri Brand et omnium aliorum ministrorum predicti comitis⁽⁹⁾.

Association with the earl's household had brought at least one influential marriage for the family and perhaps additional land. Nevertheless they lost access to a potentially useful patron when in 1156 on the death of Gilbert de Gant, the earldom of Lincoln fell into abeyance until 1217, when it was granted to the Earl of Chester.

At a county level, however, the family still enjoyed some prominence. Philip Scrope appears as a witness to a licence granted by the prior of Bridlington in 1189 and was witness to a charter of Simon de Liz, earl of Northampton, who married Gilbert de Gant's daughter. This and the fact that Philip from 1201-3 acted as under sheriff to William de Stutvill, who held the Gant fee in wardship, suggests that the family may have enjoyed a lasting connection with the administration of the fee⁽¹⁰⁾. Philip Scrope was, however, the last member of the family to hold an administrative position or to act as a witness to a noble's charter for almost a century. This seems to indicate a decline in the family's influence. Indeed it is rather surprising to find that the thirteenth century Scropes have left fewer traces than their twelfth century ancestors.

The first quarter of the thirteenth century seems to have been a very difficult time for the family. In particular it was at this time that the entire East Riding inheritance was granted to Bridlington Priory. Moreover, some members of the family may have been forced to

9. E.Y.C., ii, ed. Farrer, no. 1148. For Richard L'Escrop of Barton, E.Y.C., ii, ed. Farrer, p.195, and charters nos. 1137 and 1181. For Hugh Escrop, E.Y.C., ii, ed. Farrer, pp.436,443,451. Bridlington Cartulary, ed. Lancaster, pp.2,54.

10. Bridlington Cartulary, ed. Lancaster, p.132, J. Holt, The Northerners, (Oxford, 1961), p.75.

go abroad because of poverty. An assize roll of 1280 records the hanging as a felon of Emma Scrope of Coniston in Holderness, whose connection with the family has not yet been precisely established. The assize roll is unusually full of detail on the case, and records that the unfortunate Emma had been abandoned by her father Simon Scrope who, 'Pro paupertate ivit ad partes transamarinas..cum uxore et fil' suis'. As a result Emma was disseised of her property by the notorious Saer de Sutton. Having succeeded in recovering the land by a writ of novel disseisin, her brother returned and ejected her from the land. She brought an action against him too and they eventually agreed to share the land⁽¹¹⁾. No cause is given for the execution of this formidably persistent, independent and, presumably, wealthy woman. The significance of the case lies partly in its revelations about the possible difficulties for heiresses like Emma, and partly in the evidence which it provides for the financial difficulties of the previous generation. Nevertheless one wonders how going abroad was meant to solve these problems.

Recently historians have turned their attention to the general problems facing the knightly class in the thirteenth century. For example Peter Coss, has interpreted the period as one of crisis for the class as a whole, seeing it in financial terms relating to the cost of knighthood, inability to make the most of demesne farming and indebtedness to Jews. More recently David Carpenter has challenged this view both in financial terms and by arguing that for every family who failed in the thirteenth century there were others waiting to take their place. At any rate it is highly unlikely that such a knightly "crisis" could be sustained for an entire century. It is also hard to reconcile the economic difficulties experienced by this class and their political ascendancy. A brief examination of the fortunes of the Scrope family in the century perhaps has something of interest to

11. Part of the inquisition is printed in Yorkshire Inquisitions, ii, ed. W. Brown, (Y.A.S. Record Series, xxiii, 1897) p.73; P.R. O. J U S T 1 1067, m. 29, dorse.

offer this debate⁽¹²⁾.

No evidence survives to indicate whether the family was exploiting its lands efficiently at this time nor is there evidence of indebtedness. All that survives relates to the descent of the family property and it is only from this that problems may be deduced. It may be argued that the wealth of the family and its influence was substantially weakened in the late twelfth century when Robert Scrope divided his lands between Walter and Philip. Walter's descendants, the Scropes of Barton, seem to have been peculiarly weak. The last of them, Joice, died in 1303. His inquisition post mortem records many sickly ancestors who seem to have died young and added nothing to their estates. That particular line, then, survived the thirteenth century but were dynastically feeble⁽¹³⁾.

Walter's brother Philip, despite two marriages, was survived by only two daughters. Had they inherited Flotmanby the family would have lost the land altogether. As it was, Matilda died without issue and Alice left only a daughter who died without issue. In order to prevent the loss of their lands, Alice and Matilda sold them to their uncle Simon, who seems to have had held very little property in his own right. Simon appeared temporarily to have saved the family from extinction and it was he who laid the foundations for the development of the fourteenth century Scropes in the North Riding. At some date before 1225 Simon had married a North Riding heiress, Ingoliana, sister to Richard de Kateriz, and thereby acquired land in the manor of Wensley. How Simon came to make this marriage is not known: there

12. P.R. Coss, 'Sir Geoffrey de Langley and the Crisis of the Knightly Class in the Thirteenth Century', Past and Present, 68 (1975), pp.3-38. D. Carpenter, 'Was there a Crisis of the Knightly Class in the Thirteenth Century?', E.H.R. (1980), pp.720-752.

13. Cal.I.P.M., Edward I, iv, no. 294.

seem to have been no tenurial links between Wensley and his other possessions⁽¹⁴⁾.

It was Simon's son Henry Scrope, alias Henry Wolf, who subsequently granted away all the East Riding estates of the family. This type of activity is precisely what has encouraged historians to talk about the crisis of the knightly class. There is no doubt much evidence to show that large ecclesiastical corporations throughout thirteenth-century England were acquiring more and more land from the smaller families. In this case the beneficiary was Bridlington priory. But do these acquisitions really represent financial difficulties for the smaller landowner? Evidence from cartularies may give a misleading impression of monotonous acquisitions, and among the many questions which that evidence raises are whether these grants were outright sales or leases, or whether they were motivated by piety or financial need. If the causes were financial, they were long term since Simon had begun granting land to Bridlington himself, although the amount of land involved was small (4 tofts and 11 acres in Flotmanby) and cannot have realised much capital. Henry granted away all his demesne lands in Flotmanby with a collection of services (which incidentally reveals that Henry could have exploited this demesne had he wished) but the loss of the East Riding land was not a disaster for the family since they had already acquired their territorial base in Wensley⁽¹⁵⁾.

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14. Bridlington Cartulary, ed. Lancaster, p.81. Scrope Cartulary, no. 53. Bolton MSS ML/123 Simon de Wensley, rector of Wensley church stated that Simon was buried in Wensley church although the family did not gain the advowson of the church until 1317. Scrope v. Grosvenor, 1, p.129. Rievaulx Cartulary, ed. J. Atkinson (Surtees Society, 83, 1887), p.102.
 15. Bridlington Cartulary, ed. Lancaster, pp. 87, 90. A certain R. Escrop had also granted land to Bridlington in the late twelfth century, ibid., p. 80.

The grant of the family lands in Flotmanby may genuinely represent some kind of crisis for the Scropes but the evidence is too slender to suggest its nature. Normally one would expect the attachment to family lands to be much too strong for them to be granted away except under great pressure. There is no evidence in the charter to suggest that Henry Scrope was in particular need, but perhaps the family were having dynastic problems. Henry did have an heir, William, but the precise descent of the following generations is unclear. For almost fifty years the family leaves very little trace in the records. This may of course be due to the obscurity of the sources or, if they did settle overseas for a time, this would be an explanation. They may have left the country to avoid debts or perhaps to avoid the political unrest of the early part of the century. Many Lincolnshire landlords and Richmondshire tenants were implicated in the opposition to King John. The family's past links with the Gant's may have inclined them to support the claim of the previous earl's nephew, Gilbert, to the earldom of Lincoln, now held by the earl of Chester. Gilbert has been described as one of the "greatest Lincolnshire rebels", and Holbert or Osbert fitz Nigel, lord of the manor of Wensley was imprisoned in 1217 for his opposition to the king⁽¹⁶⁾. At any rate there were many problems which smaller landowners might have to face in this period and they were not simply financial ones. It cannot be argued that the example of the Scrope family offers very much in support of a general crisis of the knightly class. It would seem clear that the family suffered some adversity after 1200 after their quite successful beginnings, yet their later recovery also demonstrates the resilience of this part of society.

The genealogies presented by Sir Charles Clay in his Early Yorkshire Families suggests that as far as this county was concerned the thirteenth century was largely one of stability for its knightly class. Clay's volume surveys 'approximately a hundred families descending in male line or with not more than one break due to marriage from an ancestor living before the death of Henry I, and some

16. Holt, The Northerners, pp. 15, 26, 46, 48.

at least of whose lands passed by inheritance to the reign of Edward I or later'. Clay examined 103 families, including the families of Warenne, Mortimer and Mowbray, who for present purposes will be excluded since they hardly fall within the boundaries of the knightly class, however widely defined. The remaining sample of 100 families contains at its lower end those who held one knight's fee in 1166, such as the Salvains and Askes, and those more substantial landowners who held ten knight's fees such as the St Quintins and Trussebutts. The existence of such a large number of families who preserved their estates throughout the thirteenth century and well beyond tends to suggest that there was no crisis for them in the sense that they were forced to sell out to large ecclesiastical corporations. Of their individual wellbeing there is, alas, no evidence. In some instances the stability of landholding is very striking. The Musters family held sixty carucates of land in Richmondshire in 1086 and still had two thirds of this in 1284, whilst the Veilly family held three knight's fees in 1166, which they still held in 1284. The Stapletons of Stapleton held two knight's fees in 1166 and had lost only a fifth by 1401-2. The major reason for the disappearance of such families as the Trussebutts, the St. Quintins, the Arches, the Brus, the Cleasbys, was either lack of heirs or the survival of coheiresses. In each case other Yorkshire families were ready to buy up the property or marry the heiresses. The Trussebut lands went to the Roos family of Helmsley, while the Hastings succeeded to the Arches lands. This picture of Yorkshire knightly families accords well with the evidence for Oxfordshire analysed by Dr. D. Carpenter. He argued that the period was mainly one of security for this class, while individuals, particularly at the lower end of the spectrum, may have suffered. Evidence from the alienation of advowsons by the Yorkshire knights in the thirteenth century confirms this conclusion. Since the Scropes were not among the wealthiest of their class, they may well have been vulnerable. If however, they did suffer any reverses they were only temporary⁽¹⁷⁾.

17. Clay, Early Yorkshire Families, passim; J.E. Newman, 'Greater and Lesser landowners and parochial patronage : Yorkshire in the thirteenth century', E.H.R., 92 (1977), pp.280-308.

The migration of the family to the North Riding proved of fundamental significance to the family's later fortunes. How Simon Scrope came to marry Ingoliana and gain property in Wensley remains a mystery. The tenurial links between this manor and the others held by the family are, as noted above, extremely vague. A connection may have been provided by the earl of Chester, who held both the earldom of Lincoln and the honour of Richmond, but this connection is highly remote and was probably made after Scrope had already gained part of the manor. The then lord of the manor of Wensley, Holbert fitz Nigel, belonged to the Ingoldsby family who held the manor of the same name in Lincolnshire⁽¹⁸⁾. This at least indicates that it was not unusual for families to hold land in geographically disparate areas. Yet, for a family of limited resources it may not have been worth while to hold onto land which was so scattered, and this might have encouraged the abandonment of their East Riding properties.

It was left to William Scrope, son of Henry by his marriage to Gillian, daughter of Roger de Brune, to build up the family's resources in the North Riding. Some historians have regarded William as an unimportant figure, but it is with him that the family re-emerges after decades of obscurity⁽¹⁹⁾. Much more is recorded about William than about his father. This may reflect the improved status of the family although it has to be conceded that the records generally become more plentiful towards the end of the century. The first references to William occur in charters made in the 1270's relating to land in the North Riding. There are few precise dates relating to him but he was still alive in 1303 and probably dead by 1313. He had married a local heiress, Constance fitz William of Wensley, also identified as the daughter of Gillo of Neasham on Tees. As if to confirm William's position in his new manor, he was later said to have been buried in the church at Wensley. He was fairly

18. Clay, Early Yorkshire Families, pp.46-47.

19. E.L.G. Stones, 'Sir Geoffrey le Scrope, chief justice of the king's bench, 1324-1338' (University of Glasgow Ph.D thesis 1950), p.4.

active on a local level, being witness to many charters relating to local property. Moreover, in 1292 and 1293-4, he was important enough to become bailiff of Richmond⁽²⁰⁾.

Edwards I's Scottish wars had evidently increased Scrope's opportunities, like those of many other Yorkshire gentry at the period. According to John Thirlewell, a deponent in the Scrope v. Grosvenor trial, William had served as a knight at the battle of Falkirk. This particular claim may have been made simply to make Sir Richard's ancestry more acceptable, for no contemporary documents describe William as 'knight'. However, there is little doubt that Scrope did indeed participate in the campaigns. On 9 June, 1296 at Edinburgh, William Scrope obtained a royal grant of free warren in his North Riding manors which was a clear mark of royal favour. William may well have gone on the campaign which ended a month later at Brechin castle, where Balliol surrendered his crown to Edward I. Perhaps William was skilful in battle; several of the deponents in 1385 emphasised William's military skill. At tournaments he was described as, 'le plus noble tourneur en son temps' and 'un des plus nobles bohardures q' home troverait'⁽²¹⁾. The same, however, was said of William's son Geoffrey.

William's contribution to the future success of his family was three-fold. First in a small way he developed the territorial position of the family in the North Riding. Through his success the family came once more to be identified with the knightly class. Finally he facilitated the entry of his two sons Henry and Geoffrey

20. Constance fitz William appears as William's wife in the Scrope Cartulary, deeds nos. 229, 230, where land in Yafforth was settled on William for life. The Complete Peerage and Nicolas identify her as the daughter of Gillo of Neasham on Tees; deposition of Simon de Wensley, Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, p. 129. A.S. Ellis, 'Yorkshire Deeds', Y.A.J., xiii, pp. 44-77.

21. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, pp. 132, 142, 181; Scrope Cartulary, no. 28.

into the legal profession. This has traditionally been regarded as the real key to the family's success in the fourteenth century, and the two boys were said to have entered the legal profession with the approval of their parents. As a bailiff to the earl of Richmond William must have had some rudimentary legal training and it may have been this which suggested that the law was an appropriate occupation for his sons.

B. The Careers of Henry and Geoffrey Scrope, chief justices

'A sergeant of the Lawe, war and wys,...
Justice he was ful often in assise
By patente and by pleyn commissoun.
For his science and for his high renoun,
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
So greet a purchasour was nowher noon;
Al was fee symple to hym in effect'.

(The Canterbury Tales ed., F.N. Robinson (Oxford, 1978), p.20).

As has been already noted Henry and Geoffrey Scrope were respectively the elder and younger sons of William Scrope, who can only be described as a minor member of the knightly class, holding no government administrative positions, but with a modest territorial stake in the North Riding. The fortunes of the family were however to receive a sudden boost in the first decades of the fourteenth century. For both Henry and Geoffrey were able to found their individual knightly and ultimately noble dynasties, each with a very substantial landed estate in the North Riding.

Circumstantial evidence suggests that it was indeed largely due to the legal careers of both brothers that they were able to promote their family position. While this view can be largely sustained, the economic opportunities available to them at that time, together with contemporary attitudes to social mobility must also be taken into account. In some ways the social conservatism of medieval society,

particularly from the fourteenth century onwards, ought to have made the 'rise' of a family like the Scropes more difficult. There is much evidence to indicate increasing importance being attached to titles denoting rank and status. The whole concept of nobility was being re-defined in a narrower way. It was now no longer sufficient simply to be a knight to be considered noble. The outward trappings of status - such as badges and heraldry - all became more strictly controlled and defined, as testified by the drawing up of heralds' rolls. By the fifteenth century the obsession with status was such that treatises on manners and precedence proliferated. In practical terms, however, none of this restricted the advancement of a county family. After all, the attempts to classify strata of society by restricting their clothes, diet and behaviour probably reflect in reality the actual mobility and fluidity of that society, without which the attempts at stratification would be beside the point. Against this background then the Scropes emerged from being a minor knightly family to becoming two major families in the North Riding, and indeed nationally.

Much of the personal history of the two brothers Henry and Geoffrey inevitably remains hidden. No record of Henry's date of birth survives, but it probably occurred circa 1267-70. This is based on the assumption that he was at least of age in 1288, when he received a grant of land in the 'Westhall' fee of Wensley. This is the earliest known reference to him; and he was thus many years older than his brother Geoffrey, who was born c. 1285. Both men married into local knightly families. The identity of Henry's wife remains unknown. She is variously said to be either a daughter of Lord Roos or Lord fitz Walter, but neither candidate can be confirmed. Henry may, in any case, have married late in life, since his eldest son William was only sixteen on Henry's death in 1336. Margaret, Henry's widow, re-married a certain Hugh Mortimer, and survived Henry by twenty two years. Geoffrey Scrope's marriage presents fewer problems for he certainly married Ivetta, daughter of William Roos of Ingmanthorpe, who had probably predeceased Geoffrey by the time of his

death in 1340⁽²²⁾.

Precisely how the two brothers came to enter the legal profession is, however, a mystery. Although in the fifteenth century it may have been customary for sons of knightly families to gain some legal training at the Inns of court, this institution was still in its infancy at the beginning of the fourteenth century. It seems unlikely that William would have had the resources to provide his sons with the training necessary for them both in the course of their careers to hold the most important legal positions in the country. It seems more likely that the brothers attracted the patronage of an influential figure whose identity remains unknown⁽²³⁾.

The first reference to Henry Scrope as a lawyer appears in 1292 when he was a pleader in the courts of Common pleas in Westminster. He was still a pleader in 1303-4 when the courts had moved to York. It is at the stage that his brother Geoffrey also appears as a pleader, presumably attracted by the proximity of the courts and of his brother⁽²⁴⁾. In the course of his career, Henry was to serve many masters. By 1305, at least, he was being employed as counsel by Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln. A single entry in the surviving accounts for 1304-5 reveals a payment to Henry and to William de Norry of 70s 10 1/2d. for four days work at Ightenhill, the caput of the Clitheroe manor and the stronghold of the earl. This probably represents a payment for routine administrative work. William de Norry had been employed by the earl since at least 1296, when among his duties was

22. Scrope Cartulary no. 65. Cal.I.P.M. Edward III vol. 8, no. 43, Complete Peerage, vol. 11, p.538. D.N.B., vol. 51, p.138.

23. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, p.142. According to the deposition of Sir William Aton, Henry Scrope, 'fuiſt par aſſent de cez parentes mys al le ley'.

24. Year Book 20 Edward I, ed. A.J. Horwood (Rolls series, vol. 31, 1866) p.360. Year Book 30 & 31 Edward I, ed. Horwood (Rolls series, 1863) p.307. Year Book 32 & 33 Edward I ed. Horwood (Rolls series, 1864) pp.58,231. E.L.G. Stones, 'Geoffrey Scrope, chief justice' E.H.R. 69, 1954, pp.1-18.

the auditing of accounts. When Scrope began working for the earl is impossible to indicate; perhaps like Norry he had been employed for the last eight years. It is quite a striking coincidence that the family should appear once more in the service of an earl of Lincoln. Lincoln himself employed several lawyers to conduct his affairs. In 1295-6 he paid £1 2s to pleaders and clerks to conduct his business in Cheshire; and in 1304 he paid Richard Starky £7 6s 8d for pleadings and retained a certain William de Midgelay, counsel, for 13s 4d per annum⁽²⁵⁾.

Unfortunately only two years of accounts for the earl of Lincoln have survived and no further payments to Scrope have been recorded. Nevertheless, the connection between Scrope and Lacy appears to have been a close and lasting one. On Lacy's death, Scrope was appointed one of the earl's executors. As such he was immediately put under pressure to loan the crown 4,000 marks for a forthcoming Scottish expedition. In 1333 Scrope also gave St. Agatha's Abbey, Easby, £200 in order that they should provide a canon to say mass for himself and his family, every day at the church of Wensley. Amongst those to be remembered was Henry de Lacy, Scrope's former patron. Finally in 1385, many deponents recalled that Henry had been permitted to add to his arms as a special mark of favour, a purple lion, the device of the earl of Lincoln. This associated Henry very closely with the earl, and perhaps the use of this symbol performed much the same function as the granting of livery and badges in the later part of the century⁽²⁶⁾.

Close though the ties between Scrope and Lacy were, Scrope was able to offer his services to others too. According to its internal accounts, Henry was employed by Durham Priory as early as 1300-1, when

25. De Lacy Compoti, 1296, and 1305, ed., Rev. P.A. Lyons (Chetham Society, vol. 112, 1884), pp.113, 147, 152, 154.

26. C.C.R. 1307-13, p.304; Scrope Cartulary, no. 267 Scrope v. Grosvenor, I. pp. 132, 98.

he was in receipt of an annual pension of 20s⁽²⁷⁾. This relatively small sum perhaps gave the priory an 'option' on Scrope's advice and legal skills, since it seems unlikely to have been enough to buy them. Nor did this pension prevent Scrope's possible involvement in the disputes of the cathedral priory's old enemy, Anthony Bek, the bishop of Durham. In 1302, following the confiscation of the liberties of Durham, the royal justice William de Ormesby held an assize to hear complaints against the prelate. Amongst the plaintiffs was the prior of Durham, who had been at loggerheads with the bishop for some time. Henry Scrope, however acted as mainpernor for the bishop's justices, Guichard de Charon and Peter de Thoresby. Although the bishop of Durham is not recorded as having retained the services of Scrope, nevertheless all the other mainpernors were members of Bek's council which contained several lawyers. Bek may well have had an eye for talented young lawyers since among them were Walter de Friskeneay, later chief justice of the common pleas, and Hugh de Louthur, later a king's sergeant. There are other connections that suggest that Scrope may have had an association with Bek. The other knightly members of Bek's council were all men with Richmondshire connections. Two of the most prominent of the bishop's officials were Guichard de Charron and Peter de Thoresby, justices of the bishop. Charron's father had been steward to the earl of Richmond, and both men, together with a third member of the council, witnessed at least one charter copied into the Scrope cartulary⁽²⁸⁾. Other Richmondshire knights on the bishop's council included Brian fitz Alan, lord of the Bedale fee, and Sir Thomas de Richmond, who may be identified with the Sir Thomas who sold the Constable's fee to the Scropes of Masham. Although there is no firm evidence to suggest that Scrope was in Bek's service it would be surprising if no link existed; given Bek's

27. This reference was given in a letter by Dr. C.M. Fraser appended to E.L.G. Stones' thesis on Geoffrey Scrope. Durham Cathedral Archives, Miscellaneous Charters, 4668. Henry Scrope continued to receive payments from Durham priory throughout his career, receiving fees and robes from the prior in 1324 and in 1333. Durham Cathedral Archives, Miscellaneous Charters 4927, 4510.

28. Scrope Cartulary, nos. 253, 299.

connections with Richmondshire knights and his demand for legal talent⁽²⁹⁾. On 19 January, 1309 Henry Spigurnel and Henry Scrope were appointed as justices of oyer and terminer to investigate the raid by Bek's officers on Middleton in Teesdale. The suit, brought by the earl of Warwick was never heard because the bishop's officials failed to appear: it may be no coincidence that Scrope was a justice in this case⁽³⁰⁾.

In the case of Geoffrey Scrope, however, there is no evidence relating to his early service. As a pleader in the court of common pleas he was particularly active from 1311 onwards. He first entered royal service at Easter 1315 when he became one of the royal sergeants. Geoffrey's promotion was in fact much quicker and more direct than that of his brother, perhaps because he was more talented or because his brother's success had made his own career easier. It is only in Geoffrey's later career that the evidence from his other employers emerges. He was, for example, in receipt of a pension from Westminster Abbey of £2 per annum. He was also in receipt of a pension from Durham Priory until his death in 1340. The receipt of such pensions was by no means unusual and most of the Scopes' contemporaries on the bench received similar retaining fees. Nor is the assumption that such pensions inevitably led to corruption necessarily correct. However, there were attempts to outlaw the granting of gifts and fees to royal justices and Scrope's later pensions were probably in breach of these regulations⁽³¹⁾.

29. C.M. Fraser, A History of Antony Bek, (Oxford, 1957), pp.101, 184 n.

30. Ibid., p.221. C.P.R. 1307-13, pp.169, 170.

31. Stones, 'Geoffrey Scrope', E.H.R., pp.1-5; Durham Cathedral Archives, Miscellaneous Charters; 3746, 4694, 4005. J.R. Maddicott, Law and Lordship; Royal Justices as Retainers in thirteenth and fourteenth century England (Past and Present Supplement 4, 1978).

The opportunity for receiving fees and gifts was one important aspect of the potential profit to be made from a legal career. Nevertheless none of these payments seem to have been particularly large. In cash terms it has been estimated that the profits from royal service were not huge either. Geoffrey Scrope is said to have earned on average, between 1315 and 1340, from the crown c. £80 per annum for all services⁽³²⁾. It is doubtful that Henry earned much more. There was less money to be made at the king's bench, where Henry was appointed chief justice in 1317, than in the common pleas where Geoffrey was appointed briefly in 1323. On the whole salaries for justices have been described by G.O. Sayles as 'absurdly low'. Henry received, for example, £20 4s on 28 October 1328 and £40 on 17 November 1330, as his annual salary⁽³³⁾. He did receive expenses for diplomatic missions, but it is doubtful that these were very profitable. In fact considering the amount of work royal justices were expected to undertake they do seem to have been underpaid. Geoffrey Scrope for example, in the period from 1315 to 1340, in addition to being chief justice of the king's bench for most of that period, undertook twenty diplomatic missions, both to Scotland and overseas. Henry Scrope was less active, although from 1311-13 he sat on fifteen commissions of oyer and terminer. Both men were expected to be both legal experts and diplomats. They also found time to be militarily active and Geoffrey in particular was said to have participated in tournaments.

The evidence of apparently low salaries does not however accord well with general impressions of the wealth of medieval lawyers. In the poll tax assessments of 1379 royal justices were taxed at the same rate as barons, clear evidence of the wealth that they were expected to possess. Moreover it is certain that both Henry and Geoffrey had

32. Stones, E.H.R., p.13. By the early fifteenth century salaries for royal justices seem to have been in the region of £250 per annum, E.W. Ives, The Common Lawyers of Pre-Reformation England (Cambridge, 1983), p.323.

33. Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench, IV, ed. G.O. Sayles (Selden Society, LXXIV, 1955), pxxi.

earned substantial sums early in their careers. On 20 September 1314 Henry Scrope was granted a licence to crenellate his manor of Kirkby Fleetham and in the same year was permitted to enclose his park at Little Bolton⁽³⁴⁾. By that date he was clearly already assuming the outward trappings of a major county family. In 1312, before he had entered royal service Geoffrey had acquired the manor of Clifton on Ure, which five years later he had made the family seat and obtained a licence to crenellate there⁽³⁵⁾. Presumably for a skilful pleader there was also much money to be made at the bar. Apart from cash rewards, the crown had land at its disposal with which enrich its servants. Some land grants came the way of the two brothers. Henry Scrope was given the forfeited land of Andrew Harclay in the Uckerby, in the North Riding, and also land in Medbourne, Leicestershire and Bayford in Hertfordshire⁽³⁶⁾. Geoffrey Scrope acquired a sizeable amount of land by royal grant. This included several East Riding manors and Great Bowden and Market Harborough in Leicestershire⁽³⁷⁾. It is noticeable that the royal grants of land did not consolidate the Scrope's hold on the North Riding. Nevertheless the Leicestershire manors in particular were valued by the family and retained by them. In both cases the advowsons were acquired and provided family livings.

Although the cash sums earned by the Scropes seem relatively low they must have been sufficient to enable them to build up the vast estates that they left their heirs. It may be that the economic circumstances of the fourteenth century were to their advantage. There is some evidence to show that both brothers took advantage of their neighbours' financial difficulties to acquire their estates. Professor Stones noted that Geoffrey frequently advanced money to his North Riding neighbours on the security of their lands. He also noted

34. C.P.R. 1313-17, pp.175, 80.

35. Stones, E.H.R., p.1.

36. C.P.R. 1321-24, pp.248, 262, 305. E. Foss, The Judges of England, (London, 1851), iii, p.499.

37. Stones, 'Geoffrey Scrope', thesis, p.248.

a complaint against Geoffrey's unjust seizure of property and his abuse of his own position to prevent a legal inquiry⁽³⁸⁾. Henry Scrope ultimately acquired the remainder of the manor of Wensley through a series of mortgages which James de Wensley was unable to redeem⁽³⁹⁾. Several Yorkshire knights are recorded as owing Scrope money: Ronald de Richmond owed Scrope 100 marks; George Salveyn owed him £10; and Thomas Shefeld, knight, owed him 100s⁽⁴⁰⁾. There is insufficient evidence to suggest how widespread the activities of the brothers were as loan and mortgage brokers, yet this might explain their relentlessly successful acquisition of property in a very compact and well defined area, suggesting a certain ruthless design on the estates of their neighbours. This type of activity may well account for the unpopularity which medieval lawyers enjoyed; as indicated by the hostility towards them during the Peasants' Revolt. Henry Scrope himself experienced an attack on his property in 1317, when his manor of Hendon in Middlesex was attacked and his corn was taken from there⁽⁴¹⁾. Since, however, this occurred in a year of famine it is perhaps not necessarily indicative of any sentiment towards lawyers.

One aspect of the careers of the two brothers which merits consideration is their long service on the bench throughout the upheavals of Edward II's reign. Henry Scrope's first recorded royal appointment as a judge came on 26 May 1306 when he was appointed to a commission of oyer and terminer in Durham. On 27 November 1308 he was appointed justice of the king's bench and was one of the six justices of the Common bench appointed at Langley on 18 September 1309. The appointment of these six justices was apparently encouraged by the number of pleas 'now greater than ever'. From May 1306 to September 1309 Henry was appointed to eleven more commissions of oyer and

38. Stones, E.H.R., p.16.

39. See below chapter four.

40. C.C.R. 1318-23, pp.24, 566; C.C.R., 1323-7, p.128.

41. C.P.R. 1317-21, p.89.

terminer⁽⁴²⁾. Henry Scrope's appointment to the bench was fairly rapid, though he had been a prominent lawyer for many years. Comparison with the careers of his fellow justices reveals that they had had to wait rather longer for their promotion. Harvey de Stanton, Lambert de Trickingham and William de Bereford, for example, all served long apprenticeships⁽⁴³⁾. Geoffrey Scrope's career pattern was becoming the more typical one namely promotion to the bench via service as a royal sergeant at law.

Henry Scrope's promotion to the bench came when he was still presumably in the service of the earl of Lincoln and it may be that the latter's political influence at the start of Edward II's reign helped Scrope's career. On at least two occasions in 1309 Scrope was involved in hearing cases which concerned the earl. On 15 June 1309 he was on a commission to discover whether the earl's nativi had rights of common on one of his Oxfordshire manors. On 2 October 1309 Scrope was a member of a commission of oyer and terminer to investigate a complaint by the earl about a breach of his park at Caneford. Scrope's appearance on these commissions may represent concessions to the earl's political prominence⁽⁴⁴⁾. The same could be said of Scrope's appointment to the bench on 9 September 1309. Thereafter until 15 June 1317, when he was made chief justice of the king's bench, Scrope was continually active on commissions of oyer and terminer. The majority of the commissions were in the north of England and frequently involved Scrope's neighbours. On 12 February 1310 he was ordered to investigate the attack by Maria de Neville and her men on St. Mary's Abbey. On 19 December he was on a commission to

42. C.P.R. 1301-7, p.474; C.P.R. 1307-13, pp. 147, 231. C.P.R. 1301-7, pp.474, 539, 541, 545; C.P.R. 1307-13, pp.125, 126, 131, 147, 166, 169, 173.

43. E. Foss, Judges of England (reprint New York, 1966) vol. 3, 231-4; 239-40; 306-6; 533-4; 234-7; T.F. Tout, The Place of the Reign of Edward II in English History, (Manchester, 1914), p.370.

44. C.P.R. 1307-13, pp.131, 243.

investigate the burning of the house and deeds of Thomas de Richmond at Burton Constable. Similarly, on 24 October he was a member of a commissions to inquire into the burning of John de Insula's mill at Thornton Steward. This John may have been Henry's fellow justice of the same name⁽⁴⁵⁾. After the death of the earl of Lincoln, Henry is not known to have been closely associated with any great magnate. In fact the remainder of Scrope's career indicates that he was consistently loyal to Edward II.

Henry Scrope did not go to Scotland with Edward in 1311 but remained attendant on the earl of Gloucester. He was excused attendance on the general eyre as he was elsewhere. He was, however, active during the king's absence; on 23 January 1312 at York he received the custody of the lands of John de Grey of Rotherfield, worth £12 12s 1d per annum in lieu of 40 marks due for his fee and 20 marks expenses for going 'divers places'⁽⁴⁶⁾. On 8 March also at York he was appointed to correct any of the Ordinances harmful to the king and he is first described as knight on this occasion⁽⁴⁷⁾. Another favour which Scrope received was an exemption for life from granting livery to the king's marshals and ministers with respect to his houses on Bishophill, York. Mobility between Westminster and York seems to have been a necessity during this period of the Scottish wars. And when Scrope was replaced by Harvey de Stanton on the king's bench on 8 July 1323, he was unable to hand over all the rolls as some were in London and some were in York. Scrope's service to the crown was rewarded in 1317 when he was appointed chief justice of the king's bench. His tenure of office coincided with a period of political and economic instability, and that this affected the administration of justice is suggested by an order of 22 November 1317 to all justices

45. C.P.R. 1307-13, pp.252, 316, 244.

46. C.P.R. 1307-13, pp.337, 350, 43.

47. C.P.R. 1307-13, p.437.

not to delay doing justice⁽⁴⁸⁾.

As chief justice Henry Scrope was too valuable a figure to be dispensed with, even during the political ascendancy of Thomas of Lancaster. This was surely appreciated by Lancaster himself, who in 1318-9 distributed furs to William de Bereford, chief justice of the common pleas, and to Scrope. These gifts do not necessarily indicate Scrope's personal political sympathies. Nor does it seem likely that the importance attached to these offices in the Modus Tenendi Parliamentorum reflects Bereford's and Scrope's sympathy for the Lancastrian cause, a sympathy of which there appears to be no other evidence⁽⁴⁹⁾. Scrope was himself a target for attack in 1322 when on 3 April he obtained a licence to recover his horses and oxen appropriated by the contrariants. On 8 July 1322 Scrope was appointed with William de Bereford to deliver the Marshalsea gaol of 'those who were at war with the king'⁽⁵⁰⁾.

Henry Scrope's political position during the Despensers' regime however is more ambiguous. He continued on the king's bench for about a year; he was summoned to York as part of the council on 15 May 1323 and remained there until he was removed from office. From July to September 1323 Scrope received no appointments; but then, on 10 September, he was appointed keeper of the forest north of the Trent. On 18 August 1324 he was appointed justice of the forest north of the Trent, chief keeper and surveyor of the king's parks⁽⁵¹⁾. According to Tout, the 'justice or keeper of the forests had great authority, it

48. C.P.R. 1313-17, p.166; C.C.R. 1323-7, p.2; C.C.R. 1313-18, p.514.

49. J.R. Maddicott, Thomas of Lancaster 1307-22 (Oxford, 1970), pp.49, 290-1. Lancaster also feed Geoffrey Scrope in 1313-14, ibid., p.49.

50. C.P.R. 1321-24, p.88; C.F.R. 1319-27, p.152.

51. C.C.R. 1318-23, p.712; C.P.R. 1324-27, p.14.

was an office held by men of great position⁽⁵²⁾. Indeed Piers Gaveston had held the post in 1310. Nevertheless Scrope seems a strange choice for the post, especially since no other royal justice had ever been appointed to it. Yet there seems to be no evidence that Scrope was in disgrace prior to his removal from the bench. On 4 March 1323 he received a life grant of the manors of Uckerby and Caldwell, forfeited by Andrew Harclay, and on 9 March this was extended to include all the corn growing there. On 3 July, five days before his removal, the grant was extended to include all his heirs⁽⁵³⁾. There may, however, have developed a certain coolness between Scrope and the Despensers. Scrope was never again as active in legal affairs. He exercised the keepership of the forest in person and was still acting as justice of the forest on 7 April 1326. During these years he was a member of only a very few commissions. On 8 November 1324 he was appointed to the commission to make a final peace with Robert Bruce and in December he was on a commission to survey weirs. In 1325, however, he was not appointed to any commissions at all⁽⁵⁴⁾.

Henry Scrope was probably not entirely at ease with the new regime of Isabella and Mortimer. Some months after their arrival in England, on 5 February 1327 Scrope was appointed second justice of the bench, an apparently novel post. Scrope had previously refused the office of chief justice, because he alleged that he felt unequal to

52. T.F. Tout, The Place of the reign of Edward II in English History (Manchester, 1914), p.359.

53. C.P.R. 1321-24 pp.248, 262, 305.

54. P.R.O. Foreign Accounts, E101/130/8 and /9. C.C.R. 1323-27, pp.302, 246, 625. C.P.R. 1324-27, pp.46, 74, 287, 289, 256; C.C.R. 1323-7, pp.652, 569.

the labours of the office⁽⁵⁵⁾. It is possible that this was a diplomatic response on Scrope's part, although admittedly he was nearly sixty years of age by this time. Scrope, however, renewed his participation on commissions at least until December 1330. He was treated favourably in that year when in response to his petition the king remitted Scrope's service on his manor of Bayford, from 20s 2 3/4d to 1d per annum. Shortly after Mortimer's arrest on 19 December 1330 Scrope was made chief baron of the Exchequer. This promotion was what could be expected by most senior justices towards the end of their careers. After 1330 Scrope appeared on no more commissions, although he occasionally acted as chief justice during the absence of his brother Geoffrey. On 18 November 1333 Scrope was referred to as chief justice, but on the next day was again baron of the exchequer. This may have been a clerical error, or perhaps there were attempts to promote him against his will. Less and less is known of Scrope in the final years of his life. In 1334 he acquired some property from the bishop of Ely in Holborn, which then became known as Scrope's Inn. Two years later he died and was buried at St. Agatha's, Easby⁽⁵⁶⁾.

55. C.P.R. 1327-30, p.7. On 1 March 1327 Scrope's appointment was confirmed in this manner, Henry Scrope who was chief justice of the king's bench "has represented that he is no longer equal to such labours.... the king is not willing yet to lose his service, has appointed him second justice in the same court. Lest this lowering of rank should give rise to suspicion, it is notified that the change has been made for the king's advantage, for the benefit of the people of the realm, and to spare his labours, and for no other reason'. C.P.R. 1327-30, p.25.

56. Scrope did act as Chief justice of the king's bench, 28 October 1329-19 Dec. 1330, during the absence of his brother. D.N.B., pp.51, 137. P.R.O. Ancient Petitions, SC8/242/12087. C.P.R. 1327-30, 495. C.P.R. 1330-34, pp.29, 477, 482. John Lehmann, Holborn (London, 1970), p.321.

Geoffrey Scrope survived his brother by only six years, exhausted perhaps by a very active career. Politically Geoffrey Scrope had been much more partisan and pragmatic than his brother. He was closely associated with Edward II, conducting the hated eyre of London in 1320, for which, in 1326, the Londoners were said to have wanted to kill him. He also tried the rebels who were captured after Boroughbridge in 1322 (including Thomas of Lancaster himself); received many grants from the Despencers and was knighted in 1323, the year in which Mortimer is said to have wanted him dead. Yet in 1326, when Mortimer and Isabella returned to England, Geoffrey Scrope remained perfectly secure and continued in office as chief justice. Likewise he continued in office after Edward III assumed power in 1330 continuing as chief justice until his death in 1340. The stability of his position can be explained in terms of the indispensibility of professional lawyers. Geoffrey's position seems to have been more secure than Henry's, who may have been less of a 'trimmer'. Henry was certainly less successful under the Despencers and Isabella and Mortimer than Geoffrey, which perhaps indicates that family ties do not always dictate political choices⁽⁵⁷⁾.

The careers of Henry and Geoffrey Scrope accordingly indicate the extent to which it was now possible for members of the laity to advance themselves through the study of the law. The legal profession was indeed the 'growth industry' of the late thirteenth and fourteenth century. It had proved an extremely shrewd step for both brothers to exploit this new avenue of advancement in the interests of themselves and their family. If Chaucer had been writing a century earlier his portrait of the man of law would scarcely have been recognisable. Until the mid-thirteenth century most courts had been staffed largely by ecclesiastics; litigants either represented themselves or were represented by their attorneys, who were often friends, relatives or officials such as bailiffs. The expansion of statute law and the increasing complexity of writs encouraged the growth of a professional lawyer class. The sums the earl of Lincoln paid in 1304-05 for

57. Stones, E.H.R., pp.1-18.

counsel and pleading indicate the demand that existed for legal expertise. Most magnates and ecclesiastical institutions seem to have needed expert legal advice on the management of their affairs. The two Scrope brothers, then, developed skills which were in demand at exactly the right time for the family fortunes. They were not the only family to do so; the Bourghiers counted a lawyer among their early successful ancestors; the Stonor estates were accumulated from the profits of a legal career; the Pastons owed much of their prominence to their legal expertise. Indeed as Professor Ives has recently argued, 'The family which could afford to send the heir to be trained as a lawyer was placing its money where it could yield the most rapid and considerable social dividend'⁽⁵⁸⁾.

There were however drawbacks for those who entered and prospered in the legal profession. It has already been argued that lawyers were likely to have encountered resentment, largely because of their wealth. Socially, however, the lawyer's position remained ambiguous. It may be that he gained some kudos by being closely associated with a noble household or by entering royal service. Yet contemporaries regarded lawyers as socially inferior. This is quite clearly stated in the Scrope versus Grosvenor case; when Richard Scrope was taunted with the rebuke that he could not be a gentleman (gentilhomme) because his father was a lawyer⁽⁵⁹⁾. It was not until the fifteenth century that lawyers were accorded the title of gentlemen. This may indeed indicate partly why no other members of the family entered the same profession. It was not until the next generation that the family were to enter the ranks of the lower nobility. While Henry and Geoffrey had provided the means to establish a noble dynasty, it was up to their sons to effect it.

58. T.F.T. Plucknett, A Concise History of the Common Law (5th ed. London, 1956), 217. For a discussion of lawyers and the development of the legal profession see also ibid., pp.215-231 and A. Harding, The Law Courts of Medieval England (London, 1973), pp.75-78 E.W. Ives, The Common Lawyers of Pre-Reformation England (Cambridge, 1983), p.32.

59. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, p.181; A. Wagner, English Genealogy (Oxford, 1960), p.189.

CHAPTER TWO

RICHMONDSHIRE AND ITS LORDS

'The hole cuntery of Richmontshire by este from the hylles and dales is plentiful of whete, rye and meately good medowes and woodes'(1).

It has been seen that Sir Henry and Sir Geoffrey Scrope, chief justices, invested their wealth in land in the north western part of the North Riding known as Richmondshire. This area remained the territorial base of the Scopes thereafter, and an appreciation of its political, social and economic context is therefore essential in order to understand the success of the family.

A. The Honour of Richmond

In 1399, Ralph Neville, the first earl of Westmorland, was granted the honour of Richmond, an event which was greeted with protest by the Commons,

'Item mesme le Lundy, les Communes monstrerent au Roy, come ils avoient fait par devant, coment le Duc de Bretaigne leur avoit envoiez, q'il feust prest de faire a notre dit Sire le Roy tout ceo q'a luy attient: En priant, que nulles Lettres patentes, n'autre Grante, serroit faire a nully del Contee de Richemond, quel est l'eritage du dit Duc: Et coment puis leur darrein prier ensi a luy faite, certeinez Lettres patentes feurent faitz au Cont de Westmerland du dite Contee de Richemond. Et sur ceo prierent a mesme notre Sire le Roi, que si ascunes tieles lettres patentes feurent grantez ou issez, q'ils feroient repellez. A quoi mesme notre Sire le Roy respondi, que nulles lettres feurent

1. Leland's Itineraries, IV, ed. L. Toulmin-Smith (London, 1964), p.32.

n'enseallez de novel, autres que feurent grantez de long temps
davaunt ascune priere ensi faite a mesme notre Sire le Roy'⁽²⁾.

The Commons' defence of the Duke of Brittany's rights is rather surprising in view of the fact that these dukes had not been in secure possession of the honour for at least a century. Nor was the granting of the honour to Ralph Neville particularly unexpected, since Lord John Neville had already held the honour from 1381 as its 'governor'⁽³⁾. Perhaps the point of their indignation was that this grant represented the end of the duke of Brittany's hopes of recovering the lands, since the lands were now being conferred on someone who was outside the English king's immediate family. More important it indicated a serious alteration in the distribution of territorial power in this area. Whereas for the previous three centuries no one resident lord had dominated the region, it was now in the hands of a powerful and ambitious neighbour, who was able to use the area as an administrative centre and as a recruiting ground.

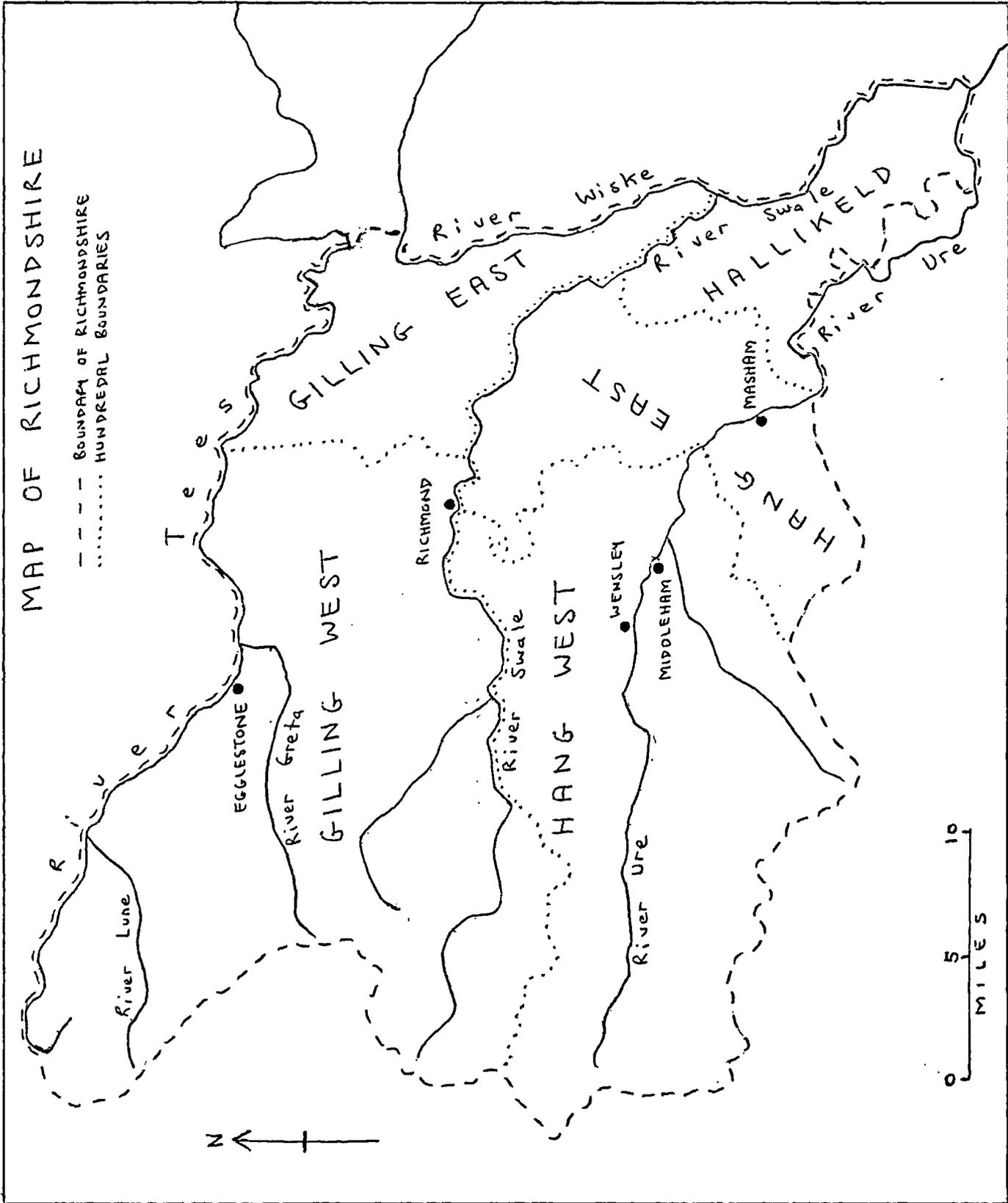
The term 'Richmondshire' was first used in 1174 to describe the North Yorkshire lands held by the earl of Richmond. The earliest reference to the 'honour of Richmond' occurred in 1218 and described the lands held by the earl in eleven counties throughout England. These lands had been granted to Count Alan of Brittany before the Domesday survey of 1086, where they had been described simply as 'terra Alani Comitatis'. By the late twelfth century Richmondshire comprised about 1000 square miles of land in the five wapentakes of Hang West and Hang East, Gilling West and Gilling East and Hallikeld. Although the wapentake of Hallikeld was described as part of the West Riding in 1086 it was always subsequently referred to as part of the honour of Richmond. The area took its name from the fortification built after the conquest by Count Alan which he called 'Richmond' meaning 'strong hill' and which also gave its name to the borough of

2. Rotuli Parliamentorum, III, p.427.

3. C.P.R. 1377-81, pp. 74; 620. The Duke of Brittany had mortgaged his lands in Richmondshire to Neville and appointed him governor of the lands.

MAP OF RICHMOND SHIRE

--- BOUNDARY OF RICHMOND SHIRE
 HUNDREDAL BOUNDARIES



ADAPTED FROM A MAP IN C.T. CLAY, ED., EARLY YORKSHIRE CHARTERS, VOL. VI, THE HONOUR OF RICHMOND, PART II.

Richmond which grew up around the castle⁽⁴⁾.

The two large but poorly populated wapentakes of Gilling West and Hang West extended over the Pennines and formed the western border of Richmondshire. To the north the 'shire' was bounded by the river Tees and in the east and south the area was drained by the rivers Wiske, Swale and Tees. The geological structure of the area lies within the carboniferous limestone series, described by Fieldhouse and Jennings as 'layers of limestone, shales and sandstone deposited in the marine basin formed by earlier mountain folding'. Deposits of millstone grit can be found in the river valley of the Swale. The geology of the area has also produced mineral deposits such as coal and lead. The Pennines rose up from the carboniferous deposits and natural erosion created the river valleys characteristic of the dales. The effects of glaciation transformed the river valleys depositing clay, gravel and sand debris thereby improving the quality of soil on the valley bottom. On higher ground the soil remains a combination of crumbly well-drained limestone and heavier, wetter shale, suitable mainly for pasture and meadow. Although the river valleys were potentially the most fertile, Anglian settlers would have found the land too swampy and forested to settle and began cultivating the higher ground, just above the woodland. The Scandinavian settlers also preferred to keep to the higher ground and it was not until after 1066 that the more prosperous part of the honour between the Pennine foothills and the river Swale became settled and cultivated⁽⁵⁾. Pastoral farming, because of the climate and soil, always remained the dominant feature of the agrarian economy of this area, as John Leland noted, 'Wensedale and the soil about is very hilly and berith little come, but norisith

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4. V.C.H. North Riding, ed. W. Page, I, p.1. A.H. Smith, The Place Names of the North Riding of Yorkshire (English Place Name Society, V, Cambridge 1928), pp. 218, 287.
 5. A. Raistrick, The Pennine Dales, (London, 1968) pp.79, 91. R. Fieldhouse and B. Jennings, A History of Richmond and Swaledale (London, 1978), pp.1-8.

many bestes'(6).

The value of the honour of Richmond to its holder must have lain partly in the compactness of the North Riding estates which it conferred on him. As has been seen, in common with all feudal honours established after the Conquest, the honour of Richmond contained manors scattered throughout the kingdom, from Yorkshire as far away as Sussex, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire. The majority were, however, in Yorkshire for Count Alan of Brittany, the first tenant of the honour, held a total of 199 manors in the North Riding, of which 108 were said in 1086 to be waste. Such a concentration of manors in the North Riding gives some indication as to the original purpose of the honour, and its major function was probably to suppress further resistance to the Conqueror after 1069-70. The honour of Richmond, as it became known, was also established to provide a base for the colonisation and development of north-west Yorkshire following its conquest and the land to the south and west of Richmond seems to have been the first to be settled and developed by the Normans. Finally the honour probably had a subsidiary function as a defence against the Scots, although this military role was never very evident in practice⁽⁷⁾. The proximity of the region to the Pennines meant that travel thereabouts was not particularly easy, as Archbishop Melton realised on his visitation of the archdeaconry of Richmond, which straddled both sides of the Pennines⁽⁸⁾. Partly for this reason the archdeaconry enjoyed uniquely independent status. The difficulty of the terrain and the compactness of the lordship of Richmond must have helped to give this part of the North Riding a sense of independence

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6. Leland's Itineraries, IV, ed. L. Toulmin Smith, p.27.
 7. W.E. Kapelle, The Norman Conquest of the North (North Carolina, 1979), p.145; Fieldhouse and Jennings, History of Richmond pp.8-12. For charters and documents relating to the honour of Richmond see, R. Gale, Registrum Honoris Richmond (1722). F.M. Stenton, William the Conqueror (London, 1908), p.324.
 8. R. Hill, The Labourer in the Vineyard (Borthwick Paper, no. 35, 1968), pp.7-9.

and coherence.

That the area had some sense of identity is suggested in the reference to the 'Contee de Richemond' within the Commons' petition of 1399. In fact it may be argued that at least by the end of the thirteenth century the concept of Richmondshire had developed⁽⁹⁾. The area was never in fact given county status; but by the middle of the fourteenth century it was treated as a separate part of the North Riding for taxation purposes. In 1268 the bailiffs of Richmond tried to claim equal status with the sherriff of York, refusing entry to the king's bailiffs, on the grounds

'quod si scribatur alicui de Richem'skyre per breve de recto, quod petenti plenum rectum teneat, et nisi fecerit vice comes faciat, et defalta curie ipsius cui scribatur sufficienter probata, illam summonicionem nisi breve de recto originale prius veniat in curia de Richem' sicut in Comitatu.'⁽¹⁰⁾

It was probably no coincidence, however, that in this year the honour had reverted to the crown and the bailiffs' resistance to royal authority may have been a piece of self-preservation. It seems clear that in Richmondshire local loyalties were to the local region rather than the large county of Yorkshire itself.

'In the final analysis the attractions, the fairness' of a lordship were in direct proportion to its financial value'⁽¹¹⁾. Judged in these terms the lordship of Richmond was indeed a fair one.

9. A.H. Smith, Place Names, p.218.

10. Yorkshire Inquisitions I, ed. W. Brown, (Y.A.S. Rec. Ser., xii, 1892), p.34, no. xxxvii, The Lay Subsidy of 1334 ed. R. Glasscock (British Academy Records of Social and Economic History New Series 11, London, 1975) p.371.

11. R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the March of Wales (Oxford, 1978), p. 176.

The traditional value of the honour was 2,000 marks, which was the size of the annuity Queen Eleanor received in lieu of the lands in 1268. More accurate assessments were made in 1280-82, when several extents were made of the honour, and in 1280 its total value was given as 2,711 1/2 marks 17 1/2 d⁽¹²⁾. An extent made in 1282 of the Yorkshire lands of the honour gave a total value of £1,221 7s 11 1/2d. The value of the lands in the Agenais, given in exchange for the honour, was given as £2,619 5s 6d, and was said to exceed the value of the honour of Richmond by £813, thus giving a value for the honour of £1,806, almost exactly the sum given in 1280⁽¹³⁾. The Yorkshire estates provided most of the income, while the lands elsewhere provided about £600 per annum. Throughout the fourteenth century the value of the lands remained reasonably stable, to judge from the very few accounts which survive for the period. It has been suggested that in the fourteenth century the earl of Richmond could expect to derive an income of £2,000 gross from his estates, mainly from his Yorkshire and Lincolnshire manors⁽¹⁴⁾. In fact this may be an inflated estimate for even official estimates were lower. In 1384, when the honour was assigned to Queen Anne of Bohemia, the lands were said to be worth £1,000⁽¹⁵⁾. The lordship of Richmond must accordingly have been a most attractive prize, providing an annual income of £1,000-2,000, it would have been a welcome addition to any noble's income. It was at least the equivalent of what the Marcher lords could expect to derive from their larger lordships.

Unfortunately account rolls for the honour are lacking, possibly burnt in the destruction of the Savoy in 1381. It is impossible therefore to say what proportion of his income the earl derived from

12. This amount was equivalent to £1,802 8s 1 1/2d see Cal.I.P.M. Edward I, II, pp.211, no, 381.

13. Yorkshire Inquisitions I, ed. W. Brown (Y.A.S., Rec.Ser., xii, 1892), p.237, note a.

14. M. Jones, Ducal Brittany (Oxford, 1979), p. 183.

15. C.P.R. 1381-85, p.511.

rents, demesne farming and judicial sources. There is no evidence to suggest that the earldom offered the opportunity to gain such extraordinary revenue from the tenantry on the scale which the Marcher lords were able to gain within their lordships and as the earl of Chester was able to do in Cheshire. Nor, as far as may be seen, did the lord of Richmondshire exploit much of the land directly. In fact ever since the grant of the vast collection of estates to Count Alan the manors had been parcelled out in various fees amongst approximately twelve major families.

Until the mid fourteenth century the earl of Richmond was usually an absentee lord. Before 1399 the honour was held either by the Duke of Brittany or the king or a member of the English royal family. Apart from being a valuable asset the honour also proved a useful lever in Anglo-French and particularly Anglo-Breton diplomacy. From 1171 onwards, when the honour first escheated to the crown, every opportunity was exploited by English monarchs to gain possession of the honour. In 1235 Peter de Dreux forfeited the lands because of his alliance with the French. Henry III secured the lands by granting them to Queen Eleanor's uncle, Peter of Savoy. In turn he bequeathed them to the queen who granted them to the king⁽¹⁶⁾. During the fourteenth century the problem was exacerbated by a disputed succession in Brittany and the outbreak of Anglo-French hostilities. Throughout the early phase of the Hundred Year's War the honour was used as a pawn in all negotiations. From 1345-1372 the honour was held by John of Gaunt, then still a minor. Accordingly his mother received much of the revenue. However on 14 July 1372 Gaunt surrendered the lands, allegedly for the good of the realm, but in fact in exchange for the lordship of Tickhill⁽¹⁷⁾. The honour was then given to John de Montfort, who had fled to England after renouncing his allegiance to France. He remained in England until

16. For a detailed account of the descent of the honour, T. Clark, 'Richmond Castle', Y.A.J., ix (1886), pp. 33-54.

17. John of Gaunt's Register, ed. S. Armitage Smith (Camden Society, third series, xx, 1911), p.10.

1381, when the annexation of Brittany by the French king Charles V prompted the Bretons to ask their lord to return. The subsequent rapprochement between the French king and the Breton duke ended the possibility of uniting the Breton lands with the honour of Richmond. In 1382-3 the honour was held by Richard II, although his sister Joan, duchess of Brittany was permitted to enjoy the revenues. In 1384 Queen Anne received a grant of the lands. The duke of Brittany made frequent approaches to Parliament for the restitution of the honour, but to no avail⁽¹⁸⁾. From 1386 to 1391 the duke received many grants of the estate, but none were effective⁽¹⁹⁾. In August 1389 the duke was negotiating for the exchange of Richmond for castles in Guienne⁽²⁰⁾. In 1393, he complained that he had been dispossessed of Richmond for nine years and in 1396 an embassy was sent to England to negotiate the return of Richmond without success. It was only in 1398 that Jean IV was successful, when a renunciation by him of all the revenues from Richmond annexed to the crown in return for cancellation of his personal debts of £15,000 seems to have paved the way for a restoration of the honour. His triumph was short lived, for on the accession of Henry IV the honour was granted to the earl of Westmorland and thereafter it remained at the disposal of the crown⁽²¹⁾.

Even when the dukes of Brittany were in possession of the honour they spent very little time there. In the eleventh and twelfth

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18. J.J.N. Palmer, England, France and Christendom (London, 1971) p. 133.
 19. Jones, Ducal Brittany p.172.
 20. Diplomatic Correspondence of Richard II, ed. E. Perroy (Camden Society, third series, xiviii, 1933), p.66.
 21. V.C.H. North Riding, pp. 10-11. G.A. Knowlson, 'Jean V Duc de Bretagne et L'Angleterre', Archives Historiques de Bretagne, 2 (1964). P Jeulin, 'Un grand honneur Anglais. Aperçus sur le comte de Richmond en Angleterre, possession des ducs de Bretagne (1069-1398)'. Annales de Bretagne, xlii (1935), pp. 265-302.

centuries, judging by the provenance of their charters they rarely left Brittany and throughout the fourteenth century their Breton lands remained their favoured residence. Even when in exile in England the earl confined himself to residing in his southern estates, largely ignoring the north⁽²²⁾.

What were the implications of this absenteeism for the honour and its inhabitants? There is some evidence of decay in the borough of Richmond from the beginning of the century. In February 1313 the Duke was granted murage on all the goods coming into the city and in 1337 a further grant of murage was made for five years. This, however, must have been inadequate, for in June 1358 Gaunt was granted all the fines made under the Statute of Labourers for the repair of his castle, houses and walls at Richmond⁽²³⁾. Three years later in 1361 Gaunt ordered John de Lasyncroft and Nicholas de Bolton to do repairs at Richmond castle⁽²⁴⁾. If the borough seems to have suffered from the early neglect of the Breton earls, at least John of Gaunt took some steps to amend it. Absenteeism may have encouraged hostility and unrest within the region. In November 1308, Henry Scrope was on a commission to investigate the burning of the duke of Brittany's house at Arkelgarth. In May 1322 a more serious incident occurred, apparently while the duke was in the country. He complained that while he was attending Parliament his castle at Bowes was invaded and he was prevented from collecting tolls. The hall in his castle was burnt and 4 tuns of wine (worth £20) were consumed. His castle was left unguarded in the face of the Scots and the invaders hunted in his

22. Jones, Ducal Brittany p.174.

23. C.P.R. 1321-4, p. 157; C.P.R. 1327-30, p.402; C.P.R. 1334-8, p. 414. There were frequent grants of murage throughout the fourteenth century: C.P.R. 1358-61, pp. 61, 574, 217, 404, 484; C.P.R. 1399-1401, p. 283. For repairs to Richmond castle, C.P.R. 1307-13, p.125; C.P.R. 1321-4, p.157; C.P.R. 1358-61, pp.61, 574.

24. C.P.R. 1358-61, p. 574.

chace⁽²⁵⁾.

It could be well argued that such prolonged absenteeism on the part of the overlord of Richmondshire reduced the opportunities for lesser families to benefit from his patronage. In this context the analogy of fourteenth century Cheshire may be a instructive. Cheshire by virtue of its palatine status enjoyed a good deal of autonomy from royal authority throughout the medieval period, particularly in the spheres of taxation and parliamentary representation. Its chief lord by the fourteenth century was a member of the royal family who held the title of earl of Chester. Needless to say the earl was rarely present in his earldom. Cheshire did not itself foster so large a group of families as those associated with the North Riding. Yet when the earl of Chester took a direct interest in the county the inhabitants achieved a good deal of prominence at national level most obviously when the palatinate was held by the Black Prince and by Richard II. However, although Cheshire produced many talented individuals who pursued military, clerical and legal careers in England it does not seem to have been a county of opportunity for those families who remained there. Those Cheshire men who were successful were those who chose to leave the county rather than to remain⁽²⁶⁾. The agrarian economy of Cheshire was such that it was unlikely to produce a large number of very wealthy families it was service to a great lord, whether military or administrative, which did much to foster the successful career patterns outlined by Dr. Michael Bennett.

Even if rarely resident in Yorkshire the lord of the honour of Richmond had a considerable amount of patronage at his disposal. In the first place by the end of the fourteenth century the honorial

25. C.P.R. 1321-4, p.157.

26. M. Bennett, Community, Class and Careerism (Cambridge, 1983). M. Bennett, 'Sources and Problems in the study of social mobility: Cheshire in the Later Middle Ages' Journal of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 128 (1979), pp. 59-88.

administration of Richmondshire employed about thirty men. These included the receiver general, and five bailiffs as well as the reeves, parkers and foresters. Not the least influential of these offices was that of bailiff of Richmond, an office held by none other than William Scrope. By 1292 William Scrope had entered the honorial administration as bailiff of Richmond and was described as such again in 1293-4⁽²⁷⁾. This was a responsible post as the bailiffs administered the honorial courts and had come to assume near shrieval status in Richmondshire. Evidently the holder had to have some genuine expertise in legal procedures. The bailiffs were also responsible for collecting the fee farm of the borough of Richmond payable to the earl. It is possible that it was partly because of William Scrope's own practical experience of legal administration that he decided to send his sons to study the law. In his capacity as bailiff, for example, Scrope witnessed two deeds of the earl in the company of fellow Richmondshire landlords; Sir Thomas Lascelles; Sir Harsculph de Cleasby, steward of Richmond; and Sir Roger Oysel, steward of Maria de Neville. These men were clearly already associated with Scrope and were amongst the many local gentry families from whom he and his sons obtained land from⁽²⁸⁾. William Scrope, moreover, could already be listed among the more prominent of the earl's tenants after 1283. In an extent of that year Scrope appeared as one of the tenants of the honour holding directly from the earl a moiety of the manor of East Bolton, which had previously been kept in demesne by the earl⁽²⁹⁾. Unfortunately the documents relating to the administration of the honour have not survived to indicate precisely how this source of patronage was exploited by the earl. Dr Ian Rowney's work on the honour of Tutbury under Lord Hastings has indicated not only what a useful vehicle for patronage such an honour could be, but also that Hastings could not ignore the more important families of the region and accordingly he did not have a completely free hand in building up

27. A.S. Ellis, 'Yorkshire Deeds', Y.A.J., xiii (1895), p.45.

28. Ibid, p.45.

29. Cal.I.P. M. Edward I, ii, p. 222, no. 381.

an affinity⁽³⁰⁾. It is difficult therefore to be certain as to whether the distribution of patronage made a family important or whether it reflected its ready established position.

There were of course more direct ways of serving a fourteenth century magnate than holding one of the offices in his administration and both the later earls of Richmond, Gaunt and Neville, used their honorial territories as a recruiting ground for their retinues. It is not clear whether Gaunt used the honorial offices available to him to build up a separate affinity in Richmond, he may have preferred to absorb the estates into the administration of the Duchy of Lancaster⁽³¹⁾. He did, however, recruit members of the Richmondshire gentry into his retinue. One of the more prominent was Richard Scrope, Lord Bolton. By 1368 Richard Scrope had obtained an annuity from Gaunt of £40 to be levied from the manor of Bainbridge⁽³²⁾. Scrope was not the only member of a prominent Richmondshire family to be retained by Gaunt. On 27 August 1372 Sir John Marmion was retained by Gaunt for life for 40 marks per annum⁽³⁴⁾. The Marmions ranked with the Nevilles of Middleham and the fitz Hughs of Ravensworth as one of the leading families in this area. In 1316 John de Marmion was lord of more manors than either of those families⁽³⁵⁾; his estates

30. I. Rowney, 'The Hastings Affinity in Staffordshire and the Honour of Tutbury', B.I.H.R., vii (1984), pp. 35-46.

31. Gaunt's Register, 1, nos. 24-9. Certainly William de Nessfeld, Gaunt's Chief Steward of the northern counties of Northumberland, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Chester and William Bailey, his feodar of Yorkshire, were ordered to hand over Gaunt's Richmondshire lands to the king in 1372.

32. Ibid., nos. 600, 1136.

33. Ibid., no. 1242.

34. Ibid., no. 819.

35. V.C.H. North Riding, i, p. 384.

were based within the wapentake of Hallikeld, while those of his territorial rivals the fitz Hughs and the Nevilles of Middleham were centred in the wapentakes of Gilling West and Hang respectively. Otherwise Gaunt does not seem to have retained many other men from the honour of Richmond, perhaps because he held that honour mainly during his minority and was later forced to surrender it.

A leading baronial family at the North Riding who were not formally retained by John of Gaunt were the fitz Hughs of Ravensworth. Even in the thirteenth century they had been one of the honour's more prominent lords. In 1282 Sir Hugh fitz Henry was perhaps the second more extensive landlord in the honour. He held three and one sixth fees at Cotherstone and Ravensworth, which formed the nucleus of his estates. His lands were worth £112 4d and in addition he held advowsons worth another £120. In the late fourteenth century Sir Henry fitz Hugh increased his territorial stake by marrying the heiress of Sir John de Marmion. This brought him four and a half knight's fees in Tanfield and Marmion, which had been assessed at £80 in 1286. Although not a retainer of Gaunt's, Henry fitz Hugh was a tenant of the duke in his lordship of Pickering and of Tickhill. Fitz Hugh may have aspired to the honour itself for in the 1380's he acquired the farm of the honour from Queen Anne of Bohemia⁽³⁶⁾.

Already by the late thirteenth century, however, the most powerful family in the region was undoubtedly the Nevilles of Middleham. As early as 1280 they held very substantial territorial assets there. Maria de Neville held three knight's fees at Middleham, Snape and Carlton in Coverdale, valued at £200 together with advowsons worth another £200⁽³⁷⁾. In terms of the sheer number of manors she held Maria was not the most powerful lord in the area. In these terms she ranked only fourth in 1316, when John de Marmion held fourteen

36. Yorkshire Inquisitions 1, ed. W. Brown (Y.A.S. Rec. Ser., xii, 1892), p. 234. C. Ross, The Yorkshire Baronage, 1399-1435, (unpublished Oxford D. Phil., thesis 1950) pp. 10, 234.

37. Yorkshire Inquisitions I, ed. W. Brown, (Y.A.S. Rec. Ser, xii, 1892), p. 231.

manors, the earl of Richmond thirteen, Henry fitz Hugh twelve and Maria de Neville nine⁽³⁸⁾. In terms of assessed wealth, however, she undoubtedly represented the richest family by 1280. It is worth noting that ranking families according to the number of manors held by them may give an inaccurate impression of their relative positions. From Maria de Neville descended the powerful Neville dynasty of Raby and Middleham. Her great grandson John Neville, (d. 1388) was retained by Gaunt and became governor of Richmond and his own son Ralph was elevated to the earldom of Westmorland.

During the course of the fourteenth century, other prominent Richmondshire families disappeared largely through their inability to produce heirs. In 1280 Sir Robert Tatershall was one of the wealthiest landlords, holding three and a half knight's fees worth £200 and advowsons worth £70. He had married very well, to one of the Neville coheiresses, but this match had produced only one daughter, Joan de Driby, and the estate later disintegrated⁽³⁹⁾. Similarly the extensive Bedale fee held by Sir Brian fitz Alan which consisted of six knight's fees worth over £200 per annum at the end of the thirteenth century, was divided between Sir Brian's daughters⁽⁴⁰⁾. The example of the Marmion estate has already been cited. Frequent failure must have encouraged social mobility even in a society which was relatively conservative in its attitudes to newcomers⁽⁴¹⁾.

38. Ibid., passim.

39. Yorkshire Inquisitions I, p. 231. Cal.I.P.M. Edward I, iii, pp. 214, 221. The Tatershall estates were divided between several coheiresses, see Kirkby's Inquisition, ed. R.H. Skaife (Surtees Society, 49, 1866), p. 311, note a.

40. V.C.H. North Riding, i, p. 384.

41. S. Thrupp, 'The Problem of Conservatism in Fifteenth Century England, Speculum, 18, (1943) pp.363-68.

It is also striking that Richmondshire produce a group of gentry families whose incomes were comparatively high, a feature stressed by Dr. Pollard in trying to explain the prominence of the Richmondshire gentry in the fifteenth century. In this later century the Nevilles were able to mobilise this wealth in a deliberate fashion not at all so evident in the fourteenth century⁽⁴²⁾.

In conclusion it must be admitted that a simple correlation between retaining and lordship and the rise of certain Richmondshire families is not altogether easy to sustain. In the first place the absenteeism of the dukes of Brittany in the early fourteenth century meant that the opportunities for service to an influential lord were reduced. Some of the leading families of Richmondshire were of course later to be found in Gaunt's service, but they had already achieved prominence. He alone did not thrust greatness upon them. Indeed the presence in Richmondshire of families, already possessed of large and valuable estates made this a useful area in which magnates might recruit support. Of these families the Scropes come to be the most outstanding of all, even if their ascendancy was to be denied the highest political prize in the region when in 1399 the earldom of Richmond was granted to their neighbours the Nevilles. This robbed the Scropes of the opportunity to augment even further their territorial power in the region where they held their estates. The opportunities for future growth were, with hindsight, ended. The balance of local power in Richmondshire had changed firmly in favour of the Nevilles, unfortunately for the Scropes, who themselves had an ambiguous relationship with this greatest of late medieval families in Yorkshire and Durham.

B. The Economy of Richmondshire in the Fourteenth Century

Despite the scarcity of manorial records an impression of the nature of the regional economy can be derived from the few surviving manorial court rolls (of 1392-1400) relating to the Scrope manor of

42. A.J. Pollard, 'The Richmondshire Gentry', in Power, Patronage and Pedigree, ed. C. Ross (Gloucester, 1979), pp. 37-60.

Thornton Watlass in Hang Wapentake, three miles to the south west of Bedale⁽⁴³⁾. The court appears to have been held twice a year, usually in January and August, though these dates occasionally varied by a month or two. The rolls are short and because they relate only to one manor over a limited period they cannot indicate any long-term developments in the local economy. Nevertheless they remain one of the best direct sources of evidence available to us. Thornton Watlass was still administered by manorial reeves by the end of the century, but there is nevertheless no evidence that this manor was still held in demesne. In fact, there is one reference to the letting out of the demesne in two halves. The rolls also record the existence of several tenants at will and no labour services are recorded as owing, as might be expected on a manor with no demesne cultivation. One of the most common offences was that of brewing against the assize. Most other offences, however, refer to the straying of animals and encroachments on pasture, often by very large flocks of sheep sometimes by three hundred of them. Sheep seem to be the most numerous and commonly kept animals, but there are also references to stray oxen and to two horses who destroyed two fields of corn. Otherwise there were penalties for those stealing fish and catching deer. By far the most common offence, however, was breaking into the lord's woods and stealing oaks, sticks and hay - even the rector was guilty of this.

These court rolls accordingly indicate an economy based largely on pastoral farming with sheep forming the main livestock. There was some arable farming too but not in great quantities. Woods and fishing were also alternative sources of income. In all the rolls there is only the slightest hint of economic recession, only one or two houses being described as decayed. Nor does there seem to have been any problem in finding new tenants for holdings surrendered in the lord's court. For example, when in 1395 William Forman returned to

43. N.Y.C.R.O., ZJX 3/1/637. The court rolls have survived because, after the forfeiture of Henry, lord Scrope of Masham, the manor passed to Jervaulx abbey, who preserved them with their archive.

the court a messuage and four and a half bovates of the demesne lands, these were taken up by Thomas Seriant for 24s and 10d per annum. Horse-rearing may have been an additional occupation in this region, for in 1393 twelve men were fined for entering the pastures at Clifton with two and three horses each. It would be surprising to find evidence of any other type of farming in the court rolls, since the agricultural opportunities for lords and tenants alike were limited in Richmondshire as a whole given the nature of the terrain and quality of the soil. The frequent references in the Scrope Cartulary to bercaria and the numerous place names ending in cote for example, 'Gaynecote' in Burton on Ure, likewise confirm the dependence of this area on sheep⁽⁴⁴⁾. Not surprisingly the Scrope estates contained fulling mills for processing the wool, while the borough of Richmond was the local centre for dyeing wool.

Production for the wool and cloth industry was itself no doubt likely to provide an important source of income in the circumstances of the late medieval economy; but it is less than certain that the fourteenth century was a prosperous period for the region. A recent history of Swaledale and Richmondshire has argued that virtually as soon as the thirteenth century came to a close the region entered a period of depression which was to last for almost two centuries. Much of the evidence for this decline has come from taxation sources, which are in themselves difficult to interpret. Before examining this particular evidence and the impression it conveys, one factor peculiar to the economy of northern England in this period should be considered - the impact of the Scottish raids.

44. Scrope Cartulary nos. 515, 520, 564, 716.

That Scottish raids in the period after Bannockburn were very devastating indeed was frequently believed by contemporaries and has been stressed by modern historians. It has been argued that 'The constant drain on resources caused by burning, plundering, and paying tribute to the Scots seriously affected the economic vitality of Richmondshire during the second and third decades of the fourteenth century'⁽⁴⁵⁾. There can be little doubt about the extent of the raiding: in 1314, for example, the Scots marauded as far as Richmond, 'cum non modico exercitu fines Angliae boriales usque Rychemundiam depraedarent et per incendium patrias devastantes reversi sunt, secum captivos plurimos abducentes'⁽⁴⁶⁾. In 1317 they ravaged as far as Northallerton and two years later they reached Myton on Swale. The Yorkshire clergy were particularly vociferous in their reactions to these plundering raids. In 1315 Archbishop Greenfield ordered the Friars Preachers at York and the Friars Minor at Richmond to preach against the Scots⁽⁴⁷⁾. In 1322 Archbishop Melton wrote to Pope John XXII, 'et praesertim magnam partem archidiaconatus Rychmond nimis excessive, quod planctu lamentabili graviter ingemisco ecclesiastica pleraque aedificia, villas et maneria reducens immaniter in cineram et favillam'⁽⁴⁸⁾. In 1328 the abbot of Egglestone asked to be released from paying the clerical tenth because of the Scottish invasion. A commission was appointed to re-tax the house and discovered that it was in a very impoverished state, 'unde nil invenimus taxandum ibidem de qua aliqua decima exigi poterit vel levari'⁽⁴⁹⁾. As late as 1363 Fountains Abbey was complaining that many of their granges were, 'lost,

45. Fieldhouse and Jennings, History of Richmond, p. 57.

46. Chronicle of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, ed. W. Stubbs, II (Rolls series, 76, 1883) p. 47.

47. Historical Letters and Papers from Northern Registers, ed. J. Raine (Rolls series, 61, 1873), p. 238.

48. Ibid., p. 315.

49. Ibid., pp. 353-54. See also B. Harvey, 'The Population Trend in England, 1300 to 1348' T.R.H.S., 5th Series XVI, (1965), p.36.

burnt and reduced to nothing'. On the basis of such references Dr. Colin Platt has argued that one of the major causes of the demise of the monastic grange was the damage caused by the Scots⁽⁵⁰⁾.

On the whole, however, the contemporary complaints against the Scots would be far more convincing had they not been made on each occasion to avoid some financial exaction. The Scots were no doubt a perfectly plausible excuse to use, but the Yorkshire clergy became adept at exploiting this issue to avoid paying taxation. The real damage done by the Scots is hard to assess. The destruction of a season's crops, the loss of sheep and cattle, were undoubtedly immediately highly damaging, but were not perhaps likely to have caused much long-term damage. Moreover it was easy to buy off the raiders. In 1321 the people of Richmond paid the Scots to stay away and were specifically included in the treaty with the Scots until 1328⁽⁵¹⁾. On the whole the Scottish raids probably only irritated a regional economy which had already entered a period of long term difficulty. In 1318 Bolton Priory suffered at the hands of the Scots, its mills were destroyed and herds of cattle seized, as a result its taxation assessment was cut by 90%. Yet, Dr. Kershaw warns us, 'The priory's plight in 1317/18 cannot be wholly, not even mainly, attributed to the Scots, they did no more than add their own contribution to Bolton's woes ..'⁽⁵²⁾. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that the Scrope estates suffered damage from the Scots. Only their Northumberland estates seem to have sustained harm from this source, the inquisition post mortem of Stephen Scrope, lord Masham, taken in 1406, records his Northumberland manors lying waste because

50. C. Platt, The Monastic Grange (New York, 1969), pp. 97-99.

51. C. Clarkson, The History of Richmond (Richmond, 1821), p. 69. R. Nicholson, Edward III and the Scots (Oxford, 1965), p. 44. J. Scammell, 'Robert I and the North of England', E.H.R., 20 (1958), p. 73.

52. I. Kershaw, Bolton Priory (Oxford, 1973), pp. 67, 168.

of the Scots, but elsewhere no such damage is noted⁽⁵³⁾.

Taxation records remain a more reliable if by no means unproblematic source for reconstructing the trends of the medieval population and economy. For the North Riding of Yorkshire two lay subsidy rolls have been published; that of a fifteenth levied in 1301 and another of the fifteenth of 1334⁽⁵⁴⁾. Detailed comparison between these two is not possible, since the later roll does not list individual contributions, but merely the assessment for each vill. More valuable is the unpublished subsidy roll for the twentieth levied in 1327⁽⁵⁵⁾, which is more detailed and provides the names of individual contributors. Between them these three rolls give a very clear picture of the pattern of lay taxation and some idea of lay wealth. The problems surrounding taxation data are well known. There are no means of assessing the scale of evasion, nor is it possible to be certain what relation the tax bore to income and on which goods it was assessed. Nevertheless, despite these caveats they can give a general impression, particularly in the absence of any other data relating to population.

53. P.R.O. C 137/ 56 m 12. At Whalton, Northumberland, a manor five miles to the south west of Morpeth a capital messuage was burnt and destroyed by the Scots and 160 acres of land and pastures were worth only 40s because of the Scots attacks and a watermill had also been destroyed there.

54. Lay Subsidy Roll, 30 Edward I, ed. W. Brown (Y.A.S.Rec.Ser., xxi, 1897). The Lay Subsidy of 1334, ed. R.E. Glasscock, (British Academy Records of Social and Economic History, new series, II 1975), pp. 371-382.

55. P.R.O. E 179 211/6.

Even more problematical are the records relating to clerical taxation, that is the ninth of 1291, the Nova Taxatio of 1317 and the Inquisitiones Nonarum in 1341⁽⁵⁶⁾. None of these sources give a reliable picture of clerical wealth or income. Dr. Kershaw for example has demonstrated that the assessment in 1317 of Bolton Priory's liability for tax was wildly inaccurate and far too low. With reference to the Nones of 1341 we are similarly warned not to leap to conclusions, 'It is hardly possible to regard the scattered instances of terra frisca in the 1341 returns as the first signs of decline; the period between 1291 and 1341, the early fourteenth century, was one of general stability in the condition of Wealden agriculture⁽⁵⁷⁾. Nevertheless, it is hard to ignore the relentless weight of evidence in the Nones of arable land ceasing to be cultivated. This evidence, taken together with the lay subsidy returns, suggests that population was probably already in decline or levelling off in the North Riding before the Black Death, the catastrophe usually held responsible for severe economic depression.

The drop in yield from the lay subsidy in 1301 compared with 1334 was in the region of 50 to 66% (see Table 1). In 1301 the North Riding paid £1668 13s 9 3/4d whereas in 1334 only £582 16s 1d was collected. Nowhere else in Yorkshire was the fall quite so dramatic. The West Riding's contribution fell from £989 15s 8 1/4d to £738 10s 8 1/2d; the East Riding had paid £1118 11s 4 1/2d but in 1334 paid only

56. Taxatio Ecclesiastica Anglia et Wallia auctoritate P. Nicolai IV, circa A.D. 1291 (Record Commission, 1802). Nonarum Inquisitiones temp. Edward III (Record Commission, 1807). R. Graham, 'The Taxation of Pope Nicholas IV', E.H.R., XXIII (1908), pp. 434-54.

57. A. Baker, 'Evidence in the Nonarum Inquisitiones of Contracting Arable Lands in England during the early fourteenth century'. Econ. H.R., 2nd series, xix (1966), pp. 518-32, see note 74.

Table 1: Comparison of Subsidy Paid in 1301 with 1334

Vill [Hang Wapentake]	Assessment	
	1301	1334
Hackforth	£3 1s 8 3/4d	£1 4s
Newton Le Willows with Ruswick	£2 17s 10 1/4d	£1 14s
Ainderby Myres with Holtby	£2	£1 2s
Thornton Watlass	£1 17s 3 3/4d	£1 4s
Snape with Thorpe Perrow	£3 7s 10 1/2d	18s
Well with Noster- field	£3 6 1/2d	18s
Hunton	£3 1/4d	£1 2s 0d
Hessleton	£1 1s 1d	12s
Burton on Ure	£1 17s 4d	£1 6s 8d
Masham	£3 1s 10d	£1 14s
Thim with Clifton on Ure	£1.13 7d	6s
Swinton	£3 10s 6 1/2d	13s 4d
Iilton	£2 9s 5 1/2s	15s 4d
Healey	£2 15s 1 1/4d	15s 4d
Fearby	£2 15s 1 1/4d	15s 4d
Ellington	£3 14s 7d	£1 8s 8d
Ellingstring	11s 3 1/4d	6s 8d
Bainbridge	£19 13s 1/4d	£4
Askrigg	£3 2d	£1 17s
Thornton Rust	£2 12s 1/4d	£1 2s
Carperby		£2
Aysgarth	£2 10s 11 1/4d	£1 5s
Thorlby	£7 3s 1/4d	£2 13s
East Bolton	£3 10s	£ 2s
West Bolton	17s 10 1/4d	13s 4d
Thoresby	15s 1d	6s
Rednire	£3 5s 4 1/4d	£1 8s 4d
Preston under Scar	£2 5s	16s
West Witton	£2 16s 8d	15s
Ellerton with Stainton	£1 1/2d	£1 10s
Walburn	£1 2d	15s
Downholme	£1 4s 11 1/2d	15s 4d
Hudswell	£3 4s 3d	14s
Bellerby	£3 11s 3/4d	15s
Barden	£1 10s	£1 2s
West Hauxwell	£1 10s 8 3/4d	£1 2s
East Hauxwell	£2 10s 7d	£1 10s
Leyburn	£4 3s 4d	£1 16s
Hamby	£2 12s 9d	8s
Spennithorne	£2 3s 9d	£2 1s
Danby on Ure	£2 10s 5 1/2d	£1 10s
Thornton Steward	£4 3/4d	£1 15s
Constable Burton	£2 14s 9d	13s
Hutton Hang	£2 17s 3/4d	8s 6d

£979 6s⁽⁵⁸⁾. Far from producing the largest amount of tax, in 1334 the North Riding produced the smallest. The decline seems to have been general. Almost every vill within Richmondshire paid less in 1334 than it had thirty years before. The wapentake of Hallikeld, which paid £123 11s 1d in 1301, paid only £28 11s 10d in 1334. Hang contributed £256 13s 5 1/4d in 1301, but by 1334 paid only £55 5s 6d. Gilling paid £276 13s 3/4d in 1301 and only £73 1s 5d in 1334⁽⁶⁰⁾. East Bolton's payment dropped from £2 10s to £1 2s⁽⁶¹⁾. Constable Burton had paid £2 14s 9d and in 1334 paid only 13s⁽⁶²⁾. Wensley paid £3 3d in 1301 and in 1334 paid £1 2s⁽⁶³⁾. Most striking of all is that 35 places assessed in 1301 were omitted altogether in 1334.

Global comparisons such as these raise the question as to whether fewer people were actually paying the subsidy or whether the same number were paying far less. At this point comparison between the 1301 assessment and the twentieth levied in 1327 can be helpful. In Thoraby in 1301 28 people paid the tax, while in 1327 only ten paid, despite the fact that a smaller proportion of income - a twentieth was being sought. At Middleham in 1301 26 contributions were made, while in 1327 only four were received. At Melmerby six had paid in 1301 and only three at the later date, at Fearby 21 people paid in 1301 and only four in 1327. Such examples could be multiplied⁽⁶⁴⁾. Some

58. For these figures see Lay Subsidy 30 Edward I p. xx; Glassock, pp. 356-7.

59. Lay Subsidy 30 Edward 1, pp. 8, 26, 104; Glassock, pp. 370-74.

60. Lay Subsidy 30 Edward 1, p. 94; Glassock, p. 372.

61. Lay Subsidy 30 Edward 1, 99; Glassock, p. 372.

62. Lay Subsidy 30 Edward 1, p. 102; Glassock, p. 372.

63. Lay Subidy 30 Edward 1, p. 94; Glassock, p. 372.

64. P.R.O. E 179 211/6 m.9. In 1301 Burton on Ure eleven inhabitants had paid the tax, but only four paid in 1332.

individuals paid much less at the later date than earlier at Middleham, for example, in 1301 Maria de Neville had paid 41s 9d, while her heir paid only 5s 6d in 1327⁽⁶⁵⁾. It is hard to believe that the Nevilles assessable wealth shrank to such a degree in the manor which was their stronghold.

It is noticeable that despite the decreasing number of taxpayers, the amounts paid were fairly high, the average per capita payment in 1327 being not much below that of 1301. In Thoraby the average payment in 1301 was 5s and in 1327 it was 3s. At Middleham the average was 2s 6d compared with 3s 5d in 1301. In Fearby the average in 1301 was 2s 6d and in 1327 it was 1s 6d⁽⁶⁶⁾. The major cause of the decline in the yield of taxation was not that individuals on average were paying less, though some obviously did, but that fewer people were paying at all. To a certain extent this may have been due to the declining efficiency of the tax collectors. The 1301 subsidy may have been fairly rigorously imposed, many small sums are recorded and the less well off may have been assessed thoroughly. The 1327 subsidy records few small sums which perhaps suggests less thoroughness. It would be surprising however, if laxity alone caused the halving of the returns in this area. In fact the assessments record fairly accurately the improving fortunes of the Scrope family, who paid the subsidy in only three places in 1301 but who were assessed in eleven places in 1327⁽⁶⁷⁾.

The records of clerical taxation give a similar impression, indicating a wholesale decline in the yields from 1291-1341, this being a national phenomenon. The deanery of Richmond was assessed at £636 6s 8d in 1291 £312 6s 8d in 1318 and £307 in 1341⁽⁶⁸⁾. The

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. P.R.O. E 179 211/79.

68. Taxatio Nicholai IV, p. 327. Nonarum Inquisitiones, p. 234.

deanery of Catterick had been assessed to pay £756 16s 8d in 1291, in 1318 paid £337 13s 4d and in 1341 £516 13s 4d⁽⁶⁹⁾. It is noticeable that in both cases there was a substantial recovery from the low point of 1318. The figures in themselves are less useful than the excuses given for them. Payments from individuals had declined substantially by 1341 and some explanation had to be given. One of the most extreme examples was the church of St. Rumbald's in Richmond, where it was said in 1341 that 40 carucates were lying 'frisce et districte' because of the Scots: the rector who had been accustomed to take seven sacks of wool worth £30, and 200 sheep worth 100s in tithes, had only one sack of wool and 40 sheep, because many sheep had died. Similar accounts were given at Stretford, Brignall and Marske, while at Kirkby Wiske it was said that the flooding of the Swale had destroyed two carucates of land⁽⁷⁰⁾. For a variety of reasons, a substantial amount of arable land appears to have gone out of cultivation in the North Riding by 1341. The abandonment of arable land probably does suggest a relieving of population pressure. How significant this was to the economy of the North Riding is another matter. It may be assumed that the pastoral economy could never sustain a large population and the loss of arable land may not be highly significant. Nevertheless, the pre Black Death economy of this region does not appear to fit the description 'buoyant'.

C. The Borough of Richmond

It is nevertheless to the fifteenth century that we must look for the least ambiguous evidence of economic decline. Despite the disappearance of some Yorkshire villages in the fourteenth century, Ulshaw near Wensley for example, most of Professor Beresford's examples occur in the fifteenth century⁽⁷¹⁾. As far as towns are concerned the picture seems to be one of almost wholesale decline, conveyed by frequent complaints of poverty and petitions for the

69. Taxatio Nicholai IV, p. 327. Nonarum Inquisitiones, p. 238.

70. Nonarum Inquisitiones, pp. 233-4.

71. M.W. Beresford, 'The Lost Villages of Yorkshire', Y.A.J. 37 and 38 (1951-54), pp. 474-92; pp. 44-280.

reduction of the fee farm. Richmond, the major market in the North Riding appears to conform to this picture. According to the Poll Tax returns for the North Riding in 1377 Richmond was the sixth largest community in the North Riding with 370 individual tax payers. Northallerton was only marginally greater with 372 taxpayers, while Pickering and Scarborough had 420 and 1393 tax payers respectively. The heyday of the borough was probably the thirteenth century. At the beginning of the century the earl granted the burgesses a charter for £29 per annum. This was later raised to £40 in 1268. This may indicate the prosperity of the borough, but the increase probably reflects the additional grant of the pasture of Whitcliff⁽⁷³⁾. It has previously been established how, in the fourteenth century, the town walls were allowed to decay and in 1312 the Earl had demolished many tenements to extend the town wall, which in fact was never subsequently re-built.

Richmond seems to have a thriving market which served a wide hinterland. In 1441 it was claimed that men came from Lancaster, Cumberland, and Westmorland to buy and sell their grain at Richmond⁽⁷⁴⁾. Apart from grain it was a market for a variety of other goods, like livestock, cloth, building materials, metals and fuel as well as luxury items such as silken cloth, honey and raisins: in 1400 cloth of gold and other types of cloth were bought there⁽⁷⁵⁾. By 17 February 1441 however, the burgesses were petitioning for a reduction of the fee farm: they complained that many burgesses had left Richmond, 'like beggars with their wives and children leaving their houses desolate', they said that workmen 'fear to come thither or to

72. B.S.D. Harrison, 'The 1377 Poll Tax Returns for the North Riding', The Cleveland and Teesside Local History Bulletin, No. 10 (September, 1970), pp. 1-8.

73. C.P.R. 1436-41 p. 509.

74. Ibid., pp. 452, 509.

75. Clarkson, A History of Richmond pp. 69-71.

tarry there on account of the aforesaid poverty, that the greater part of the houses and buildings of the same town are waste and desolate and the lands in the fields of the same town are waste, desolate and fallow⁽⁷⁶⁾. The commissioners empowered to investigate Richmond's petition explained the town's poverty in terms of its decline as a market, since it was the tolls levied on goods entering Richmond which enabled the burgesses to pay the fee farm. This decline was blamed on increased competition from other markets at Masham, Bedale, Middleham, Staindrop and Barnard Castle. It seems, however, unlikely that these markets were the cause of Richmond's malaise, since they had been in existence for some time and were not particularly close to Richmond.

By 1440 the pasture of Whicliff, once added to the borough's possessions (presumably at a time of population growth) now allegedly lay overgrown with thorns and brambles. It was also noted that, 'many of the present burgesses, artificiers victuallers, workmen and other late inhabitants of ... Richmond had been carried off by pestilences and epidemics'. They also observed that men from neighbouring counties no longer came to Richmond because they 'have made an extraordinary increase in the production of wheat and other corn on fertile ground there'⁽⁷⁷⁾. An increase in the production of grain elsewhere would, however, only affect the demand for a small part of the products which Richmond acted as a market for. It would accordingly appear likely that in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries Richmond did suffer from a decline in demand from a reduction in population, of which the neglect of its own town pasture was an obvious symptom. The commissioners were convinced of Richmond's plight and reduced the fee farm to £19 13s 4d. It may be no coincidence that Richmond's petition followed shortly after the bad harvests of 1437-39, which caused near famine conditions and obviously

76. Charters of the Borough of Richmond, N.Y.C.R.O., DC/RMB.

77. Ibid.

a shortage of grain available for sale at the market of Richmond⁽⁷⁸⁾.

Professor Bridbury has warned against accepting too readily the uniform picture of decline in the late medieval town, particularly where the evidence relates to obtaining financial privileges⁽⁷⁹⁾. Yet there is little evidence of growth in late medieval Richmond. Although Richmond was involved in the export of wool to the continent via York and Newcastle; the wool was generally of fairly poor quality and does not seem to have contributed much to the prosperity of the town.

The adversities of the later medieval period do not however, seem to have harmed the Scrope family. In fact the reverse was probably true. The difficulties experienced by Bolton priory in the first decades of the fourteenth century were probably not exclusive to them, even if few examples of lay lords in difficulties can be given. However, one such might be James de Wensley, who held half the manor of Wensley and in the course of the 1320's was forced to mortgage his lands to the Scopes. Ultimately he could not redeem his lands and they passed permanently to the Scrope family⁽⁸⁰⁾. Here seems to be an example of the way in which the economic situation of the fourteenth century may have been highly advantageous to any family which had a large amount of capital to invest. Moreover, as the population of Richmondshire declined the circumstances may have been easier for a family like the Scopes to accumulate less profitable lesser estates. Amidst the uncertainties of economic trends in fourteenth century Yorkshire it would be dangerous to be too confident: but to some extent at least the Scopes of Richmondshire may have been the beneficiaries rather than the victims^{of} 'economic decline'.

78. R.B. Dobson, Durham Priory (Cambridge, 1973). pp. 266-67.

79. A.R. Bridbury, 'English Provincial Towns in the Later Middle Ages', Econ. H.R., xxxiv (1981), pp. 1-24.

80. Scrope Cartulary - see under Wensley, nos. 64-85.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PATH TO NOBILITY : THE PROFITS OF WAR AND SERVICE TO THE CROWN - THE CAREERS OF HENRY AND RICHARD SCOPE, C. 1340-1403

In November 1350 the Scopes of Masham attained the defining characteristic of the late medieval nobility when Henry Scope received an individual writ of summons to Parliament, an honour which included him in the ranks of the parliamentary peerage. It was an honour which the Scopes of Bolton were to share when Henry's cousin Richard received a writ of summons in 1371⁽¹⁾. How was it that the family had managed to achieve this status? The landed estates assembled by the lawyer brothers Henry and Geoffrey were not in themselves enough to ensure that the family would be elevated to the ranks of nobility. As K.B. McFarlane once argued, the possession of land alone was not sufficient to achieve nobility. Indeed the possession of land was not so much a way of becoming wealthy so much as a symbol of wealth, because although land may have been 'a safe investment which gave its buyer social and political consequence' it 'was a very slow means of increasing his principal'⁽²⁾. K.B. McFarlane cited five certain methods of social advancement. The role of the law has already been discussed, and the importance of the church will be discussed in Chapter Five. Participation in trade and more especially in finance was a less frequent method of advancement, although employed with exceptional success by the de la Poles - while many members of the nobility may well have been in the business of making loans. It is to war and to royal service that many upwardly mobile families in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries owed their good fortune, and these two possibilities will be considered in the case of the Scope family.

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1. Complete Peerage, XI, pp. 539, 561.
 2. K.B. McFarlane, The Nobility of Later Medieval England (Oxford, 1973), p.10.

The economic profitability of warfare has long been a controversial issue. On the whole, the weight of evidence now supports the view that for many participating individuals, military service in France from the 1330's to the 1420's was indeed a source of profit. That is not, however, to say that the tax payer or the government found it so. If, as was once argued military service was not advantageous, then it is hard to explain why so many individuals continued to fight overseas. While it must be acknowledged that only in a few famous cases, that of Sir John Fastolf for example, are the profits quantifiable, it is not to say that the benefits did not exist for many more⁽³⁾. It would be wrong furthermore merely to consider medieval warfare in terms of "profit and loss". In a society where martial values and prowess were admired, campaigning was a welcome activity, not to be measured entirely in economic terms. Finally there was undoubtedly a social cachet which attached to a successful military career; for example, many of the deponents in the Scrope and Grosvenor dispute noted that the Scropes 'en leur armes ount acquis grant honour en leur temps'⁽⁴⁾. Such gains cannot be quantified but were unquestionably of enormous importance to an aspiring family. Some idea of the importance of military service and its rewards emerges clearly from examining the careers of two of the most successful members of the Scrope family in the generation which succeeded the two chief justices, namely Henry Scrope of Masham and Richard Scrope of Bolton.

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3. The Hundred Years War ed. K. Fowler (London, 1971). K.B. McFarlane, 'The Investment of Sir John Fastolf's War Profits', T.R.H.S., 5th Series, 7 (1957).
 4. Deposition of Geoffrey Bugg in Scrope v. Grosvenor I, p.60.

A. WARFARE AND CRUSADING

At the end of the fourteenth century the Scropes had acquired an outstanding reputation for martial prowess. As Stephen de Hales a veteran of the French wars, and aged 50 in 1385, declared, even when he was young the Scropes were considered 'bones turneors et les plus fortes du paiis de North'⁽⁵⁾. Part of this reputation had been developed by William Scrope, who was described as 'le plus fort tourneur de tout notre paiis'⁽⁶⁾. William's son Geoffrey, the great lawyer, was also famed for his talent at the tournament and their military prowess was likewise inherited by the next generation. Not that this reputation can have been predicted when Geoffrey Scrope's eldest son, Henry, was born circa 1315⁽⁷⁾. Very little in the way of biographical information about him is available to the historian. Some idea of the family's still relatively ambiguous social position at this time is indicated by the fact that the identity of Henry Scrope's wives remains unknown. He appears to have married twice, for in 1314 as lord of Manfield he and his wife Agnes acquired a messuage in the city of York. Agnes, however, appears in no other connection⁽⁸⁾. She was probably not the mother of any of Scrope's children, and certainly not the mother of archbishop Scrope, whose mother was called Joan. Henry held the manor of Carlton Castle Lindsey, North Lincolnshire, jointly with Joan and she may have been a Lincolnshire heiress⁽⁹⁾.

5. Ibid., I p.163.

6. Ibid., I p. 142.

7. Henry was said to have been aged twenty-five on his father's death in 1340. Cal. I.P.M., Edward III, VIII, p.205.

8. Yorkshire Fines 1327-47 ed. W. Paley Baildon (Y.A.S., Rec. Ser., XLII, 1910), p.170, no. 36.

9. Scrope v. Grosvenor, II, pp.112-119.

Henry Scrope's cousin Richard became his father's heir entirely by mischance, since Richard's elder brother William had died in 1342 from wounds received at the battle of Morlaix. Richard was only sixteen at the time and the keeping of his lands was entrusted to William de Bohun, earl of Northampton. At least until 1359 his inheritance remained insecure, and he had difficulty justifying his claim to the manor of Bayford in Hertfordshire and even in securing his claim to his Yorkshire estates⁽¹⁰⁾.

In contrast with his cousin Henry, Richard Scrope married a famous heiress. In 1344-5 he married Blanche de la Pole, the sister of Michael de la Pole, first earl of Suffolk. For Blanche, according to Rosemary Horrox, this marriage must have been something of a social coup, giving her the respectability of an alliance with a family with a substantial landed estate⁽¹¹⁾. For Scrope it probably brought little social advantage, but it may have brought substantial financial gains. Some idea of the settlement he may have gained can be conveyed by looking at the arrangements surrounding the marriage of Blanche's sister Margaret to Robert Neville in 1362 when William de la Pole paid off Robert's debts amounting to £2,000⁽¹²⁾. The marriage between Richard and Blanche initiated a long standing friendship between the Scropes and the de la Poles. Richard frequently acted as a feoffee to the family and in 1386 tried in vain to defend Michael de la Pole during his impeachment⁽¹³⁾.

10. Cal. I.P.M. Edward III, VIII, pp.399, 452. C.P.R. 1358-61, p.212.

11. R. Horrox, The de la Poles of Hull (East Yorkshire Local History Society, 1983), p.28.

12. Ibid., p.28.

13. C.C.R. 1385-89, p.509; C.C.R. 1392-96, pp.502, 503; C.P.R. 1354-8, p.158.

The early careers of both Henry and Richard were essentially military. Henry Scrope in particular can be described as a career soldier. He campaigned in both France and Scotland and was knighted in 1346 at the battle of Nevilles Cross⁽¹⁴⁾. He was particularly associated with William de Bohun, earl of Northampton, (1337-69); indeed Scrope served with Bohun on so many occasions that he may well have been permanently retained by him. Henry Scrope served with the earl at Crécy on 26 August 1346, and at the siege of Calais in August the following year. He was also at the battle of Espagnols sur Mer in 1350 as well as at the siege of Boulogne, and the siege of Paris in 1359. On these occasions and at the siege of Edinburgh and on the march to Peebles, Scrope was in Bohun's retinue. It was on the march to Peebles that Scrope was elevated to the rank of banneret⁽¹⁵⁾. The title banneret was in vogue during the fourteenth century, but was not a hereditary title and did not survive as a noble rank. It was an honour granted to those who were distinguished in arms; the holder now enjoyed a lesser noble status and could be summoned to Parliament. As Dr. Nigel Saul has suggested the use of the title banneret does indeed imply that 'eminence on the battlefield carried implications for social status'⁽¹⁶⁾. A banneret was expected to have an income of £200 per annum and to lead 20-30 men into battle. One retinue roll survives for Henry Scrope, relating to his participation in the campaign leading to the English naval defeat at La Rochelle in 1372⁽¹⁷⁾. On this occasion Scrope left Rye on 18 August and returned on 5 October taking with him five knights, eleven men at arms and 24

14. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, pp.112-119. Scrope's presence at Neville's Cross was noted in the Anonimale Chronicle, p.25 and by Walsingham, Chronicon Angliae, p.24.

15. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, pp.112-119. Scrope was described as 'banneret' in February 1362, C.P.R. 1361-64, p.167, but he was still sometimes referred to as chivaler, C.C.R. 1381-85, p.121.

16. N. Saul, Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century (Oxford, 1981), p.8.

17. P.R.O. E 101/31/34.

archers. Obviously Scrope's contribution was far in excess of what was expected of his rank. On the other hand it is perhaps the retinue on the scale expected of a former governor of Calais and steward of the household. The five knights who accompanied Scrope were Sir Stephen Scrope, Henry's son, Sir Robert Plumpton, Sir William Wauton, Sir John Roos and Sir Thomas Marshall. It is usually accepted that there is little relationship between the peace time retinues of members of the nobility and the retainers they took to war with them. Nevertheless as far as the knightly element of the retinue is concerned there were close links between them. Stephen Scrope was Henry's younger son and became his heir on the death of Henry's eldest son Geoffrey. Stephen had an extensive military career and had gone to Alexandria in 1365 where he was made a knight of the King of Cyprus⁽¹⁸⁾. Sir Robert Plumpton, of Plumpton in the West Riding, was Henry Scrope's son-in-law, having married his daughter Isabella. Robert had been in Scrope's service for some time, having obtained a licence to join Henry in Calais on 2 January 1368⁽¹⁹⁾. Sir Thomas Marshall was a knight from Somerset, who served in Gaunt's retinue when he went to Spain in 1386⁽²⁰⁾. Any further connection between Marshall and Scrope cannot be firmly established. Of his archers, two at least, John de Masham and Alan de Manfield, judging by their surnames were probably from Scrope's North Riding estate.

Henry Scrope, however, was far from being the only member of his family who pursued a military career. Henry's brother William had gone to the eastern Mediterranean in the retinue of the Earl of Hereford and had probably accompanied him to Lombardy too. He was also at Adalia in 1361 and Alexandria in 1365 where he was said to

18. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, p.124, deposition of Nicholas Sabraham.

19. C.P.R. 1367-70, p.73.

20. Scrope v. Grosvenor, II, pp.211-2.

have died⁽²¹⁾. Henry's sons too seem to have been very active crusaders. Henry's heir Geoffrey went on crusade to Prussia with the Teutonic knights and died in Lithuania in 1362; he was buried in Königsberg cathedral⁽²²⁾. Another son Henry also went out to the eastern Mediterranean and died at Messambria, presumably in the aftermath of the crusade to Alexandria⁽²³⁾. Henry's grandson and namesake Henry shared this enthusiasm for crusading and went on the Barbary expedition in 1390⁽²⁴⁾.

In itself the family's crusading activity was not untypical of the fourteenth century English nobility. Henry Grosmont, earl of Lancaster decided to join the Teutonic knights in 1351, and even his capture and eventual release for a ransom of 30,000 gold crowns did not deter him from returning in 1354⁽²⁵⁾. The enthusiasm for crusading continued and affected the next generation as Bolingbroke's well documented expedition to Prussia in 1394 indicates⁽²⁶⁾. A recent article by Dr. Maurice Keen has discussed noble enthusiasm for crusades in general and the crusading activities of the Scropes in particular, and has used their ventures as evidence that crusading

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21. Ibid., I, p.70, deposition of Sir Alexander Goldingham.
 22. Ibid., I, pp.117, 123, depositions of Sir Thomas de Boynton and Sir Thomas fitz Henry.
 23. Ibid., I, p.124, deposition of Nicholas Sabraham.
 24. F. Devon, Issues of the Exchequer Henry III - Henry VI, p. 245. Henry received £20 from Richard II towards his expenses "in lately coming from Barbarie", 12 August 1390.
 25. K. Fowler, The King's Lieutenant (London, 1969), p.103.
 26. F.R.H. du Boulay, 'Henry of Derby's Expeditions to Prussia, 1390-1 + 1392, in The Reign of Richard II ed. F.R.H. du Boulay and C.M. Barron (London, 1971), pp. 153-173.

remained an ideal long after 1291⁽²⁷⁾. It would appear, however, that for the Scropes crusading was only one aspect of their military careers and many members of the family had previously gained experience in France. Henry's brother William had fought with the Black Prince at Narbonne and Carcassonne, while Henry's son Geoffrey had fought in Brittany and at Paris. But the contraction of opportunities for fighting in France after the treaty of Brétigny may well have encouraged the Scropes and their contemporaries to look farther afield for military ventures.

It has been suggested by Dr. Keen that Chaucer's figure of the knight in the prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* was based on a composite picture of the Scropes⁽²⁸⁾. Certainly Chaucer was acquainted with the family, as his deposition in the Scrope and Grosvenor case indicates, and the family would have been familiar with all the places listed in connection with the knight⁽²⁹⁾. Nevertheless it is fair to argue that the Scropes' experience was far from unique, as the experiences of the hundreds of witnesses in the dispute over their heraldic arms confirm.

Like his cousin Henry, Richard, lord Scrope of Bolton, was initially above all a soldier and the testimony to his military expertise is overwhelming. He fought in all the major theatres of war in France, Spain and Scotland. As a retainer of John, duke of Lancaster he appears most often to have accompanied him on campaigns but his service was not reserved exclusively for Gaunt.

27. M. Keen, 'Chaucer's Knight, the English Aristocracy and the Crusade' in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. V.J. Scattergood and J.W. Sherborne (London, 1983), pp.45-63.

28. *Ibid.*, p.52. The suggestion was originally made by J.M. Manly in his edition of the *Canterbury Tales* (London, n.d.) p.500.

29. *Scrope v. Grosvenor*, I, pp.178-9.

For example at Espagnols sur Mer the naval engagement of 29 August 1350, Scrope was variously said to have been in the retinue of either the earl of Warwick or the earl of Northampton. He was again to be found in Warwick's retinue at the relief of Stirling castle. When he was knighted at the battle of Durham he was apparently in the retinue of Henry Hotspur on the March day before the battle. He and five other members of the family were at the siege of Paris in 1359-60, with Edward III. Most often, however, Scrope did serve with Gaunt, on campaigns both in Brittany and Normandy; on Gaunt's chevauchee to Paris and he went to Spain with Gaunt and the Black Prince, serving at the battle of Najera in April 1367⁽³⁰⁾. It is evident from his participation in these campaigns that Scrope was closely associated with Gaunt even before the first reference to Scrope's formal retaining by the duke. It may be argued that the military exploits of the family not only attracted the attention and admiration of their fellow soldiers but probably brought them to the attention of potential patrons. Richard Scrope, for example, bequeathed to his son Stephen a sword which had belonged to Edward III, and this was perhaps a sign of royal recognition for this worthy warrior⁽³¹⁾.

Circumstantial evidence suggests that the military ventures of the family added much to their advancement. Certainly their elevation to the parliamentary peerage occurred during or immediately after distinguished military careers. Furthermore Henry and Richard were not the only famous captains to find themselves summoned to Parliament. Sir Roger Beauchamp, Sir Richard Stafford and Sir Guy de Brienne, all famous captains, were similarly honoured⁽³²⁾.

30. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, pp. 103, 107, 108.

31. Stephen Scrope's will is printed in Scrope v. Grosvenor, II, pp.45-53.

32. N. Saul, Knights and Esquires p.8.

It is much more difficult to assess the financial benefits which a military career brought. None of the deponents in the great heraldic dispute record that the Scropes were fortunate in gaining substantial booty, nor that they had the lucky windfall of obtaining a great ransom. Nevertheless there can be no doubt that expectations of the economic advantages of military service were high. Such hopes of riches have recently been demonstrated in an article by Dr. Simon Walker⁽³³⁾. Evidence from the Scrope of Bolton cartulary indicates that by 1360 Richard Scrope had very substantially expanded his landed inheritance and this achievement requires an explanation. If the profits from land itself were not enough to finance substantial re-investment in property, then cash must have come from another source. Scrope may have acquired a fortune on his marriage to Blanche de la Pole, though his investment in property was gradual rather than sudden, suggesting instead a steady growth in income. His connection with the de la Poles suggests that Scrope may also have acted as a financier, but unfortunately there is no other evidence to support this. At times indeed Scrope himself may have been in need of cash, for he borrowed large sums from the Earl of Arundel⁽³⁴⁾. It is hard to avoid the impression that it was military service in France which provided Scrope with his fortune and which at the end of his career he invested in building his great residence - Castle Bolton.

Scrope was far from alone in enjoying the proceeds of military service. Dr. Rawcliffe has demonstrated the part which military service in France played in enhancing the fortunes of Sir Ralph

33. S. Walker, 'Profit and Loss in the Hundred Years War: the subcontracts of Sir John Strother', B.I.H.R., LVIII (1985), pp.100-106.

34. In 1376 Scrope owed Arundel's estate 4500 marks. M. Aston, Thomas Arundel (Oxford, 1976), p.17.

Stafford, elevated to an earldom in 1357⁽³⁵⁾. Scrope's neighbour and contemporary Henry fitz Hugh enjoyed similar success and enjoyed a prominence nearly the equal of Scrope's⁽³⁶⁾. The Bourgchiers have been stated to have owed a large part of their wealth to the success of Henry V's campaigns in France⁽³⁷⁾.

Military service certainly provided the Scrope family with kudos which, with their uncertain origins, was an important factor in their rising social position. And it probably brought them riches too, enabling them to assume the outward trappings of nobility. But military service was not the only method of serving the crown and the next section will consider other equally important aspects of royal service.

B. ROYAL SERVICE, C. 1360-1400

After the peace with France made by the treaty of Brétigny, the opportunities for fighting in Europe were more limited. Although there were expeditions to Spain, and for the more adventurous, crusades in the eastern Mediterranean, clearly the first great phase of military activity in the reign of Edward III had ended. Soldiers like Richard and Henry Scrope who had spent most of their careers abroad may have found that the peace presented them with difficult choices. Henry Scrope, perhaps the more committed and able soldier, opted to stay abroad in the service of the crown while his cousin Richard returned to England.

Henry Scrope, first lord of Masham, was appointed governor of Calais in 1361 and remained there until June 1368 when, in anticipation of renewed hostilities with France, control of Calais was

35. C. Rawcliffe, The Staffords, Earls of Stafford and Dukes of Buckingham 1394-1521 (Cambridge, 1978), pp.1, 8.

36. For a survey of fitz Hugh's career see A.C. Reeves, Lancastrian Englishmen (Washington, 1981), pp.65-119.

37. L. Woodger, 'Henry Bourgchier, Earl of Essex and his family, 1408-1483', (unpublished Oxford D.Phil thesis, 1974).

given to the Lieutenant of Picardy⁽³⁸⁾. The functions of the governor of Calais were essentially military and judicial. Calais had been seized by the English in 1347 and it had then become a major garrison and commercial centre. Since its fall to the English the town had been regarded as 'un fragment d'Angleterre outre-mer'⁽³⁹⁾, a position which was formally recognised by the treaty of 1360. Thereafter the English grasp on Calais was considerably strengthened by its designation as part of the royal domain and its increased control over the neighbouring area including the rest of the county of Guisnes. The office of governor was a newly created post and Henry Scrope was quickly appointed to it. Initially Calais was essentially a garrison town with two garrisons; one at the castle and another in the town. But, after 1363 its position as a commercial centre was recognised by the establishment of the Calais Staple.

As governor Henry Scrope had two main responsibilities. The first was the maintenance of the garrison at Calais including the supervision of building projects and the provision of pay and supplies. In addition he was also the supreme judicial figure in the town, representing the king of England in his capacity as count of Guisnes. Many of the petitions made to Scrope were related to the high cost of living in Calais created mainly because of the financial demands of maintaining a garrison there. There were complaints by the burgesses of the town about the high level of payments for castle ward. An undated file of bills, probably from after 1363, records further complaints by the inhabitants about the high level of rents, the high price of food and wine and the seizure of vacant property in the town by the mayor and aldermen⁽⁴⁰⁾.

38. C.C.R. 1360-64, p.267. C.P.R. 1364-67, p. 445.

39. J. Le Patourel, 'L'Occupation Anglaise de Calais au XIV^e eme siecle', Revue du Nord, XXXIII (1951), p.229.

40. P.R.O. SC 1/50/146 - a petition to Scrope by Henry Denton for restitution of goods stolen by Flemish pirates. P.R.O. SC 1/42/111 - a description of Henry's supervision of repairs to the town.

In undertaking his responsibilities the governor was assisted by two major administrators, who were the victualler and the treasurer. As might be expected the treasurer had to pay the garrison while the victualler was in charge of supplies. During his governorship, Scrope had appointed William Topcliff, clerk, as controller at the treasury. He was probably a native of the North Riding and was no doubt a member of Scrope's household. Topcliff was Scrope's attorney at the royal Exchequer in 1365-66 and held the living of Carlton church in Lincolnshire, an advowson which belonged to the Scropes of Masham⁽⁴¹⁾. Scrope clearly maintained a large household while he was at Calais, for on 1 March 1366 he obtained a licence to export 400 quarters of malt for himself and his household⁽⁴²⁾. Of this household unfortunately only one additional member may be identified - his son-in-law Sir Robert Plumpton, who joined him in 1368.

While at Calais Scrope's responsibilities included those of a diplomat. On 8 February 1362 he was appointed to negotiate the marriage between Edward Langley and the Duchess of Burgundy and was still involved in these unsuccessful negotiations in 1365. And again in 1371 he was involved in the peace negotiations between England, France and Flanders⁽⁴³⁾. After the loss of his governorship in 1368 Henry Scrope returned to England and became a member of the king's council; and from January to November 1371 he was steward of the household an office usually held by someone who had the close confidence of the king⁽⁴⁴⁾. 1371 proved to be a year of great importance for both Henry and his cousin Richard who in the same year

41. P.R.O. E 372/210;/209.

42. C.P.R. 1364-67, p.317.

43. C.P.R. 1364-67, p.53; Anonimale Chronicle, p.69; C.P.R. 1361-64, p.167.

44. C.C.R. 1364-8, p.494; C.C.R. 1377-81, p.22.

had been appointed treasurer⁽⁴⁵⁾. While Henry had been at Calais, Richard had returned to England and had been quite active on local commissions. In the 1360's Richard sat on nine commissions of oyer and terminer and of the peace, almost exclusively for the North Riding⁽⁴⁶⁾. And as a mark of his real prominence in 1365, he was appointed knight of the shire for the North Riding. This appointment was unusual because very few North Riding knights ever represented their county in Parliament⁽⁴⁷⁾. By contrast Henry Scrope was not at all active in local administration.

Richard Scrope's appointment as treasurer in 1371 can be regarded as significant in several ways. It is an indication that he was already wealthy by this date. It was usual to appoint the wealthier members of the episcopacy to this post, on the understanding that with their resources they could assist with any financial problems experienced by the government. Secondly, it may well be a mark of Gaunt's influence at court. Indeed Dr. Holmes has argued that Gaunt's support explains Scrope's appointment entirely⁽⁴⁸⁾. Scrope was not the only one of Gaunt's retainers to be placed in an important post at this time. John Neville of Raby for example had replaced Henry Scrope as steward of the household in November 1371⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Richard Scrope held the office of treasurer for the period from March 1371 to September 1375. During this time some particularly contentious loans were made to the crown, which were later criticised in the Good Parliament. Scrope was not held personally responsible

45. C.P.R. 1370-74, p.61.

46. C.P.R. 1361-64, pp.65, 150, 292, 452, 530, 539; C.P.R. 1364-67, pp.69, 151; C.P.R. 1367-70, p.193.

47. C.C.R. 1364-8, p.169.

48. G. Holmes, The Good Parliament (Oxford, 1975), p.64.

49. Ibid., p.68.

for these loans in 1376, although Dr. George Holmes has indicated that his appointment may have opened up the way for 'courtier financiers'. It could be argued that during Richard Scrope's period of office and that of his successor Sir Robert Ashford, the financial administration was in the hands of men who were relatively less powerful than their predecessors and that this provided opportunities for influential courtiers such as Richard Latimer and John Neville to exploit the crown's financial position⁽⁵⁰⁾.

Henry Scrope had virtually disappeared from politics in the last years of Edward III's reign. He re-emerged however, in the Good Parliament, when he was among the twelve peers asked by Peter de la Mare to assist the Commons in remedying the grievous defects of the realm⁽⁵¹⁾. This was one of Henry Scrope's last political appearances. He later resumed diplomatic activities in negotiating with the Scots, and in the early years of Richard II's reign he was regularly summoned to Parliament⁽⁵²⁾. Yet by 1383 he was described as too aged to attend commissions. He was admittedly nearly seventy at this time⁽⁵³⁾. He spent the last ten years of his life in retirement on his Yorkshire estates and he died in June 1392 when he was buried with his ancestors at Coverham Abbey. His funeral was attended by at least one of his sons, and the most famous of them, the future archbishop of York, Richard Scrope⁽⁵⁴⁾.

50. Ibid., p.65.

51. Ibid., p.102.

52. C.C.R. 1381-85, pp.121, 210, 246, 390.

53. C.C.R. 1381-85, p.451.

54. Lichfield Joint Record Office, Register of Skirlaw and Scrope, B/A/1/6, fo. 76V.

At the time when Henry Scrope chose to retire from political life, the career of his cousin Richard went from strength to strength. Within months of Edward III's death on 4 August 1377 he had been appointed steward of the household⁽⁵⁵⁾. Almost immediately he went north to attend a March day⁽⁵⁶⁾. He remained steward of the household until 10 May 1378 and several months later on 29 October 1378, he was appointed royal chancellor⁽⁵⁷⁾. He held this office for a little over a year and Archbishop Sudbury, perhaps fortunately for Scrope, replaced him as custodian of the Great Seal on 30 January 1380. In December 1380 Scrope was appointed one of the wardens of the west march and a few months later he was appointed the sole warden there⁽⁵⁸⁾. At the end of 1381 he was once more made chancellor of the realm, 'by popular demand' according to Thomas Walsingham⁽⁵⁹⁾.

The early years of Richard II's reign were thus the years of greatest prominence for Richard Scrope, and it is very probable that he owed his promotion to John of Gaunt, who was the leading political figure in the last years of the reign of Edward III and during the early years of Richard II's minority. During this period another retainer of Gaunt's, John Neville of Raby, likewise achieved a leading role in national affairs. His son, Sir Ralph Neville was promoted to an earldom just as Richard Scrope's eldest son William was to be⁽⁶⁰⁾.

55. C.C.R. 1377-81, p.22.

56. Devon, Issues of the Exchequer, p.206. On the 25 January 1378 Scrope was paid £66. 13s 4d expenses for attending the March day.

57. C.C.R. 1377-81, p.157.

58. R.L. Storey, 'The Wardens of the Marches towards Scotland 1377-1489', E.H.R., LXXII (1957), p.596.

59. Walsingham, Chronicon Angliae, p.334.

60. Holmes, The Good Parliament, p.68.

Scrope's association with Gaunt may however have had its drawbacks. For example, his loss of the chancellorship in 1380 to Archbishop Sudbury, when the Earl of Warwick had emerged as governor of the realm, was brought about according to Higden, 'per invidiam aliquorum'⁽⁶¹⁾. Gaunt, as is clear from Walsingham's chronicle and from the attacks on him at the time of the Peasants' Revolt, was extremely unpopular, though for what reason has never been clear.

After 1381 Sir Richard Scrope found himself increasingly at odds with the young King Richard II and subsequently became identified with the aristocratic opposition of the 1380's. Scrope's second term of office as chancellor came to an abrupt end on 11 July 1382. According to Walsingham, Scrope was removed from office for his opposition to the king's extravagance, particularly expressed in his alienation of the earl of March's estates⁽⁶²⁾. The official reason for Richard Scrope's removal, given in the patent rolls, blames Scrope's alleged incompetence, explaining that the king removed Scrope from office, 'willing that the public business of the peoples' suits should not be delayed for lack of sealing'⁽⁶³⁾. The issue at stake was indeed the Mortimer inheritance which Richard II wished to grant away, and which as chancellor, Scrope would have been obliged to authorise. Many members of the nobility had opposed this grant and were finally to prevent it in 1383. Scrope may have refused to seal the charters on principle or he may have felt obliged to protect Mortimer's interests since in 1380 Scrope had been appointed one of Mortimer's attorneys, and in January of that year had been appointed one of the earl's feoffees together with Peter de la Mare⁽⁶⁴⁾.

61. Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden, VIII, ed. J. R. Lumby (Rolls Series, 41, 1882).

62. Walsingham, Chronicon Angliae, p.353.

63. C.C.R. 1381-85, p.215.

64. C.C.R. 1377-81, p.365.
C.P.R. 1377-81, p.459.

In the late 1380's Scrope was again identified with opposition to Richard II. He was included in the commissions of 1385 and 1386 which were established to curb royal expenditure⁽⁶⁵⁾. In 1387 he was also appointed to the continual council to restrain the king⁽⁶⁶⁾. At this time Scrope publicly identified with the duke of Gloucester, since much later on 29 November 1397 he was granted a pardon 'for his adherence to Thomas, duke of Gloucester, when in 1387 Gloucester, Arundel and Warwick usurped the royal power, issued a commission for the governance of the realm and rose in insurrection at Haringey'⁽⁶⁷⁾. Furthermore in 1395 Richard lord Scrope acted as attorney to Thomas of Woodstock and there was a particularly close connection between Gloucester and Scrope's cousin Henry, later lord Masham, (d. 1415) to whom Gloucester bequeathed a breviary and whom in turn Henry Scrope commemorated in his will of 1415⁽⁶⁸⁾.

It is not surprising in view of his early association with the king's opponents that in the later years of Richard II's reign, Richard Scrope played a much less prominent part in affairs. He was a member of the council in 1395, but was rarely a witness to royal charters or present on commissions⁽⁶⁹⁾. By the 1390's though Scrope was an old man and his retirement from politics may have been partly to do with his age. It is striking that Richard Scrope's opposition to Richard II did not, however, damage the fortunes of his children of whom William Scrope in particular received lavish grants of patronage from Richard II and played a leading role in national affairs. Unlike his son William though, Richard Scrope came through the events of 1399 unscathed. His previous connection with the duke of Lancaster

65. A.J. Tuck, Richard II and the English Nobility (London, 1973), p.100.

66. Ibid., p.127.

67. C.P.R. 1396-99, p.272.

68. A. Goodman, The Loyal Conspiracy (London, 1971), pp.75, 81.

69. P.O.P.C., I, p.57.

probably helped him and his annuity, formerly paid by Gaunt, was renewed to him on 22 November 1399⁽⁷⁰⁾. In common with the majority of his contemporaries he clearly had no qualms about serving Henry IV, acting as a member of the council in 1401 and attending Parliament in 1402⁽⁷¹⁾. His loyalty to the new regime was, however, never properly put to the test for he died before June 1403⁽⁷²⁾.

It would be hard to determine the single aspect of Henry and Richard Scropes' careers which made their ennoblement assured. In general the profits of justice had financed the territorial basis for their position and success in warfare had enhanced their social position. More particularly Richard Scrope, lord Bolton, may well have owed his prominence to the patronage of John of Gaunt, but it is important to remember that lord Bolton was a powerful northern noble in his own right. Nevertheless the Scropes' selection for the major administrative positions in the kingdom still requires some explanation.

In the first place it should be noted that the Scropes' advancement coincided with that of the Percies, the Nevilles and their neighbours the fitz Hughs. It seems no coincidence that all these families were based in the same part of the kingdom with estates in north Yorkshire and counties close to the border with Scotland. The reason for the prominence of the Percies and Nevilles is not too difficult to explain⁽⁷³⁾. It lay in the strategic importance of

70. C.P.R. 1399-1401, p. 155.

71. P.O.P.C., I, p.157; C.P.R. 1401-5, p.122.

72. C.F.R. 1399-1405, p.219.

73. A.J. Tuck, 'Richard II and the Border magnates', Northern History, III (1968), pp. 27-52.

their estates, which meant that they alone could effectively wield power on the border with Scotland. It was an area which was quite remote from royal authority, except through the channels offered by the Neville and Percy families. The Scrope estates lay on the very southern edge of this border area. That they had a contribution to make to border politics is demonstrated by Richard Scrope's appointment to the wardenship of the west march. It is partly here that their usefulness lay. More significantly perhaps the reign of Richard II saw many attempts at an extension of royal power in the localities. This occurred partly through securing sheriffs who were loyal to the king, and partly by building up support in areas which had been remote from authority by securing the prominence of men who were loyal to him. An example of this can be found in the south-west of the kingdom where Richard II hoped to elevate John Holland at the expense of the Courtenay earls of Devon. The king could not afford to ignore the emergence of any powerful new family, and the territorial position of the Scropes in the North Riding had already led to their recognition as peers of the realm. The fact that they were a northern baronial family must have made them even more worth cultivating. If the crown could not secure their loyalty they might become one more powerful adherent of either the Percies or Nevilles who already enjoyed uniquely powerful positions on the northern border, positions which as far as they did not guarantee peace in border politics were not in the interests of the crown. Richard II may well have promoted Richard, the first lord Masham's son, to the primacy of York and William, the first lord Bolton's son, to the earldom of Wiltshire with a view to strengthening the position of this family vis à vis the Percies and Nevilles and to ensuring their loyalty and reliability.

Castle Bolton, Wensleydale.



East front - Gateway



Western Range

C. THE SPOILS OF SUCCESS: THE BUILDING OF CASTLE BOLTON

'This house appeareth to be very strong, very fair, and very stately after the old manner of building, and is the highest walled house that I have seen, and hath but one entrance hereinto. And halfe the number of these soldiers maye better watch and ward the same, than the whole number thereof could do Carlisle castle'⁽⁷⁴⁾.

Castle Bolton lies on the brow of a hill overlooking the river Ure. No visitor to the castle can fail to be impressed, just as Sir Francis Knollys was, by the height and strength of its massive grey stone walls. There can be no greater monument to the power of the Scropes and to the fact that when this castle was built they had truly arrived in noble society. The date of the castle's construction can be given with some certainty. On 4 July 1379 Richard Scrope obtained a licence to crenellate his manor of Bolton in Wensleydale⁽⁷⁵⁾. But by this date work was well underway. On 14 September 1378 Scrope had made a contract with John Lewyn, employing him to build a kitchen tower and other buildings on the site. These latter were probably the eastern range and tower. The building contract, which is a rare survival, refers to money already owed to Lewyn suggesting that work had already been done. That Lewyn was undoubtedly responsible for the entire construction, emerges from the uniformity of the structure and design⁽⁷⁶⁾. The new kitchen at Durham Cathedral priory had occupied Lewyn until 1374 and it is perhaps unlikely that he would have started at Bolton before this date. The chapels in the castle were not dedicated until 1399, so the castle may not have been completed long

74. Sir Francis Knollys's description of Bolton Castle in 1568, given in a letter from Thomas Amyot, Archaeologia, XXI (1827) p.162.

75. N.Y.C.R.O., Bolton MSS, MC/55 a + b.

76. N.Y.C.R.O., Bolton MSS, MD/1. The building contract is printed in L.F. Salzman, Building in England 2nd edition (Oxford, 1967) p.454.

before then⁽⁷⁷⁾. Many years later John Leland estimated that it had taken 18 years to build Castle Bolton at a cost of 1,000 marks per annum⁽⁷⁸⁾.

Richard Scrope had employed the best and most experienced mason in the north to build his residence. John Lewyn, who was mainly active from 1368-99, was chief mason to Bishop Hatfield of Durham⁽⁷⁹⁾. Until 1374, Lewyn worked mainly at Durham, but thereafter he worked on almost every major northern fortification. He undertook repairs to Bamburgh, Roxburgh, Carlisle and Dunstanburgh castles. He may also have worked on Warkworth and Sheriff Hutton. Sheriff Hutton, a now dilapidated Neville stronghold bears an overwhelming resemblance to Castle Bolton, both in its layout and its tall stone towers. Ralph Neville had a licence to crenellate here in 1382 and since Lewyn had worked for him at Middleham, it seems likely he was employed at Sheriff Hutton too.

Why did Scrope consider it necessary to build Castle Bolton? It was expensive, it was finished not long before his death and he may not have lived there. He certainly appears to have spent his last years at his manor of Pishobury in Hertfordshire⁽⁸⁰⁾. John Harvey has argued that Castle Bolton was but one example of a great flurry of castle building and re-edification in the north in the late fourteenth century. Political reasons seem to be one possible explanation, especially fears that during the minority of Richard II the Scots would grow confident enough to begin raiding again. Fear of the Scots may well also account for the repairs at the border castles which Lewyn was so actively engaged in. The re-fortification of Dunstanburgh

77. C.P.R. 1369-9, p.488.

78. Leland's Itinerary, V, p.139.

79. J. Harvey, English Medieval Architects 2nd edition (Gloucester, 1984), p.181.

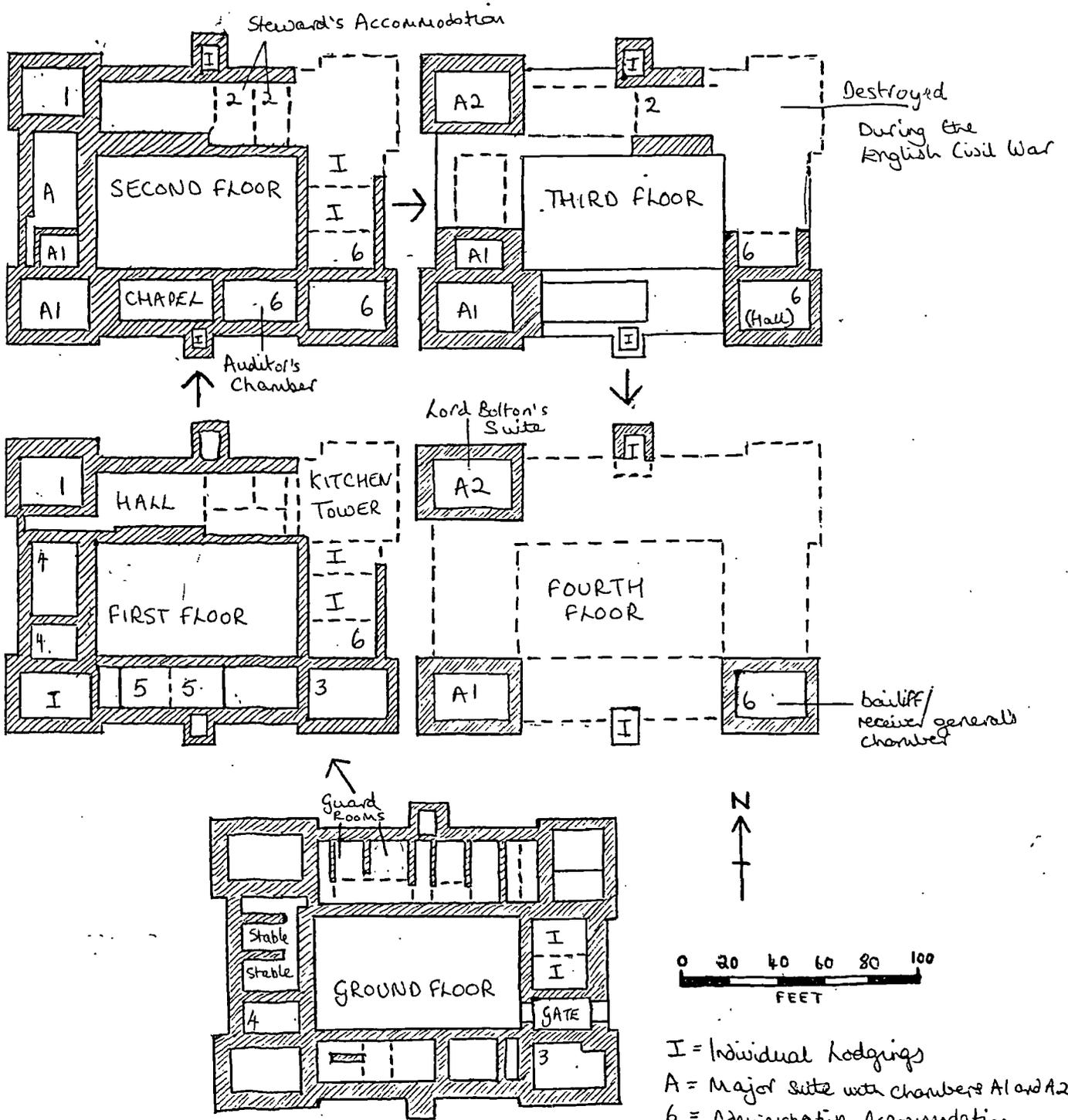
80. Richard Scrope's will was made there in 1400, Scrope v. Grosvenor II, pp.27-37.

castle under John of Gaunt may well be seen in this light. Nevertheless in view of Gaunt's bad relations with Henry Percy, one may wonder whom he was trying to keep at bay. Fear of the Scots does not explain the addition of the magnificent octagonal tower at Warkworth, with its large windows and spacious accommodation. Nor does it convincingly explain the construction of Castle Bolton nor even Sheriff Hutton. Certainly the Scots did raid as far south as the North Riding. But this was rare and had not occurred since the early part of the century. Another problem with this explanation is that the buildings were not purely nor even mainly military in function. Their function indeed offers the best hope of understanding why they were built.

The architectural design of Castle Bolton was the height of fourteenth-century architectural fashion⁽⁸¹⁾. Quadrangular in shape, it enclosed a large courtyard. Each of its four ranges contained three stories of domestic accommodation. At each corner projected a four or five storied tower, again containing either service or residential accommodation. Two turrets were placed midway along the north and south ranges. The towers, turrets and provision for a portcullis at the only entrance to the building, suggest that it was capable of being defended. The main aim of the castle was, however, to provide plentiful and luxurious accommodation. The architecture itself is devoid of decoration, but according to P.A. Faulkner the castle contained within 'every luxury known to the time'. These included spacious, private quarters, and novelties such as flues over the heads of windows for smoke to escape. In his article on fourteenth century castle planning, P.A. Faulkner has vividly analysed the provision of living space within the building.

81. For much of what follows see R. Allen Brown, The Architecture of Castles (London, 1984), p.71; V.C.H. North Riding, I, p.272; and especially P.A. Faulkner, 'Castle Planning in the Fourteenth Century', Archaeological Journal, 120 (1963), pp.215-236.

Plan of Castle Bolton, Wensleydale



I = Individual lodgings
 A = Major suite with chambers A1 and A2
 6 = Administrative Accommodation
 1-5 = Apartments

Derived from: P.A. Faulkner, 'Castle Planning in the Fourteenth Century', Archaeological Journal, 120 (1963), pp 215-236.

The castle comprised eight major residential suites capable of housing a noble household and 12 smaller individual lodgings (see diagram). The greatest suite of rooms lay on the western range and in south and north west towers. It consisted of six rooms with access only from the great hall by means of an inner chamber. This inner chamber was shared by the occupant of another suite of rooms probably indeed by Lord Scrope himself. The emphasis in the design of these suites was firmly on seclusion and privacy. The difficulty in obtaining access to these chambers tends to suggest that the accommodation would be reserved for the most noble of visitors. The great hall itself which would formerly have been the meeting place for a lord and his men was now, as Faulkner has indicated, a much smaller room, probably rarely used for its designated function.

Other chambers in the south east tower and over the gate were intended to house Scrope's administrative and financial officials. Accommodation for lord Bolton's chief steward was, however, close to Scrope's own quarters near to the great hall and Faulkner notes that this suite was in position normally occupied by the owner of the castle. The smaller chambers, single lodgings, were probably intended for regular inhabitants of the castle, such as the priests required to serve in Scrope's chantry at the castle or his officials and retainers.

It would appear that Castle Bolton had two major functions. First of all it was intended to provide accommodation for Richard Scrope's administration, giving his most important officials comfortable accommodation and keeping them within easy reach of their lord, whenever he was present. In his article Mr. Faulkner has suggested that accommodation would be available for Lord Scrope's steward, for his chief bailiff and the bailiffs of his outlying principle manors. In addition there was ample accommodation for the lowlier pages or esquires employed to serve the greater households.

Above all Castle Bolton was a stylish, fashionable and luxurious residence where Scrope could entertain the greatest of his contemporaries, even the king himself. It was a residence suited to his noble rank and can only have enhanced his prestige. The motives behind such an investment in building must be explained by the social preoccupations of the period. Increasing consciousness of rank and place meant that investment in a major fortified residence was also an investment in establishing a place in society. Even within the design of the castle such consciousness of rank was reflected in the increasing privacy of accommodation and withdrawal into the seclusion of private chambers of the noble guest.

The construction of Castle Bolton is accordingly more of a testimony to Scrope's position and contemporary assumptions about the proper trappings of nobility than it is to the state of Anglo-Scottish relations or to the unruliness of northern society. Similarly the Nevilles and Percies invested in building at this time. Sir Ralph Neville obtained a licence to crenellate Raby Castle in 1378 and Sheriff Hutton in 1382. In the late fourteenth century the Nevilles made additions to Middleham castle. The first earl of Northumberland had the octagonal donjon of Warkworth castle constructed in circa 1400. And, in the course of the fourteenth century Alnwick castle, the Percies' great residence, was largely re-built. This enthusiasm for building was inspired partly by military but also by domestic needs and suggests that both the Percies and Nevilles were acquiring the type of military and residential accommodation suitable for their new noble status⁽⁸²⁾.

82. R. Allen Brown, Castles (Poole, 1980) pp.130, 131, 132. Sir John Neville had licence to crenellate Raby Castle in 1378 and Sheriff Hutton in 1382. Complete Peerage, IX, p.502; C.P.R. 1381-85, p.108.

D. THE PITFALLS OF SUCCESS : THE SCROPE AND GROSVENOR DISPUTE

Soon after the work on Castle Bolton was underway, Richard Scrope, lord Bolton, received an unexpected and now notorious challenge to his right to bear his family's arms. The challenge came from a little known Cheshire knight, Sir Robert Grosvenor. On Richard II's Scottish expedition in 1385, when the army had reached Newcastle upon Tyne, Grosvenor publicly disputed Scrope's right to bear the arms azure a bend or.

This was not the first time that Scrope's right to bear these particular arms had been disputed. On a previous occasion one Thomas Carminow from Cornwall had challenged Scrope's claim⁽⁸³⁾. On that occasion John of Gaunt had permitted both men to bear the arms, arguing that Cornwall had once been a separate kingdom. At Newcastle, however, no such compromise could be found. The case was referred to the court of chivalry and the dispute was to last for five years, making it the longest and most famous of recorded causes of arms in late medieval England. As is well known the dispute is highly instructive for the social history of the fourteenth century. It has to be seen in the context of a society which was becoming increasingly preoccupied with status and outward forms of displaying rank. National sumptuary legislation from 1363 onwards is one example of this preoccupation⁽⁸⁴⁾. The use of heraldic arms in particular had been increasingly popular since the end of the thirteenth century; it was a fashion which had resulted increasingly in the production of heralds' rolls, in an attempt to monitor ownership of arms⁽⁸⁵⁾. The significance of heraldry and the importance which was attached to it has been explained by Sir Anthony Wagner, 'In England where the tests of nobility (in this context synonymous with gentility) were vague and elastic, the status of arms as ensigns of gentility and indeed as the

83. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, p.63 - deposition of Sir John de Brewes.

84. E.H.D., IV, p.1153.

85. M. Keen, Chivalry (New Haven and London, 1984) pp.134-6.

surest evidence of its existence, was insisted upon⁽⁸⁶⁾.

But clearly the use of heraldic emblems was widespread and not easily controlled. A later attempt at control was made in 1417 when, at musters of men leaving for France, those departing were expected to prove their right to bear heraldic arms, on the basis that 'although the Almighty distributes his favours in natural matters equally between rich and poor, as he wills, nevertheless, he wishes that each of our lieges aforesaid should be held and considered as his rank demands'⁽⁸⁷⁾.

Nevertheless during the course of the fourteenth century a variety of symbols and devices were employed by knights, their sons and even merchants in an ill defined manner. According to Sir Anthony Wagner, 'By the fourteenth century there were two schools of thought. One held that arms were ensigns of nobility, which would be granted on ennoblement, but might not be adopted at will. The other argued that any man might adopt arms provided that the device in question was not already borne by another'⁽⁸⁸⁾. The importance of a clear definition as to who should and did have the right to bear arms and its attendant privileges cannot be under-estimated. The importance of visual symbols denoting ownership and rank in a non-literate society is something which may now be hard to appreciate. All the witnesses for Scrope bear overwhelming testimony as to the importance of visual display both on the battlefield and at home. In recognition of this the Scropes themselves had distributed their emblems throughout their estates on churches, on windows, wall hangings and tableware⁽⁸⁹⁾. There can be no doubt that this was a form of self-advertisement and

86. E.H.D., IV, p.1004. A Wagner, English Genealogy 2nd edition (Oxford, 1972), p.120.

87. E.H.D., IV, p.1117.

88. Wagner, English Genealogy, p.119; N. Denholm - Young, The Country Gentry in the Fourteenth Century (Oxford, 1969), pp.4, 5, 23.

89. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, pp.222-229.

self-assertion, and any doubt about who owned arms could be intensely damaging to the family's position. The ownership of arms was closely associated with success on battlefield, and military prowess was a very important aspect of nobility⁽⁹⁰⁾. A challenge to a right to bear arms accordingly reflected badly on a noble's standing. As Richard Scrope himself argued, 'the highest and most sovereign things a knight ought to guard in defence of his estate are his troth and his arms and that in both of them Sir Robert had impeached him'⁽⁹¹⁾. The symbolism attached to the possession of arms was heavy indeed. There were not only the connotations of nobility which went with them; but as heraldry became a more sophisticated science the very colours used had a symbolic meaning, denoting the virtues associated with their owner. As Dr. Maurice Keen has argued, 'Heraldry had become one of the prime keys to a secular chivalrous erudition that was at once literate and visual, practical and ideological'⁽⁹²⁾. It is easy to see why Grosvenor's attack on Scrope was seen to be so serious and why it took five years and over 4,000 marks to settle.

The proceedings relating to the dispute were edited in 1832 by Sir N.H. Nicolas in two volumes⁽⁹³⁾. The first contains the depositions themselves; the second contains biographies of the deponents on behalf of Scrope. The original manuscripts of the

90. Keen, Chivalry, Chapters VIII and IX, especially pp.143-178.

91. C.C.R. 1389-91, pp.517-19.

92. Keen, Chivalry, pp.131-2, 134.

93. Sir N.H. Nicolas, The Scrope and Grosvenor Controversy (2 vols, London, 1832).

depositions themselves are filed amongst the Chancery Miscellanea in the Public Record Office⁽⁹⁴⁾. They comprise two large rolls, one for each of the two parties, amounting to a total of 400 membranes stitched together. Comparison between the manuscripts and the printed text suggests that Nicolas' edition is very accurate. The rolls represent a compilation and copy of all the transcripts of the depositions taken throughout the country from 1385-90. In the same file are the proceedings of another heraldic dispute, the Lovell v. Morley dispute, which remain unpublished⁽⁹⁵⁾. This dispute is contemporary with Scrope and Grosvenor case. It is not, however, as extensive as the case under scrutiny, the depositions being very brief and the witnesses not as numerous.

The dispute over the Scrope arms was referred to the court of Chivalry by John of Gaunt. As constable of England, the duke of Gloucester issued a commission to investigate the case to Lord Fitz Walter, Sir John de Marmion and Sir John de Kentwode, who were to interview witnesses and to record their testimony. The first set of depositions were taken at Plymouth on 16 June 1386 in the house of the Carmelite friars where Gaunt was then resident. On 12 July 1386 further depositions were taken at the manor of Tiverton, whose lord, Sir John Sully gave evidence in favour of Scrope. From there the commission moved to the refectory of the abbey of Abbotsbury in Dorset on 16 July 1386. On this occasion six men were interviewed. At Tiverton only four witnesses had been called, and among them was the earl of Devon himself, who evasively testified that he was too young and inexperienced to know anything about these matters. From there

94. P.R.O. C 47/6/2, contains the depositions for Scrope; C 47/6/3 contains the depositions for Grosvenor. B.L. Harley MS 294 fos. 184-200 also contains extracts from the dispute.

95. P.R.O. C 47/6/1. A third heraldic dispute between Lords Grey and Hastings has been edited by C.G. Young (London, 1841).

the commission travelled north and interviewed eleven men at Chester on 4 September 1386. But by far the largest meeting of witnesses occurred in the chapter house of York Minster from 17 September 1386 onwards, where in all 153 men were asked to give their testimony. Some, however, were too aged or infirm to travel to York and had to be interviewed at Scarborough or Lincoln⁽⁹⁶⁾.

Each deponent was to answer the same questions - who had the right to bear the arms; was it by right of inheritance; how and why did they know this; where, when and how many times had they seen the said bearer of the arms; what age were they and of what cause were they?⁽⁹⁷⁾. The depositions inevitably concentrate on these replies and much of the evidence is rather repetitive. Nevertheless they contain a wealth of detail particularly about the military activities of the family. On the whole the testimonies seem to be reliable, with many of the witnesses corroborating each other. Sometimes doubts may be raised about the trustworthiness of the depositions, particularly that of John Sully who claimed to be 105 years old⁽⁹⁸⁾. There are however examples of what seems to be complete honesty for example, Sir Thomas Marshall while giving evidence in favour of Scrope, felt obliged to say that Grosvenor 'est gentil home et venuz des bons gentz'⁽⁹⁹⁾.

The evidence provided by these depositions about the military activities of the family has already been discussed elsewhere. One of the most important issues which this dispute raises is the nature of the support which each party could call on, particularly the existence and role of aristocratic affinities. Medieval affinities represented a network of mutual obligation and support for the aristocrat and his

96. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, pp.72, 75, 78, 83, 84.

97. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, p.84.

98. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, p.74.

99. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, p.64.

followers. For the noble an affinity meant having supporters in the locality who would help and co-operate with him, protect his interests and ensure the smooth running of his administration. For his followers the association meant rewards, prestige and protection. A dispute like the Scrope and Grosvenor case would seem to have been a golden opportunity for a nobleman to call on his affinity's support. This is precisely what Grosvenor did; but with Scrope the situation was rather different.

151 men made depositions in favour of Sir Robert Grosvenor. In their accounts they supplied him with a traditional noble lineage, arguing that his ancestor Gilbert de Grosvenor had come over with the Conqueror. They stated that the arms were known to be Grosvenor's throughout Flint and Cheshire. This in itself was perhaps not much of a recommendation. Sir Robert Grosvenor had participated in campaigns in Poitou, Berry and Normandy. But his expeditions do not compare with those credited to his rival. Above all Grosvenor was a much less well known figure than Scrope.

Of those who supported Grosvenor 27 admitted to being his cousin or related to him by marriage. Only four of the deponents denied either being members of his affinity or being related by marriage nor, significantly, 'par prier ou allowance corrupte'⁽¹⁰⁰⁾. The extensive kinship network which is revealed by these deponents bears out Michael Bennett's view of the high level of inter-relatedness and intermarriage among the Cheshire gentry⁽¹⁰¹⁾. The vast majority of Grosvenor's supporters were from Cheshire or North Wales. He was certainly able to mobilise his county behind him. Oddly, one of

100. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, p.318.

101. M. Bennett, Community, Class and Careerism (Cambridge, 1983).

Scrope's retainers, Thomas de Hornby, was interviewed on Grosvenor's behalf, but this was probably by mistake since he denied knowing anything about Grosvenor. Surprisingly, eleven Cheshire men were interviewed on behalf of Richard Scrope on a separate occasion in Chester. Six of them admitted to being related to Grosvenor or of his affinity. Two of them denied any connection and three denied knowing anything at all. Their depositions suggest that they were being put in a difficult position. They must have had some connection with Scrope or they would not have been called on his behalf. Most of them were older heads of knightly families, contemporaries of Scrope who admitted to having seen Scrope bear the arms. Most of them refused to commit themselves, and said they did not know the truth of the matter. Only one, Sir William Brereton, took the extreme course of refusing to testify at all and was fined £20 for contempt⁽¹⁰²⁾. In all 33 men known to be of Grosvenor's affinity supported his claim and this is an impressive illustration of the sort of support which a lord could draw on. It is nevertheless doubtful whether this example based on Cheshire is typical of other counties. And however solid Grosvenor's support might have been, it could not match, either quantitatively or qualitatively, the weight of evidence Scrope was able to provide for his claim.

On five separate occasions 246 witnesses were interviewed on behalf of Sir Richard Scrope. Slightly more than two thirds of all the deponents were interviewed at York, suggesting that Scrope's main support as might be expected came from this area. Some of those interviewed at York, a tiny minority, had no real connection with the north, one such example being Sir Edward Dalingridge. The majority, however, were the most prominent northern landowners, both lay and ecclesiastical. Sixteen members of religious houses were interviewed and all gave valuable evidence, submitting charters and chronicles in support of Scrope. The most influential of the northern lords spoke for Scrope and these included the earl of Northumberland, the duke of York, lord Clifford, Ralph Neville, the earl of Arundel, and of course

102. Scrope v. Grosvenor, II, p.83.

John of Gaunt and his son had already given evidence at Plymouth. In addition, Scrope had the support of many of the heads of the leading Yorkshire knightly families, such as Sir Richard Tempest, Sir John Constable of Halsham, Sir William de Melton, Sir Ralph Hastings, Sir Bryan Stapleton, Sir John Savile, Sir Robert Constable, these men were all members of families who took a leading part in the administration of the county. Other witnesses included royal household knights such as Sir Lewis Clifford, Sir Simon Burley and Sir John Clanvowe. Some idea of the latter's personality appears in his rather irritable reply that if he was asked these questions by 'touz lez interrogatoirs du mond il luy respondera a un foitz pour tout'⁽¹⁰³⁾. Geoffrey Chaucer also appears among the witnesses, and his highly anecdotal deposition described how he had seen Scrope's banner hanging out of a window as he was walking down a London street⁽¹⁰⁴⁾.

Unfortunately none of the deponents admitted to belonging either to Scrope's affinity or to being related to him. Yet undoubtedly some of them were. Sir Robert Plumpton was related by marriage to Scrope's cousin Henry. In addition Andrew Luttrell was related to the family through the marriage of Scrope's cousins into the Luttrell family. Another of Scrope's cousins had also married into the Neville family⁽¹⁰⁵⁾. Simon de Wensley who held the living of Wensley church was a feoffee and witness to many of Scrope's charters⁽¹⁰⁶⁾. Other deponents closely connected with Scrope were; John Conyers of Hornby who was favoured by Scrope with the grant of the marriage of the heiress of the St. Quintin family⁽¹⁰⁷⁾; Sir John Warde who served in

103. Ibid., I, p.184.

104. Ibid., I, p.178.

105. See family genealogy.

106. Scrope Cartulary, no. 41.

107. C. Ross 'Yorkshire Baronage', p.227.

the retinue of Scrope's son in Gascony⁽¹⁰⁸⁾; Sir Randolph Pygot had served in Richard Scrope's retinues in France and Scotland⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ and Sir William de Chauncy who served in Scrope's cousin's retinue⁽¹¹⁰⁾. At least fourteen further deponents were Scrope's neighbours in the North Riding. These included Sir Gerard de Lound, Sir Robert de Laton, Sir Thomas de Rokeby, Sir Thomas de Boynton, Sir Randolph Pygot, Sir Edmund de Killingwick, Sir Robert Conyers and Conan de Ask. Sir Richard Scrope nevertheless did not have to rely as heavily on members of his kinship group or his affinity as Grosvenor. The largest coherent group that he could call on was not so much his own affinity but the retinue of his own lord, John of Gaunt. There is every indication that John of Gaunt had mobilised his retainers behind Scrope. Forty six of those men who were interviewed at Plymouth with Gaunt were retained by him. 21 were life retainers and the rest had been specifically recruited by Gaunt for his 1386 expedition to Castile, on which he was about to embark⁽¹¹¹⁾. This represents one more example of the way in which Gaunt helped his retainer. It is a useful example of the value of belonging to the retinue of a great lord for his support could be depended on when it counted.

108. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, p.118.

109. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, pp.119.

110. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, p.112.

111. Scrope v. Grosvenor, I, pp.49-72; John of Gaunt's Register, ed. S. Armitage Smith, 2 vols (Camden Society, 3rd series, XX and XXI, 1911). The life retainers were:- John Bathe; Edward de Beauchamp; Sir Walter Blount; John de Bolton; Thomas Bradeley; Sir John de Brewes; William Chetwynde; Sir Thomas Clynton; Thomas Driffeld; Sir Thomas Erpingham; Warin Eyrdale; Sir William de Lucy the younger; Sir Thomas Marshall; John Mynyot; Adam Neusom; Robert de Pilkington; Sir Thomas de Routh; Sir John Scargill; William Sudbury; Hugh Waterton; Sir John White and Sir Miles de Windsor.

The fact that Scrope could call on so many prominent men to speak for him and was not forced simply to rely on local or family ties, is testimony to his status by 1385. He was universally known throughout the political community and had some powerful supporters. With such influential support it is difficult to imagine that Scrope could have lost the case. Yet all did not run smoothly. Grosvenor frequently refused to attend the proceedings and by 1389 it may have become clear that he would lose⁽¹¹²⁾. He began an appeal stating that Scrope had manipulated the commission in his favour. On May 17 1389 a commission was established to hear Grosvenor's appeal, but he refused to attend⁽¹¹³⁾. This appeared to be, as Scrope alleged, delaying tactics on his opponent's part. On 27 May 1390 the arms were awarded to Scrope together with damages of 500 marks⁽¹¹⁴⁾. Grosvenor remained recalcitrant and refused to pay the damages. On 3 November Scrope found Grosvenor in the Parliament chamber and asked the king to prevent Grosvenor from leaving until he had paid the damages and costs. This was initially to no avail, but ten days later Scrope did receive some satisfaction. He declared before the king that 'he ought not and would not ever be friends with Sir Robert, who had averred against him such villainy, unless due amends were made to him to save his honour'⁽¹¹⁵⁾. Although Grosvenor publicly cleared Scrope of the charge of falsehood, declaring that his council had persuaded him to make the charge; he said that he could not afford to pay the damages. Whereupon Scrope felt that his honour had been saved and forgave Grosvenor the damages.

112. Scrope v. Grosvenor I, p.83.

113. C.P.R. 1388-92, pp.40, 51.

114. C.P.R. 1388-92, p.258.

115. C.C.R. 1389-91, pp.517-519.

The heraldic dispute is undoubtedly largely explicable in terms of the increasing contemporary obsession with status. A family like the Scropes, who were not of the old established nobility were especially vulnerable to this type of attack. Nevertheless it is tempting to speculate as to whether there was a political dimension to this case. What gave Grosvenor the confidence to attack a prominent man like Scrope who had the support of the political establishment? This was perhaps a clash between a representative of the forces of opposition to the king and a representative of the new power base which Richard II was building for himself in Cheshire. The king had first begun to recruit men from the county in 1385. There is no direct evidence to connect Grosvenor and the king, but on the Issue roll for Michaelmas 1386, the Cheshire knight was amongst one of several Cheshire men rewarded for coming to the aid of the king in defending the coast against his enemies⁽¹¹⁶⁾. By 1385, Scrope had already fallen from the king's favour. It may be that Richard II tacitly supported Grosvenor, which would explain why his delaying tactics went unpunished and why the dispute took so long to settle.

116. P.R.O. E 403/515.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ESTATES OF THE SCROPE FAMILY, C. 1300-1400

In the fifty years since K.B. McFarlane's pioneering work on English aristocratic history there has been a steady growth in historical writing in this area. A central theme of such works as George Holmes' Estates of the Higher Nobility and R.R. Davies' Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, together with a number of unpublished theses on individual noble families, is the analysis of the economic well-being of the later medieval nobility through an examination of the profits and management of their estates⁽¹⁾. It is difficult to build up a picture of the economic position of the nobility as a whole for a number of reasons. In the first place the survival of aristocratic archive material is patchy⁽²⁾. In particular little material for studying the estates of the Yorkshire nobility has survived. Even for the most famous of the Scrope's northern contemporaries, the Neville and Fitz Hugh families, such documentary evidence is missing. The propensity of aristocratic families, to forfeit property, or to die out in the male line after three

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1. G.A. Holmes, The Estates of the Higher Nobility (Cambridge, 1957), R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the March of Wales (Oxford, 1978), C. Rawcliffe, The Staffords, Earls of Stafford and Dukes of Buckingham, 1394-1521 (Cambridge, 1978), K.B. McFarlane, The Nobility of Later Medieval England (Oxford, 1973). L. Woodger, 'Henry Bourghier, , Earl of Essex and his family, 1408-83', (unpublished D. Phil. thesis Oxford, 1974). R.E. Archer, 'The Mowbrays, Earls of Nottingham and Dukes of Norfolk, to 1432', (unpublished D. Phil. thesis Oxford, 1984). M. Cherry, 'The Crown and the Political Community in Devonshire 1377-1461', (unpublished Ph.D thesis University of Wales, 1981).
 2. R.R. Davies, 'Baronial Accounts, Incomes and Arrears', Econ. H.R., XXI (1968), pp.211-229, C.D. Ross and T.B. Pugh, 'Some Materials for the Study of Baronial Incomes in the Fifteenth Century' Econ. H.R., 6 (1953), pp.185-94.

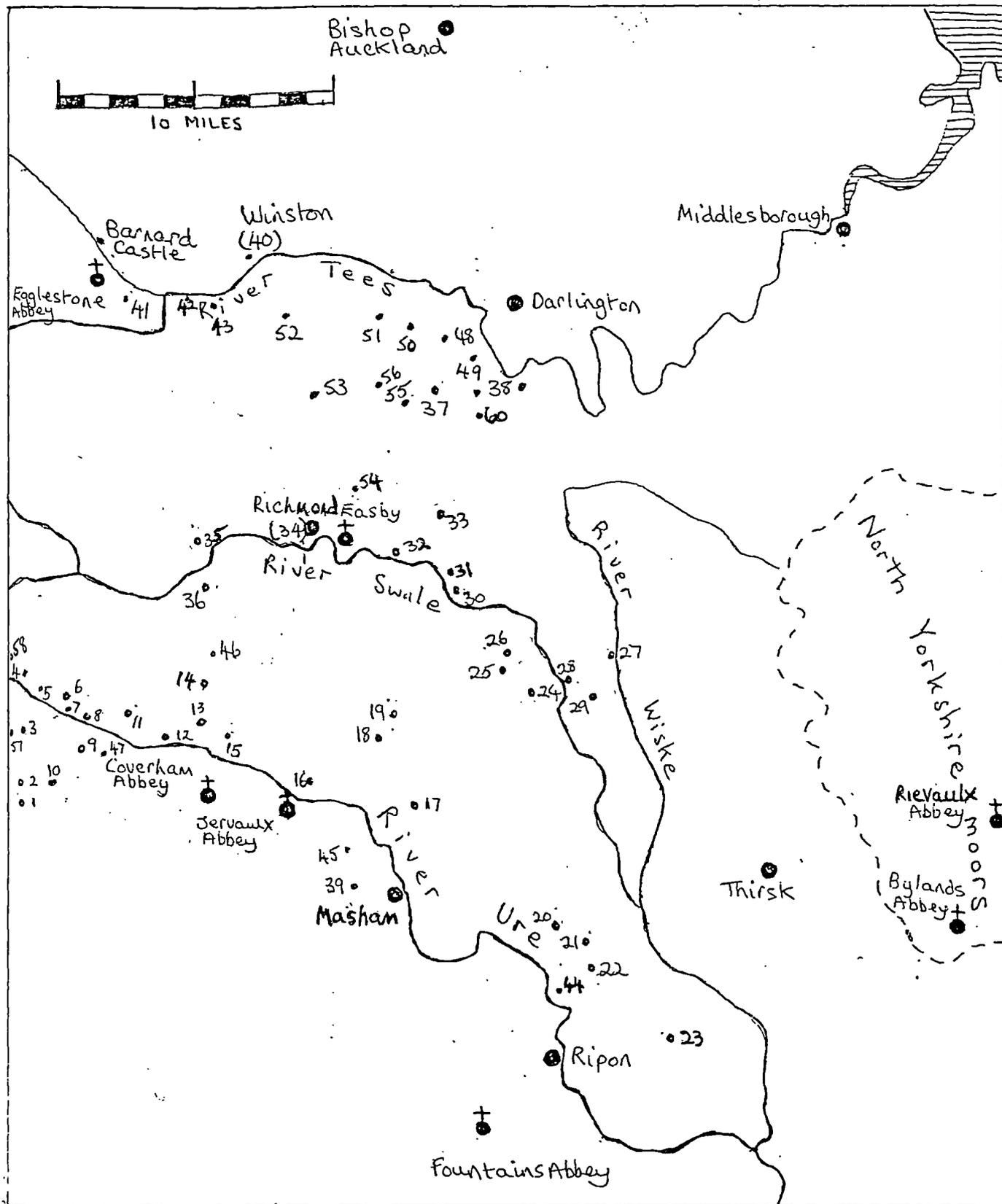
generations encouraged the dispersal not only of their estates but of the documentation relating to them. Furthermore families simply may not have appreciated the value of estates documents: as G.R.C. Davies has indicated, the survival of many medieval cartularies is the result of an antiquarian interest in them which only developed as late as the seventeenth century. Relatively, estates documents have survived in much greater numbers for the ecclesiastical houses and it seems likely that the administrative continuity which they enjoyed down to the Reformation may have been responsible for this. The problem of writing the history of a noble estate is, however, only partly to do with the survival of evidence. Even where administrative documents do exist their interpretation is not at all straightforward. It has been argued that because of the method of compiling medieval accounts it is almost impossible to deduce from manorial accounts any reasonable idea as to whether a manor was profitable or not. Centrally produced documents such as inquisitions post mortem are not a reliable indication of either the amount of land held on a tenant's death or its value. The major problem with inquisitions post mortem is that they do not record land held in dower nor enfeoffed to feoffees, which by the late fourteenth century could be a substantial amount. It has also been argued that the valor was the most useful estates document since it was specifically designed to tell a landowner what revenues were potentially available to him, but such documents have unfortunately rarely survived.

This chapter seeks to examine the methods by which one particular noble estate was accumulated and maintained. By outlining the pattern and method of investment in land and the chronological and territorial limits to this investment some general conclusions about the management abilities and financial position of the Scropes of Bolton may be deduced. Unfortunately there are no estates documents of any description relating to the family of Scropes of Bolton, no valors, no receivers accounts, and no manorial accounts. Much of the material for this chapter will therefore be taken from the Scrope of Bolton cartulary. A detailed description of the cartulary and its value to the historian is given in the introduction to volume two. It should

be noted, however, the usefulness of the cartulary lies in the record which it provides of the extent and pace of the land acquired by three generations of the Scropes of Bolton, from the 1280's to the 1380's. By its very nature it does not record land which was surrendered by the Scrope family, except where this was by way of an exchange. Moreover, the title deeds themselves are blunt instruments for measuring the nature of the Scropes method of land acquisition and exploitation. The majority of charters simply record the granting of property from the donor to the donee with no indication as to the terms under which the grant was made. Rarely is it possible to distinguish between a lease, an outright sale or a mortgage. Notwithstanding these caveats the cartulary remains of inestimable value for the study of the Scrope of Bolton estates. It contains over 800 deeds relating to property in 59 manors in the North Riding; in two manors in the county palatine of Durham; to tenements in the borough of Richmond; and the advowsons of St. Agatha's abbey, Easby as well as the priory of Bradley, Leicestershire. It is clear from other sources such as inquisitions post mortem that the Scropes of Bolton did acquire property outside this region, but the cartulary only records Yorkshire and neighbouring land. As can be seen from the map the Scropes of Bolton Yorkshire estates were mainly concentrated in the area south of the river Swale and north of the river Ure, the river Wiske provided the easternmost limits of the territory while the westernmost limits of the territory were defined by the Pennines. There was of course landed property in outlying manors to the north and on the river Tees, for example at Croft on Tees and to the south and east near Doncaster. In addition the Scropes of Bolton held borough tenements at Richmond. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the major Yorkshire residence of the Scropes of Bolton was Castle Bolton. The licence to crenellate granted to Richard Scrope in 1379 suggests that there was already a residence on this site and it was here that Richard's grandfather William had been granted a licence of free warren in 1296⁽³⁾. On his death in the

3. Scrope Cartulary, nos. 28, 35.

MAP SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF LANDS HELD
 IN RICHMONDSHIRE BY THE SCROPE FAMILY
 OF CASTLE BOLTON IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.



KEY TO MAP

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Newbiggin | 53. Aldbrough |
| 2. Thoralby | 54. Skeeby |
| 3. Aysgarth | 55. Barton |
| 4. Carperby | 56. Brettanby |
| 5. West Bolton | 57. Thornton Rust |
| 6. Castle Bolton | 58. Askrigg |
| 7. Low Bolton | 59. Jolby |
| 8. Redmire | 60. Walmire |
| 9. Swinithwaite | |
| 10. West Burton | |
| 11. Preston under Scar | |
| 12. Wensley | |
| 13. Leyburn | |
| 14. Bellerby | |
| 15. Hamby | |
| 16. Thornton Steward | |
| 17. Thornton Watlass | |
| 18. Newton le Willows | |
| 19. Patrick Brompton | |
| 20. Sutton Howgrave | |
| 21. Middleton Quernhow | |
| 22. Melmerby | |
| 23. Dishforth | |
| 24. Scruton | |
| 25. Great and Little Fencote | |
| 26. Kirkby Fleetham | |
| 27. Yafforth | |
| 28. Thrintoft | |
| 29. Ainderby Steeple | |
| 30. Ellerton on Swale | |
| 31. Bolton on Swale | |
| 32. Brompton on Swale | |
| 33. Uckerby | |
| 34. Richmond | |
| 35. Marske | |
| 36. Downholme | |
| 37. Newton Morrell | |
| 38. Croft | |
| 39. Fearby | |
| 40. Winston | |
| 41. Brignall | |
| 42. Mortham (Tower) | |
| 43. Wycliffe | |
| 44. Norton Conyers | |
| 45. High and Low Ellington | |
| 46. Walburn | |
| 47. West Witton | |
| 48. Manfield | |
| 49. Cleasby | |
| 50. Stanwick | |
| 51. Eppleby | |
| 52. Caldwell | |

early part of the fourteenth century William Scrope can have bequeathed only a limited territorial inheritance to his sons Henry and Geoffrey, namely property in the manors of Wensley, Yafforth and East Bolton. The cartulary reveals the extent to which Henry and his son Richard were able to augment their inheritance. In one single territorial transaction in 1315 with John de Cleseby Henry Scrope acquired property in 23 North Riding manors amounting to 3 1/4 knight's fees⁽⁴⁾. By his death in 1336 he had acquired landed property in twenty-eight additional manors⁽⁵⁾. Henry's son Richard extended the family's holdings in ten of these manors and added landed property in a further eleven locations in the North Riding⁽⁶⁾.

The Scropes of Masham held their estates in the same geographical area as the Scropes of Bolton. Their northernmost Yorkshire estates were on the river Tees at Caldwell, Eppleby and Croft and did not extend beyond the river Ure in the south, nor beyond the Pennines to the west. They did, however, extend beyond the river Wiske to the east, where the Scropes of Masham held property in several manors to the north of Thirsk at Ainderby Steeple, Upsall, Thornborough, Kilvington and at Thirsk itself. In the city of York the Scropes of Masham held tenements on Micklegate together with the advowson of St Martin cum Gregory on Micklegate. In the East Riding the Scropes of Masham held property at Wharram Percy and at Driffield, Skipsea

4. Scrope Cartulary, no. 192.

5. In Kirkby Fleetham, Askrigg, Nappa, Thoresby, Eppleby, West Bolton, Little Bolton, Wensley, Stainton, Jolby, Croft-on-Tees, Walmire, Uckerby, Thrintoft, Brettanby and Barton; Langley, Hekhington and Healeyfield in the county palatine of Durham. Henry and Richard acquired property in Caldwell, Great Fencote, Carperby, Preston, Redmire, Leyburn, Harmby, Bellerby, Bolton on Swale, East Bolton.

6. Richard alone acquired landed property in Brignall, Mortham, Thornton Steward, Little Burton and Great Burton on Ure, Fearby, Newton near Patrick Brompton, Swinithwaite, Thoraby, Waldene, West Burton.

and Beeford⁽⁷⁾.

A. THE ACQUISITION OF THE SCROPE OF BOLTON ESTATES

Apart from direct inheritance there were three major methods for a noble to acquire land in the middle ages. The first and perhaps the most difficult method was through direct investment, either by outright purchase or by leasing land. The second and maybe the most commonly exploited was by marriage. Finally and potentially the most lucrative was by royal endowment, but this latter was not often employed by the king and could be insecure, since the land could later be resumed and it was often granted only for life. This section will examine the extent to which the Scropes of Bolton employed these three methods, looking at the activities of three members of the family in particular: Henry Scrope chief justice (d. 1336); his son Richard, first lord Bolton, (d. 1403); and Richard's son William Scrope, earl of Wiltshire (d. 1399). They were the most successful in advancing their family position and provide the greatest evidence for discussion. Reference will, however, be made to members of the Scropes of Masham family for comparative purposes.

For the Scropes, as for all late medieval aristocratic families, three main motives for investing in land can be readily discerned. In the first place possession of a territorial estate was itself the sine qua non of nobility, and ownership of a large estate automatically meant social distinction. Secondly, land was a relatively safe and, in the long term, rewarding investment. For fortunes made in war, the law or finance there were indeed limited alternative opportunities for investment. Finally ownership of a large estate provided great political power both locally and, as the northern magnates of the fourteenth century discovered, nationally.

7. E.L.G. Stones, 'Sir Geoffrey Scrope, chief justice' thesis, pp.248-252.

It was commonplace for noble families to have geographically dispersed estates. The Clares, for example had landed possessions both in the Marches and in East Anglia⁽⁸⁾. The Mowbray possessions were divided between Norfolk and Yorkshire⁽⁹⁾. The Bourgchier estates were a little more coherent, being based in Essex and Suffolk⁽¹⁰⁾. The Scropes were not of course completely different from their peers in this respect. When Henry Scrope, lord Masham, died in 1392, his inquisition post mortem recorded property in London, Kent, Leicestershire, Staffordshire, Lincolnshire, Essex, Herfordshire, Suffolk, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire⁽¹¹⁾. Less extensive but equally dispersed were the possessions of Roger Scrope, lord Bolton, who died in 1404 seised of lands in Leicestershire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire in addition to his Yorkshire properties⁽¹²⁾. In both cases, however, the property of the Scropes of Bolton and Masham outside Yorkshire consisted of one or two manors in many different counties and the bulk of the family's estates lay within Richmondshire forming a very compact territorial estate (see map). It can have been no accident that both branches of the family consolidated their holdings in this way and it undoubtedly represented a policy on their part to establish a cohesive territorial bloc.

Even within the North Riding of Yorkshire, however, there were several obstacles to overcome in the acquisition of land. First of all it was expensive to invest in property. Unfortunately no precise idea of the cost of land can be derived from records relating to the Scrope estates themselves. In the fifteenth century, K.B. McFarlane estimated from the evidence of the Cromwell valor that land was

8. J.C. Ward, 'The Estates of the Clare Family, 1066-1317', B.I.H.R., XXXVII (1964), pp.114-17.

9. Archer, 'The Mowbrays', p.2.

10. Woodger, 'Henry Bourgchier', p.175.

11. P.R.O. C 136/78.

12. P.R.O. C 137/43.

purchased at twenty times its annual net value, and so clearly it was necessary to have substantial liquid assets to buy property⁽¹³⁾. In the previous century only rarely are any sums of money mentioned in the recorded conveyances of the Scropes and where money is recorded in these transactions, it is difficult to interpret precisely what it represents. For example, in 1315 Henry Scrope was alleged to have paid John de Cleseby £200 for land in 23 manors. If this was actually the total cost to the purchaser then he had a remarkable bargain, since in 1358 the lands were estimated to be worth £60 per annum⁽¹⁴⁾. However, Barbara Harvey has warned us against taking these prices at face value, suggesting that the values may represent simply a first instalment or alternatively the price of the reversion of the land rather than its freehold⁽¹⁵⁾. Several fines made by the Scropes record the conveyance of property to them for the nominal rent of a rose at rose time, disguising the real nature of the tenure, which was actually a form of lease. Indeed the nature of the charters themselves makes it difficult to determine whether the Scropes were generally buying land, leasing it or acting as mortgage brokers.

Another major difficulty in acquiring the freehold on property was that there were few incentives to part with property. No landowner would permanently alienate his lands unless he was under extreme pressure; and probably the most common reasons for doing so were failure of heirs or serious debt. In the latter case the charters sometimes actually record the tell-tale phrase of the grantor's urgent need (sua magna necessitate). These obstacles inevitably meant that territorial accumulation was likely to be rather piecemeal and slow. Indeed even the fourteenth century abbots of Westminster despite all their resources, often found it difficult to

13. K.B. McFarlane, The Nobility of Later Medieval England (Oxford, 1973), p.57.

14. Scrope Cartulary, nos. 192, 213.

15. B. Harvey, Westminster Abbey and its Estates (Oxford, 1977) p.194.

acquire land where they wanted it. As K.B. McFarlane observed both because of the dominant position of the church as a landowner and the increasing use of entails there was rarely a glut in the landmarket. Accordingly he argued, 'The question should be rather how small was the fraction of England that then changed hands by sale'⁽¹⁶⁾. Nevertheless despite the apparent difficulties in establishing a large estate from humble beginnings, the Scropes of Bolton do indeed seem to prove an exception to the general rule.

The origins of the Scrope of Bolton's Yorkshire estates can be traced back to the personal investment of Henry Scrope (d. 1336) and his son Richard (d. 1403). The evidence from the Scrope cartulary indicates that there had been a consistent and long term interest in acquiring land in the North Riding. In West Bolton for example, the family aquired property from before 1300 and up to 1364⁽¹⁷⁾. For the most part Henry Scrope patiently consolidated his position. The charters relating to the manors of Kirkby Fleetham and Fencote near Bedale are instructive here. In 1296 Henry Scrope exchanged part of his manor of 'Randeby' with Sir John Coleman for part of the manor of Kirkby Fleetham⁽¹⁸⁾. In 1299 he enclosed this land and obtained a supply of running water for it. He then obtained permission to build a mill and all the pools he required there. The lord of the manor, Miles de Stapleton, granted him rights of common and permission to enclose his wood. Henry Scrope then obtained from Henry Payne property adjacent to his original tenement in Fleetham, and subsequently received several grants of services. By 1316 Henry Scrope had become joint lord of Fleetham with Miles de Stapleton, sharing with him the right to present to Fleetham church. From this

16. McFarlane, Nobility p. 53.

17. Scrope Cartulary, nos. 1-14.

18. Scrope Cartulary, no. 596.

detailed example it maybe argued that Scrope had a consistent and clear policy towards extending his property in this manor. The charters provide evidence of Scrope's investment and the improvement of his property with the construction of the mill. It took him twenty years to become joint lord of the manor of Kirkby Fleetham, not a very long time considering he did not have a hereditary claim to property here.

However, the example of Kirkby Fleetham may make the Scropes' accumulation of property in Wensleydale appear deceptively easy. It is not so easy to offer an explanation as to how this development of a landed estate was achieved. Nevertheless it is worth considering Prof. Lionel Stones' suggestion that throughout his career Geoffrey Scrope, chief justice, was unscrupulous in taking advantage of the financial difficulties of his neighbours. He argued that 'The rapid accumulation of Scrope's estates in the North Riding of Yorkshire is consistent with the view that he advanced money to his impoverished neighbours on the security of their lands, as a step forward finally supplanting them'⁽¹⁹⁾. There is some evidence to be found in the Scrope of Bolton Cartulary to sustain a similar view of Geoffrey's brother. The clearest example is that of the manor of Wensley, the first manor in the North Riding within which the Scropes held land⁽²⁰⁾. Wensley was a large manor consisting of nine carucates and constituting one knight's fee. It had also been the site of a market since 1296. The manor contained two fees, one was held by a Lincolnshire family, the Ingoldsbys, the other by the Wensley family itself. In 1280 Nicholas de Wensley leased his lands to Sir Ranulph fitz Ranulph for 20 years in return for a sum of money given to him in 'sua necessitate'. From 1291 Nicholas sold off most of his assets in the manor and Henry Scrope became a major beneficiary. From 1320-22 Nicholas' brother James mortgaged his lands to Henry Scrope and was

19. E.L.G. Stones, 'Sir Geoffrey le Scrope, c. 1280-1340, Chief Justice of the King's Bench', E.H.R., CXIX (1954) p.13.

20. Scrope Cartulary, nos. 64-85.

ultimately unable to redeem the mortgage. By 1333 James had quitclaimed all his rights in the manor to Henry, who thenceforward was its only lord.

The charters relating to Wensley are unusually full of detail and it might be unwise to portray them as typical of Henry Scrope's methods. Yet it seems clear that the Scropes' hold on this manor, was established through advancing mortgages on the security of land and by buying out other mortgagers. Dr. Barbara Harvey has suggested that the fluidity of the land market could be enhanced by the pledging of land for loans, although the abbots of Westminster probably did not gain much property in this way themselves⁽²¹⁾. However, the Scropes' legal expertise and their professional involvement in conveyancing property probably put them in a very strong position to acquire property, because they would be well aware of the availability of land and could be well informed about estates encumbered with mortgages.

Further evidence as to the position of those who conveyed property to the Scropes is elusive. What prompted John de Cleseby for example to grant land in twenty-three manors to Henry Scrope in 1315 is a matter for speculation. Although lack of heirs was probably the commonest reason for alienating property, John de Cleseby did have an heir who later quitclaimed all his rights to Henry Scrope's own heir William. Cleseby may well have been in financial difficulties and tempted by the large lump sum he could obtain for his property. Only two years later Cleseby joined with Gilbert de Middleton in extorting protection money from northern communities and was condemned as a traitor. His activities were to have repercussions for Henry's heir Richard Scrope, for in 1358 the lands formerly belonging to Cleseby were confiscated pending an inquisition into their tenure. William de Nessefeld was appointed to investigate whether Henry Scrope had been seised of the lands before Cleseby had forfeited his property for treason. Fortunately in 1359, mindful of Richard Scrope's good service and perhaps even more of the £40 offered to him, the king

21. Harvey, Westminster Abbey, pp. 191-2.

restored the property to Scrope⁽²²⁾.

Similarly Sir Geoffrey of Masham gained land in thirteen manors from Roald son of Thomas de Richmond in 1320-21⁽²³⁾. This represented the conveyance of the entire constable's fee, an ancient fee of the honour of Richmond. It seems likely that Roald had no heirs since the family disappeared from the records at this point. In addition before 1319, Roald's father is recorded as having debts relating to his keeping of the castle of Cockermouth⁽²⁴⁾.

However these large conveyances of property were relatively unusual in the case of the Scrope family and the most common transactions involved small pieces of land. Whether a measure of compulsion was exerted over smaller landholders to part with their lands cannot be fully estimated. This was a factor noted by Prof. Robin du Boulay in his study of Knole in Sevenoaks, where he argued, 'What could be done by obscure men who possessed acres in or about Knole which the archbishop wanted?'⁽²⁵⁾. While the Scropes were not the equals of the archbishop of Canterbury, they were in a position to exert considerable influence in their locality.

The procedures surrounding the conveyance of land were relatively lengthy; after the initial charter, quitclaims and often a final concord followed. These arrangements could be expensive and often took some time to effect. Moreover, livery of seisin of land, without which the freehold possession was not complete, could also be delayed. This may have often been the case with the Scropes, so often active on business at Westminster and elsewhere. Such a situation was

22. Scrope Cartulary nos. 213-16.

23. Clay, Early Yorkshire Charters, V, p.94.

24. Scrope Cartulary, no. 220.

25. F.R.H. du Boulay, 'The Assembling of an Estate: Knole in Sevenoaks c. 1275 - c. 1525', Archaeologia Cantiana, LXXXIX (1974), p.5.

anticipated in 1320 when on 12 May Henry Scrope leased the lands of Sir Matthew de Bassinburn in Ellerton on Swale. Provision was made for Henry to receive the issues of the lands at Whitsun, even if he had not received seisin of the lands by then, because of their remoteness⁽²⁶⁾.

The acquisition of property did not always proceed smoothly, and it may be that these lengthy procedures encouraged disputes. On 26 September 1364, for example Richard Scrope exchanged his land and rents in several manors near Doncaster for land in the manor of Brignall, near Barnard Castle. The exchange was effected through Richard Roter, feoffee of Thomas Rokeby, L'oncle, lord of the manor of Brignall. Following the exchange, quitclaims were quickly granted by Alexander and Thomas Rokeby, junior, and Acaris de Halnathby⁽²⁷⁾. Nevertheless Scrope's position was not entirely secure. On 8 July 1365 Richard Scrope complained that Thomas de Rokeby, other Rokebys and John de Akum, vicar of Brignall church had entered his free warren there and hunted⁽²⁸⁾. This apparent breach of contract probably lay behind the ratification of Scrope's estate there by Thomas de Rokeby on 27 October 1364 in London. Richard's father Henry had had similar problems in October 1317 when he made a complaint that his manor of Hendon in Middlesex had been attacked. The damage was quite serious, his trees had been felled destroying an expensive capital investment; the grass had been mowed in his meadows and his corn had been reaped. However, these incidents appear to have been rare⁽²⁹⁾. By the end of the fourteenth century the Scropes of Bolton were in possession of an extensive estate based on landed property in over fifty manors in the North Riding. As will be demonstrated in succeeding sections of this chapter, little of the property was acquired through marriage or by way of royal endowment. The property was accumulated by the direct

26. Scrope Cartulary, no. 208.

27. Scrope Cartulary, nos. 285-289.

28. C.P.R. 1364-7, p.200.

29. C.P.R. 1317-21, p.89.

investment of Henry and Richard Scrope as the charters in the Scrope of Bolton Cartulary testify.

Dealing in the marriage market was a well known method of acquiring property. Spectacular gains could be made by capturing the hand of an heiress. One example, is the marriage in the fourteenth century of Anne, countess of Stafford, the wealthiest heiress of her day, to William Bourghier, which brought the family considerable if temporary financial advantage⁽³⁰⁾. Less often marriage could bring ruin, as the heirs of Ralph Neville, earl of Westmorland by his first wife were to discover on his second marriage to Joan Beaufort, by November 1396⁽³¹⁾. Inevitably then marriage alliances had to be carefully managed, an obvious generalisation to which the Scropes were no exception. As might be expected many of the partners chosen for Scrope heirs and heiresses were from other Yorkshire and northern baronial families. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Scropes consistently contracted marriages within the same social and geographical circle. Geoffrey Scrope, heir to the first lord Masham contracted a marriage with Eleanor, daughter of Ralph Neville of Raby in 1347⁽³²⁾. Richard Scrope, the third lord of Bolton, heir to the Bolton estates in 1405 was first the ward of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland and by 1418 had become his son-in-law. Westmorland married his young ward to his sixth daughter Margaret, issue of his marriage to Margaret Stafford⁽³³⁾. In the fourteenth century Richard Scrope, first lord Bolton had married into the de la Pole family. Other marital alliances were arranged with the Percy and Fitz Hugh families. And on at least two occasions attempts were made to consolidate the family's position by marriages between the two branches of the Scrope family, when in 1435 Henry Scrope, lord Bolton married Elizabeth daughter of John, lord Scrope of Masham and at the

30. Woodger, 'Henry Bourghier', p.176.

31. Complete Peerage, XI, p.502.

32. P.R.O. E 326/9309.

33. Complete Peerage, XI, p.540.

end of the century Henry, seventh lord Scrope of Bolton married Alice baroness Masham⁽³⁴⁾. Marriages with local families were probably inspired by the desire to consolidate territory in one area. Certainly this was a preoccupation of knightly families in Cheshire and Derbyshire. There seems to have been no consistent political motive behind their marriage alliances of the family. For a brief period, however, at the end of the fourteenth century, leading members of the Scropes of Masham and Bolton families did not choose northern brides for their marriage partners. William Scrope, earl of Wiltshire, married Isabel Russell daughter of Sir Maurice Russell of Dyrham, Gloucestershire and Kingston Russell, Dorset. The date of this marriage is not known⁽³⁵⁾. Sir Henry Scrope, third lord Masham, married as his first wife in circa 1398 Philippa, coheiress of Sir Guy de Brienne. Marriage to Philippa endowed Henry Scrope with property in Dorset and Somerset⁽³⁶⁾. Two of the three daughters and coheiresses of Sir Robert Tiptoft married two sons of Sir Richard Scrope first lord Bolton, in circa 1386⁽³⁷⁾. This brief departure from the usual choice of marriage partners may perhaps be largely explained in terms of the wealth which these heiresses could make available to their husbands. However, one may speculate that the Scropes may have been trying to develop alliances outside the northern part of the kingdom which was now increasingly dominated by the two powerful Neville and Percy dynasties.

34. Ibid., XI, p.550.

35. Ibid., XII, p.733.

36. Ibid., XI, p.564.

37. B.L. Additional MS 28,206, fo. 10.

From Simon Scrope's marriage to Ingoliana before 1225 the family had consistently gained landed property through marriage. Two generations later Geoffrey Scrope, chief justice, acquired the manors of South Muskham and Carlton in Nottinghamshire by his marriage to Ivetta daughter of William Roos of Ingmanthorpe in 1311⁽³⁸⁾. But thereafter cash rather than property seems to have been the most usual profit from the Scrope's marriages. Geoffrey Scrope, heir to the Masham estates gained £600 on his marriage to Eleanor Neville in 1347. Richard Scrope's marriage to Blanche de la Pole presumably brought cash since it brought no property. Marriage to Joan, duchess of York in 1409 brought a substantial dower income to Henry Scrope, lord Masham, which may have compensated him for her probable infertility.

Henry, lord Scrope of Masham's first wife Phillipa de Brienne whom he married in 1398 was a royal ward when Scrope married her and she did not receive livery of her inheritance until 13 February 1399⁽³⁹⁾. The partition of the estates between herself and her sister Elizabeth did not occur until 18 June 1400⁽⁴⁰⁾. Initially she received only a proportion of her estates, two manors in Somerset and two manors in Devon, worth £20 per annum⁽⁴¹⁾. By the time of her death on 19 November 1406 she was in full possession of her estates which consisted of some tenements and pasture in Gloucester, seven manors in Somerset, some small pieces of land in Dorset and Middlesex as well as three manors and additional land in Kent. Since she had no children, her heir was her sister Elizabeth, the wife of Robert Lovell, son of John, lord Lovell. Henry Scrope was not entitled to hold any of her lands, after her death.

38. Stones, 'Geoffrey Scrope' thesis p.249.

39. C.C.R. 1396-99, p.376.

40. C.C.R. 1399-1402, p.302.

41. C.C.R. 1396-99, p.376.

In the long term the most valuable heiresses secured by the family proved to be the daughters of Sir Robert Tiptoft. On 8 July 1372 when he was treasurer lord Richard Scrope was granted the wardship of two-thirds of the Tiptoft inheritance⁽⁴²⁾. Some idea of what this was worth can be gauged when eight years later Scrope was given the entire custody of this inheritance paying £153 6s 8d per annum⁽⁴³⁾. Sir Robert was survived by three infant daughters, Margaret, Millicent and Elizabeth and a wife also called Margaret. Tiptoft's daughters were very young at the time of his death, Margaret was aged six, Millicent four and Elizabeth two. His estates were widely scattered, comprising manors in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, as well as in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Buckinghamshire. On 10 December 1386 Richard Scrope arranged for the division of the Tiptoft inheritance, having first married two of the heiresses to two of his sons⁽⁴⁴⁾. They were contracted to marry Scrope's sons immediately after Richard had acquired their wardship. Originally Richard Scrope may have intended that all three should marry his sons. William of Worcester recorded that the youngest daughter was betrothed to Scrope's younger son Nicholas. If this was the case, then this son clearly did not survive to fulfil the marriage for the third Tiptoft daughter was eventually married to Philip Despenser⁽⁴⁵⁾.

Following their marriages, on 10 December 1385 Scrope arranged for a tripartite division of the Tiptoft inheritance. Margaret and Roger Scrope were assigned the manors of Langar and Barston in Nottinghamshire, Eston in Lincolnshire, Market Overton in Rutland; Edmerthorp and Wymondham in Leicestershire, Sunningden in Bedfordshire and Hameldon in Buckinghamshire, where Richard Scrope held property himself, as well as £25 4s 4d rent from the manor of Oxendon in

42. C.C.R. 1369-74, p.396.

43. C.F.R. 1377-83, p.192.

44. BL. Additional MS 28, 206, fo. 10.

45. Scrope, Castle Combe, p.79.

Gloucestershire which was granted to Stephen and Millicent Scrope, together with the advowson of Eldormay in Kent. At the same time, Stephen Scrope and Millicent were granted the manors of Wighton, Bentley and Hamthwait in Yorkshire with Oxendon in Gloucestershire and Castle Combe in Wiltshire. Philip Despenser and Elizabeth were assigned the manors of Nettlestead and Barrow in Suffolk, a quarter of the manor of Thaxted, the manor of Lyndsels and Little Stanbridge in Essex, Chatham, Kingston and Sibton in Kent, Marston in Lincolnshire and the advowson of Blakenham in Lincolnshire.

It would appear that the division of the inheritance was arranged on a topographical basis. Roger Scrope acquired the midlands manors, Stephen Scrope the Yorkshire and western manors while Philip Despenser obtained the south-eastern estates. In each case the values of the estates were given. In total Roger and Margaret received land worth £271 18s 3d. Of the manors they received, that of Langar in Nottinghamshire was the most valuable, worth £123 5s per annum. Stephen and Millicent received manors worth £220 1s 7d per annum. The manors of Bentley and Hamthwait were jointly the most valuable at £104 10s 1d per annum. Philip and Elizabeth received manors worth £234 19s 9d per annum, the most valuable being Nettlestead in Suffolk worth £68. Accordingly through control of the Tiptoft inheritance Roger, Stephen and Philip were endowed with lands which easily brought them incomes equal to the most affluent knightly families. Richard Scrope was able to ensure that his sons had livelihoods appropriate to their rank without dismembering the family patrimony, which was presumably reserved for his eldest son William. From Stephen and Millicent descended a cadet branch of the Scopes which came to be based at Castle Combe in Wiltshire and Bentley in Yorkshire. However, the possibility that another cadet branch of the family might be based in the Midlands ended in 1399 with the execution of William Scrope, ensuring that his brother Roger now became his father's heir, uniting his Midlands property with the Yorkshire estates.

No other marriages arranged by the Scropes were to augment their estates and influence so dramatically. Yet the potential for profit from matrimonial alliances with heiresses was always present and marriages had to be contracted with the utmost care. The transfer of cash and property on these occasions necessitated security and legal protection for both parties. As is well known the arrangements surrounding marital alliances conditioned the institution of marriage among late medieval magnates and gentry alike. In the case of the Scropes too, their marriage arrangements confirm the care with which the nobility sought to manage this most important economic resources. The rare survival of a marriage contract between Geoffrey Scrope, eldest son and heir of Henry, first lord Masham, and Eleanor, daughter of Ralph Neville, lord of Raby, is particularly revealing about the complexities and provisions surrounding such noble marriages.

This marriage contract was drawn up in York on 20 December 1347⁽⁴⁶⁾. Initially Henry Scrope agreed to enfeoff Master Thomas Neville, archdeacon of Durham, John Hesselarton, parson of Patrick Brompton church and William Scruton, with 100 marks of land, which they would re-grant to Henry who could hold it for ten years before it passed to the couple. The land would revert to Henry should Geoffrey and Eleanor fail to produce heirs. This enfeoffment was to be performed within fifteen days of the marriage, although later Henry was to settle an additional 50 marks of land on the same trustees. In the event that Eleanor survived Geoffrey beyond the age of twenty-one, she could continue to hold the land, but paying 50 marks per annum. Meanwhile Henry was to support the couple for this subsequent ten years, giving them reasonable sustenance and granting them an annuity of 50 marks for the next eight years.

Henry's burdens were accordingly to be spread over the next decade, so that he did not finally part with landed property until the couple were of age. Sir Ralph however had to provide cash sums immediately as part of his own responsibilities by the agreement. He

46. P.R.O. E 326/9309.

agreed to pay Henry £600 in all, in three stages; £300 on the marriage, £150 at Whitsun next and £150 at the following feast of St. Martin. As a safeguard Henry agreed to repay half the money he had received within fourteen days if Eleanor died before the age of twelve. Whatever money Henry had paid in the form of an annuity was to be discounted against this sum.

Henry's obligation to support the couple for the next ten years suggests that they were aged somewhere between six and eleven years old. According to the lower estimate Geoffrey may just have come of age before he was killed fighting in Prussia in 1362. Accordingly this potentially rewarding match came to nothing and produced no heirs. Nevertheless this marriage settlement of 1347 illustrates in unusual detail the way in which the Scropes used the marriage of their children to extend their power. Not that the marriage alliances of the Scrope family were dictated by any one simple policy. Indeed the difficulties of finding suitable partners must have dictated a flexible approach, and as the Scrope family extended their influence they ranged more widely for partners, influenced by a variety of territorial, economic and political factors.

The expansion of the Scrope estates was not due primarily to royal generosity, since grants of land from the king were comparatively rare. That this was the case is perhaps only to be expected - the amount of land which the king could dispose of without directly impoverishing himself was limited. Escheats to the crown and forfeiture of land were contingencies that most landowners strove to avoid. Yet these were the main additional sources of land at the king's disposal. By their nature these accidental acquisitions were neither regular nor often plentiful.

The extent to which royal generosity featured in the early development of the estates has already been discussed. Henry and Geoffrey, chief justices, received several grants of land during their careers. Their descendants were mostly less successful in this respect. Geoffrey's son Henry received some London property and the

manor of Faxfleet in Yorkshire in 1391, in lieu of a 200 marks annuity⁽⁴⁷⁾. Sir Geoffrey's great grandson was granted land in Wales worth £10 per annum on 28 September 1403, following the rebellion of that year⁽⁴⁸⁾. On 12 July 1411 and again on 23 May 1413 he was granted the 'towns' of Hampstead and Hendon, for 'harboring his men and horses' when he came to Westminster⁽⁴⁹⁾. Richard Scrope, lord Bolton, received a grant of the manor of Edlington, Yorkshire on 21 September 1381⁽⁵⁰⁾. Wardships, indeed, almost certainly proved more important than the small number of property grants. Thus Sir Richard Scrope, lord Bolton, received a series of lucrative grants of wardship from Edward III and Richard II including the Tiptoft heiresses, that of the Deschalers heir in 1372 and the wardship of Robert Grey of Rotherfield on 26 October 1388⁽⁵¹⁾.

The great exception to this general picture occurred at the end of the fourteenth century with the elevation of William Scrope to the earldom of Wiltshire on September 27 1397. Richard II's generosity to the new earl at this time was one of the several examples selected by Dr. Holmes to prove that, 'New inheritances were the creatures of

47. C.P.R. 1391-96, p.66.

48. C.P.R. 1401-5, p.298.

49. C.P.R. 1413-16, p.17.

50. C.F.R. 1391-99, p.10.

51. C.C.R. 1369-74, p.396; C.F.R. 1377-83, p.49; C.C.R. 1369-74, p.359, C.P.R. 1385-9, p.476. In 1394 Scrope paid Queen Anne of Bohemia £80 for the wardship of the North Riding heir Thomas Mountford and his lands, P.R.O. SC 8/181 no. 9017. In 1396 he was granted custody of the lands and heir of Richard Thurgryme, C.F.R. 1391-99, p.195, P.R.O. E 364/34.

politics, built up by royal favours and powers at court'(52). There is no doubt of course that William Scrope, eldest son of Richard Scrope, lord Bolton, was one of Richard II's most important servants. His close identification with the king earned him many rewards and much hostility; according to Thomas Walsingham he was, 'vir quo in humano genere de facili non inveneretur nequior aut crudelior'(53). Even allowing for Lancastrian bias, this assessment of Scrope may not have been entirely unjustified. At any rate he was a man who aroused particular antagonism. In 1389, for example, William and Stephen Scrope were mainprised on a bond of 10,000 marks to 'do no harm to Walter, the bishop of Durham nor hinder a process which the bishop etc. are suing in the form of law'(54). William had probably committed a major misdemeanour, for on 24 January 1390 he offered a jewel worth £500 at the shrine of St. Cuthbert 'for trespases done by William and his people in Durham'(55). The loss of Bishop Walter Skirlaw's contemporary register has ended the possibility of discovering the nature of this dispute. It may have been related to the management of the see of Durham to which Skirlaw was promoted in 1389. After Scrope's death, several of those who had suffered at his hands appealed against his decisions. On 10 November 1399 the canons of St. Mary's, Salisbury, petitioned for the return of their late bishop's 'better and more precious vestment' which had been bequeathed to them, but given to the abbot of Westminster on Scrope's advice(56). On July 15 1401 the bailiffs of the Exchequer had their allowances restored to £100 after Scrope had cut them to £7(57). It was of course easier to blame a hated and recently beheaded courtier for

52. Holmes, Higher Nobility p.40.

53. Historia Anglicana, II, p.213.

54. C.C.R. 1389-92, p.64.

55. C.P.R. 1388-92, p.178.

56. C.P.R. 1399-1401, p.82.

57. C.C.R. 1399-1402, p.372.

these things than ascribe blame to anyone else.

Richard II's generosity to William Scrope lay more in terms of offices and annuities than grants of property. In particular the attainting of the Earl of Warwick provided the opportunity to endow Scrope with the earl's forfeited lordships of Barnard Castle, the manor of Middleton in Teesdale and additional manors in Essex with land in Wales. These grants occurred late in the reign and provided the basis for Scrope's elevation to an earldom. Earlier he had been showered with gifts and annuities. The offices held by Scrope were mainly military in nature and provide some clue as to his talents and usefulness to the crown. Like many members of the family Scrope began his career as a soldier in France and was quickly promoted. It was no doubt his military activities to which the king was most interested. By 1399 indeed Scrope was to be given almost complete military and judicial control over north-west England, north Wales, Ireland and the Isle of Man. How far Richard II was inspired by unorthodox political intentions in this respect is debatable. It probably made sense to give overall political control of this area, notoriously unruly and remote from authority, to one magnate. It was an example to be copied by Henry IV who simply replaced Scrope with Henry Percy in 1399⁽⁵⁸⁾.

Scrope was in any case a natural choice to hold supreme political power in the north-west, since in 1392 together with his father and brother, he had bought the Isle of Man from the childless earl of Salisbury⁽⁵⁹⁾. On 25 April 1392 Sir Richard Scrope and his two sons, William and Stephen, paid William Montague, earl of Salisbury the final instalments of 10,000 marks, the purchase price for the Isle of Man. The Isle was bought on behalf of William and was forfeit as such in 1399. There is no evidence to suggest that they bought the Isle with royal connivance; but it is hard to believe that they could have

58. C.P.R. 1399-1401, pp.27, 37. See Appendix One for a summary of Scrope's offices.

59. C.C.R. 1389-92, pp.559, 64.

bought it without Richard II's support. It is also startling to discover that they had been able to raise 10,000 marks in three years. It was at this period that Scrope began to be lavished with crown offices, for it seems clear that Richard Scrope, lord Bolton, did not ever provide his son with the £1,000 per annum required to support the status of an earl. In fact William did not receive any of the family property before his father's death, to judge by their non-appearance among the estates forfeited on his own death in 1399. William Scrope was highly dependent on the king for support and was too closely identified with Richard II to survive the events of 1399. In addition he had received much of Bolingbroke's forfeited property, a factor which must have added to his unpopularity with the Lancastrians in the summer of 1399.

However, Earl William's execution in 1399 at Bristol made little difference to the total Scrope family estate. In fact remarkably little property was forfeited by him and few of his moveable possessions seem to have been found. Accordingly it emerges that the earldom of Wiltshire was a political creation with no real territorial basis. It was designed to give its holder the prestige and influence befitting such a prominent royal servant. The promotion of this new earl was of course one example of the new noble creations which Richard II sought to make to offset the criticism of the older members of the aristocracy and, after the events of 1397, to replace it. As a political creation, the earldom could not survive the violent deaths of its earl and his patron. The family themselves did not have the independent means to sustain such an honour and not until the nineteenth century did any member of the family seek to recover the earldom of Wiltshire.

B. MANAGEMENT AND INHERITANCE OF THE ESTATES

Whether the great magnates of the later middle ages were 'good' managers of their resources is a question which can never be fully answered, however important an issue this is for any evaluation of their response to the problems of the late medieval economy. It must be accepted that aristocratic estate management could never be run purely according to economic considerations for the political responsibilities of lordship and family welfare could never be disregarded. Nevertheless, the presence of these considerations did not perhaps lead inevitably to economic inefficiency, in so far as that can be measured.

In general the geographical distribution of noble estates may suggest a lack of organisation. A collection of manors spread over several counties must have been difficult to oversee, inconvenient to visit and slow to produce revenue. These problems were largely avoided by the Scrope family whose estates were concentrated in one area. Nevertheless, the Scropes of Bolton did hold fairly scattered manors, including some in the vicinity of Doncaster and some within the county palatine of Durham. It is clear that some attempt at rationalisation was made by exchanging land in the more distant manors for property nearer home. On 10 March 1315 Henry Scrope granted land in Neasham on Tees to Rievaulx Abbey in exchange for land in East Bolton⁽⁶⁰⁾. Similarly on 26 September 1364 Sir Richard Scrope granted Richard Roter, feoffee of Sir Thomas de Rokeby, land in Doncaster and three surrounding manors for land in Brignall⁽⁶¹⁾.

Nevertheless, the possession of outlying manors was not always a disadvantage, for they could serve a useful function. Often such property was used to endow widows or younger sons without damaging the

60. Rievaulx Cartulary, pp.103-106. C.P.R. 1313-17, p.260.

61. Scrope Cartulary, no. 285.

integrity of the main part of the inheritance. Margaret, the widow of Henry Scrope, chief justice, was dowered in 1336 with the manors of Hendon in Middlesex, and Langford, Hole, Clifton, South Yewel and Stratton in Bedfordshire⁽⁶²⁾. Since she outlived her husband by twenty-two years, this enabled her heir to enjoy his Yorkshire estates unencumbered. Similarly in 1345 Cecily, widow of William Scrope, eldest son of Henry, did receive a share of the Yorkshire estates, but was also dowered with the manors of Medbourne in Leicestershire, Bayford in Herts., and Casterton in Rutland⁽⁶³⁾. A tendency to endow widows with the more scattered manors of the family's estate has been noted by Dr. R. Archer in her study of the Mowbrays⁽⁶⁴⁾. Likewise these manors could also be used to support younger members of the family. For example, John Scrope, a younger son of Henry, first lord Masham, held the manors of Thorpe Constantine in Staffordshire, Hay in Hertfordshire, and South Muskham in Nottinghamshire. John held them from his father for the nominal rent of a rose at rose time. In 1406 his daughters held them on the same terms from their uncle Stephen after their father's death⁽⁶⁵⁾.

However, any attempt to assess the success with which the Scropes managed their estates must concentrate on their lands in Yorkshire and accept the general proposition that by the late fourteenth century demesne cultivation was for many great landlords no longer profitable. This was because of the notorious post-Black Death shortage of labour and the relative depression of prices for agricultural produce. Nevertheless the end of demesne farming was a drawn out and uneven process, with some landowners being very slow to abandon the practice.

62. Cal.I.P.M., Edward III, X, no. 149.

63. Cal.I.P.M., Edward III, VIII, no. 606.

64. R. Archer, 'The Mowbrays', p.9.

65. P.R.O. C 137/56 m. 4-16. Inquisition post mortem of Stephen Scrope, lord Masham died 1405.

It certainly seems likely that the Scropes of Bolton were still cultivating their demesnes in the mid-fourteenth century. On the death of William Scrope in 1345 several of his servants were asked to account for his manors and were presumably then acting as reeves or bailiffs⁽⁶⁶⁾. The Scropes of Masham, on at least some of their manors, still had demesnes in the late fourteenth century when they were in the hands of reeves⁽⁶⁷⁾. P.D.A. Harvey has noted that the presence of a bailiff or reeve usually indicated demesne cultivation on the manor. However, it may be that by the late fourteenth century the bailiff or reeve was farming the demesne himself in return for a payment of a fee farm to the lord of the manor⁽⁶⁸⁾.

Generally Richard Scrope, lord Bolton responded sensitively to the varying prosperity of the agrarian economy. Towards the end of the fourteenth century Scrope investment in property ended altogether. Largely by 1380 the expansion of the Scrope of Bolton estates had reached a conclusion. Lord Richard had apparently taken a great interest in his estates from 1360-80; and the production of his cartulary is testimony to his care. It was however a period largely of consolidation. He added many finishing touches, either by making small exchanges or by securing final concords previously too expensive to buy. After 1395 the Scrope cartulary is devoid of new acquisitions to the estate. There may have been specific reasons for this. By 1382 Richard Scrope was in his fifties and his career had already reached its peak; although he did not lack resources, he may have chosen to invest in building rather than land. After 1379 the bulk of his income must have been employed in building Castle Bolton. Politically and socially the family had now arrived and had acquired a noble estate. These factors together with the declining return on land may partly explain the apparent lack of investment in new land after circa 1380.

66. N.Y.C.R.O. MSS Bolton MC/16.

67. P.R.O. SC 6 1085/no. 10.

68. P.D.A. Harvey, Manorial Records, (Medieval Section of the Y.A.S. 1983) p.6.

There is some evidence that in response to the declining profitability and direct exploitation Richard Scrope did start leasing land, but the evidence is often difficult to interpret. In 1362 Richard Scrope granted his lands in Leyburn to John Butler for £10 per annum, but whether this was in reality a leasing of the land is doubtful, since no term of years is specified in the grant and Butler had previously granted property to Scrope⁽⁶⁹⁾. In 1368 Richard made a further grant of various lands to Henry de Bellerby for life⁽⁷⁰⁾.

Again this was probably not a purely economic transaction and may represent the endowment of one Scrope's servants. Henry de Bellerby witnessed many of Scrope's land transactions and received a bequest in his will. Lord Bolton did however derive some income from rents, although the evidence is meagre at this point. In 1362 he rented land in Newton Morrell one of his more distant manors to Adam Wedowson for 17 s per annum⁽⁷¹⁾. In 1395 Richard Scrope leased to John Lorne three sheep folds with appurtenant meadows and pasture and 1,300 oxen for £16 per annum⁽⁷²⁾. In the same year he leased for six years to William del Vale half the manor of Thornton Steward including eighty seven acres of demesne land and all boonworks, for £9 per annum⁽⁷³⁾. These few examples of leasing are the only ones to be found in either the cartulary or the collection of extant deeds relating to the estates. On their own they are not substantial enough to indicate that the Scropes of Bolton had become completely rentier landlords by the end of the fourteenth century; but it is likely that they were increasingly leasing their land.

69. Scrope Cartulary, no. 90.

70. Scrope Cartulary, no. 114.

71. Scrope Cartulary, no. 169.

72. N.Y.C.R.O. Bolton MSS MC/58.

73. N.Y.C.R.O. Bolton MSS MK/45.

Recent research has indicated that despite the contraction in the fifteenth century economy, the nobility faced less profound economic difficulties than was once supposed. Dr. Holmes estimated that the nobility faced only a ten per cent drop in income by the end of the fourteenth century; K.B. McFarlane argued that any decline in revenue suffered by the aristocracy could often be offset by a tendency to accumulate land through marriage, particularly as the ranks of nobility thinned through natural causes or political miscalculation. Dr. Linda Woodger has argued that the Bourghchiers' income remained largely stable throughout the fifteenth century and Professor Charles Ross noted that none of the Yorkshire nobility save the Dacres suffered any real impoverishment in the later medieval period⁽⁷⁴⁾. The Scropes themselves showed many signs of their wealth in their wills and their building, Henry Scrope, lord Masham, for example was particularly wealthy, since in his will he offered his wife Joan £2,000 in lieu of a dower settlement on his estates. Professor Ross highlighted the point that the wealth and expenditure of the more prominent northern nobles was far in excess of the revenue their land could have been expected to provide. A conservative estimate of the value of the Bolton estates in 1345 would be in the region of £164 per annum, that is three times the dower of Cecily widow of William Scrope⁽⁷⁵⁾. This figure would put the family merely at the top of the knightly class. In 1415 Henry Scrope's forfeited estates were granted to lord fitz Hugh for £260 per annum⁽⁷⁶⁾. Although this grant was probably on favourable terms to fitz Hugh, the escheator had only valued the estates of £305 per annum in 1406⁽⁷⁷⁾. By 1436 the Scropes of Masham had an estimated income from land of £557 per annum, thus

74. McFarlane, Nobility p.59; Woodger, 'Henry Bourghchier', p.180; C.D. Ross 'Yorkshire Baronage', p.390.

75. Cal.I.P.M., Edward III VIII, no. 606, pp.451-453.

76. C.P.R. 1413-16, pp.360, 373.

77. P.R.O. E 136 57/6.

placing them in the middle ranks of the nobility⁽⁷⁸⁾.

It can be argued that political importance of the family was not a reflection of their economic strength. Moreover their relatively mediocre income from land must have made them dependent on other sources for revenue. One of these sources was royal patronage, but reliance on royal favour could have unpleasant repercussions, and those members of the family who were the most successful in political, economic and social terms - William, earl of Wiltshire, and Henry, third lord Masham - also paid the highest penalties.

In the absence of detailed estate documentation for the Scropes, most obviously manorial accounts, only a general picture of estate administration can be drawn. It was usual elsewhere for great landowners to divide their property into geographically coherent units under the control of a receiver and a steward, to whom manorial reeves and bailiffs accounted. However, the Scrope estates were not substantial enough to warrant an extensive organisation. With outlying manors held by widows, younger sons and brothers, it seems likely that the North Riding manors could be managed by one receiver and a steward.

It also seems likely that the estate organisation was centralised on the favourite northern manors of both families. The accommodation at Castle Bolton comprised rooms for the lord's greatest officials. The manor there was probably the caput of the administration and perhaps had been so even before the building of the castle, since deeds were often witnessed there from an early date. The favoured residence of the Scropes of Masham was not Masham but Clifton upon Ure in the earlier period and the manor of Faxfleet in the East Riding on

78. C.D. Ross, 'Yorkshire Baronage', p.447. This figure based on taxation assessment is probably rather low, the dower assignment to Lady Margery Scrope in 1413 valued the lands at £754; C.D. Ross and T.B. Pugh, 'The English Baronage and the Income Tax of 1436', B.I.H.R., XXVI (1953), pp.1-28.

the river Humber from the late fourteenth century. The extent of the forfeited goods found at Faxfleet in 1415 certainly indicates that this was the major family residence by then⁽⁷⁹⁾.

Rarely, unfortunately, can individual estate officials be identified. Some members of lord Masham's household appeared before Henry V in 1415 to answer for Scrope's goods. They included a certain John Marshall, Scrope's former receiver, who had since entered royal service⁽⁸⁰⁾. John Tibbay, steward to Richard Scrope, lord Bolton, was another officer known to have entered royal service. Service to a noble family may have been a path to promotion, but for the most part the Scropes did not employ men who advanced very far. On the whole the family employed men who would serve their interests and not men who would progress further in their careers.

Loosely connected with the estates was a circle of men who acted as witnesses to conveyances and as feoffees. They may have been members of the household, though they may more probably be members of a wider affinity. It seems clear that witnesses to charters were not simply local neighbours called in on an ad hoc basis. The frequency with which certain individuals appeared in this capacity suggests a more regular connection. Often the family called on the incumbents of their family livings to act as feoffees, as will be discussed below. One frequent witness was Henry de Bellerby, a tenant of Richard Scrope's and a beneficiary in his will. Service to the Scropes could be a family tradition; thus, John de Gunwardby and his son of the same name frequently witnessed charters, and John junior received ten marks in lord Bolton's will⁽⁸¹⁾. Often several generations of the Scropes were served by the same men. For example John Tibbay served Richard Scrope, his son Roger and his son Richard over a period of seventeen years. Tibbay was a favoured servant of the family and in

79. P.R.O. E 153/722 m.2-3.

80. P.R.O. E 403/622; E 403/609; P.O.P.C., II, pp.342, 182.

81. C.C.R. 1369-74, p.555; Test. Ebor. I, ed. J. Raine (Surtees Society, 1836) p.277.

appreciation lord Bolton bequeathed him six silver dishes, six salt cellars, a cup emblazoned with the Scrope and Stapleton arms and a bed of red cloth embroidered with butterflies⁽⁸²⁾. Richard Norton of Norton Conyers, chief justice of the Common Pleas from 1413-20, acted as trustee to Henry lord Masham in 1397, supervisor of Roger Scrope's will in 1403 and executor of Stephen Scrope, lord Masham's will in 1405⁽⁸³⁾. William Audley first described as William Scrope's esquire in 1391, acted as his attorney and receiver until 1399 and in 1401 acted as receiver for Sir Stephen Scrope⁽⁸⁴⁾. From these examples it can be argued that the administration of the Scrope family was characterised by continuity and loyalty. Stability marks the family's connections with their servants and this accords well with the picture of baronial affinities outlined by Dr. Christine Carpenter and Dr. Martin Cherry⁽⁸⁵⁾.

Trusted servants were also indispensable in ensuring the peaceful descent of the Scrope's inheritance. At common law a landowner had very little control over the disposition of his land after his death. Legally real estate could not be disposed of by will and descended according to primogeniture. This led to many difficulties since landowners could not arrange to pay debts, endow younger sons or make religious donations from their property. In the event that a minor inherited property, considerable damage could be done to the property during his wardship and he would become liable to pay entry fines to the king on attaining his majority. During the fourteenth century landlords increasingly took advantage of enfeoffments and trusts to ensure that they had some say in the descent of their property. K.B. McFarlane saw the increasing use of the trust as being damaging to the

82. C.F.R. 1405-13, p.253; P.R.O. E 403/549; Test Ebor., I, p.277.

83. C.D. Ross, 'Yorkshire Baronage', p.400.

84. P.R.O. E 364/31, E 403/532, E 403/548, E 403/551, E 403/561.

85. C. Carpenter, 'The Beauchamp Affinity', E.H.R. XCV (1980), pp.514-532; M. Cherry 'Political Community in Devon', pp. 121-134.

claims of primogeniture, but the behaviour of the Scrope family in this respect does not necessarily seem to bear out this statement.

The Scrope family do not appear to have used the device of enfeoffment to use, although it may be that no record has survived of such arrangements. Certainly the Scrope cartulary records no enfeoffments to use at all, though clearly feoffees were used on occasions. Henry Scrope, chief justice used feoffees in fictitious conveyances of land in order to settle the title to the lands. For example, in 1331 Henry Scrope conveyed to Richard de Langford, chaplain, the bulk of his estates to hold for Henry's life with successive remainders to William his eldest son in tail male⁽⁸⁶⁾. A similar conveyance was made in 1332 with Peter de Richmond over the manor of Sutton Howgrave, and Wensley was similarly settled on all three sons in 1331⁽⁸⁷⁾. In all cases the feoffees re-granted the lands to Henry who was merely establishing the title to the lands. This must have been important since these lands were newly acquired during Henry's lifetime and he wished to secure them for his sons. The official attitude to these arrangements was hostile. In 1345 in the inquisition post mortem made on the death of William Scrope, the conveyance was referred to stating that, 'the said fine was levied in fraud to take away the wardship and marriage from the chief lords of those fees, and because the said Henry was unwilling that the said tenements should be alienated to strangers and his heirs disinherited, or that those tenements should be divided among his female heirs'⁽⁸⁸⁾. William copied the practice of his father and granted all his lands to Thomas de Synythayt, rector of Thornton Watlass church and William de Synythwait, rector of Ainderby Steeple church. They regranted them to William and entailed them on his heirs male. William, in words echoing Quia Emptores, was accused of taking away 'from the chief

86. Yorkshire Fines 1327-47, ed., W. Paley-Baildon, (Y.A.S. Rec. Ser., XLII, 1910), p.38.

87. Yorkshire Fines, ed. W. Paley-Baildon, ed., (Y.A.S. Rec. Ser., LII, 1920) p.211.

88. Cal.I.P.M., Edward III VIII, no. 546.

lords of those fees the wardship and marriage of those tenements⁽⁸⁹⁾. In addition he was accused of fraudulently bequeathing in his will to his brother Richard two tenements in York, despite the fact that one of the distinctive features of burgage tenure was its ability to be devised at will.

However, the arrangements made by Henry and his son William were very sensible and provide the best testimony to the success of the Scropes in securing the succession of their patrimony. Sir Henry Scrope of Bolton had married late in life and had anticipated the possibility of leaving a minor heir. He had created another interest in the lands by granting them to a feoffee, who held the title to the property in the event of a minority, in trust for the heir. William's arrangements were wise and were presumably made because of his departure for France. In the event it was fortunate that he had created the entail since he died without issue and his younger brother Richard was still a minor. It must be stressed that neither of these arrangements amounted to an enfeoffment to use since in each case the property was re-granted to Henry and William who remained in possession. William's feoffees were rectors of the churches of Thornton Watlass and Ainderby Steeple, both in the gift of the Scropes of Masham. At some time before 1360 Richard Scrope, lord Bolton, had enfeoffed all his Yorkshire manors, some sixty three are named, to a group of feoffees who later surrendered them to him. Before 1393 he had also granted five of his manors to two trustees, before they too surrendered this grant⁽⁹⁰⁾. It seems likely that the first arrangement preceded Scrope's campaigns in France and that his return and the peace of 1360 made such provision less necessary. The circumstances of the smaller grant are unknown. In both cases the feoffees were closely involved with service to the family. All the feoffees were clerks, two of them held family livings; Simon de Wensley had the living of Wensley church and Richard de Middleham had

89. Ibid, no. 546.

90. Yorkshire Deeds, ed. W. Brown, II, (Y.A.S. Rec. Ser., L, 1914) nos. 133, 108, 134.

the living of Finghall church belonging to the Scropes of Masham. One of the two feoffees in 1392 was John de Tibbay.

By the end of the fourteenth century the enfeoffment to use was a well-tried expedient for arranging for the future descent of property. A group of feoffees with the legal title to land meant that on a landowner's death there could be no minorities nor a new heir to pay an entry fine. Despite these advantages landlords were still careless about protecting their estates in this way. Certainly Roger, lord Scrope, had made no such arrangements when he died in 1405 leaving the family estates to his son Richard who was still a minor. The wardship and custody of the young Richard was soon to pass to the earl of Westmorland. Perhaps on this occasion it was not disadvantageous. Much more careless were the arrangements not made by Henry, lord Masham who on his death had not apparently entailed his lands and thus did not protect them from forfeiture. This was a calamity for the family whose far reaching consequences will be examined in Chapter Six.

Evidence from the Scrope cartulary indicates that the family took care to build up property in a well defined area. They were quick to improve their estates by building mills, imparking and enclosing. On occasions when they acquired property in a new manor, such as in Uckerby in 1323, they quickly surrounded the forfeited land of the earl of Carlisle with new purchases⁽⁹¹⁾. The production of the two Bolton cartularies highlights a concern for their lands. The Scropes of Masham possessed a similar document now lost, while that for the Scropes of Castle Combe survives in the British Library⁽⁹²⁾. As K.B. McFarlane argued many years ago, the nobility were undoubtedly sufficiently well educated to manage their property well and there is no evidence here to suggest that they did not do so. Indeed, 'All the

91. Scrope Cartulary, nos. 184-187.

92. Bodleian MS Dodsworth 122, fos. 134-6 contains copies of charters relating to the Scropes of Masham which were copied from a cartulary. The cartulary of the Scropes of Castle Combe has survived as B.L. Additional MS 28, 206.

evidence suggests that most of the landowners of our period - all who have left any records - were well able to take care of their property, and if they got the chance, of their neighbours' also'(93).

93. McFarlane, English Nobility, p.53.

CHAPTER 5

RICHARD SCROPE, BISHOP OF LICHFIELD, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, c. 1350-1405

'...not...by Favour, or any indirect means,
but on account of his own personal worth and
merit..'

(The reasons for Scrope's preferment in the church
according the anonymous author of The Loyal
Martyr, London, 1722, p.3.)

The Scrope family will no doubt always remain most famous for their achievements as laymen and for their promotion to the nobility largely through their successes in the law, in warfare and in politics. Nevertheless, as K.B. McFarlane noted, for the late medieval nobility the greatest fortunes and success could often be found in an ecclesiastical career⁽¹⁾. Although there were limits to the transmission of wealth gained in the church, a high ecclesiastical position could be used to the advantage of an aristocratic family: patronage could be mobilised behind a favourite nephew and other kinsmen. It could also be argued that great success in the Church itself reflected a family's position, for aristocratic connections still remained important to achieving promotion to a bishopric. This chapter seeks to explore not only some of the elements which made Archbishop Richard Scrope a major and controversial member of the Church hierarchy but also the contribution he made to the dioceses under his care and to his own family's position. It could be argued that no study of the Scrope family would be complete without examining the life and career of its most famous member, Archbishop Richard Scrope. Moreover the survival of Scrope's episcopal and archiepiscopal registers, the material relating to his rebellion in 1405 and to his posthumous cult enable the examination of themes normally hidden from the historian of late medieval magnates.

1. McFarlane, English Nobility, p.12.

A. Early Prospects and Promotion

Richard Scrope was a younger son of Henry Scrope, baron of Masham, (d.1393) and he therefore belonged to the third generation of the family of the Scropes of Masham. His father, Henry, was an extremely experienced and distinguished soldier, a veteran of the French wars, but the identity of his mother Joan, unfortunately remains a mystery. In all surviving sources, she is referred to simply as Joan, Henry's consort. Her identity may yet be established, since she was probably the heiress to the manor of Castle Carlton in Lincolnshire, which she and her husband Henry held jointly.⁽²⁾ Their son Richard was born somewhere between 1346 and 1350, and was their third or fourth youngest son.⁽³⁾ The paucity of evidence relating to Richard Scrope's early life has caused some confusion in the past. Some historians have described him as the son of Richard Scrope, lord Bolton. This view was based on the reference in the latter's will which referred to the future Archbishop of York as 'carissimo patri et filio'⁽⁴⁾ However, Richard's father was clearly Henry, lord Scrope of Masham for he is described as such in Scrope's registers at

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2. Joan's identity has eluded all biographers of the family. Scrope v. Grosvenor, II, p.119.
 3. A.B. Emden, Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge (Cambridge, 1963) gives c. 1346, D.N.B. gives c.1350. According to Sir Harris Nicolas, Scrope's elder brother was born c.1345, Scrope is generally regarded as the third or fourth son. Accordingly 1350 seems correct. This would give him his first living, Ainderby Steeple at the age of 17, which seems likely Nicholas, II, p.130.
 4. Testamenta Eboracensia, I, ed. J. Raine (Surtees Society, 1836) p.276, see note 6 where both Raine and apparently Sir William Dugdale identified the future archbishop as a son of lord Bolton.

Lichfield.⁽⁵⁾ It seems likely that the archbishop was lord Bolton's godson, a relationship often commemorated by the identical forenames of godfather and godson. Richard Scrope was not the first member of the Scrope family to pursue an ecclesiastical career. The most prominent hitherto had been Master Geoffrey Scrope, uncle to Richard Scrope, and canon of Lincoln, (c 1317-1383). Although by his death Master Geoffrey had failed to obtain promotion to the higher ranks of the clergy, he had had a long and successful career. He too was a canon lawyer, obtaining a doctorate in canon law by 1348 from Oxford university, possibly when at Balliol College to which he bequeathed £20.⁽⁶⁾ From 1355 until his death he was a canon of Lincoln cathedral, where he asked to be buried under the bell tower near his sister. This was one of several livings held by Geoffrey Scrope. On 9 January 1338 he became a canon of St. Paul's, London. By 1340 Geoffrey Scrope was a king's clerk and was presented by the king to the living of Bolton Percy church on 7th April 1340 and to the prebend of Apethorp, Yorkshire.⁽⁷⁾ From 15 November 1342 to December 1362 Scrope was rector of Solihull church, Warwickshire, which he resigned to become rector of Halton-on-Trent, Lincolnshire. The fruits of Scrope's career proved to be very substantial. In his will, made in 1383, he bequeathed many fine vestments, beds, items of silverware and sums of money which he asked to be distributed among the needy, his friends and family. It seems very likely that Geoffrey would have done all he could to assist his nephew in his career, as indeed Richard Scrope in due course helped his own nephew Stephen. Only hints, however, remain of the practical help Geoffrey was able to offer the later archbishop. He clearly made way for his nephew to hold some of the livings within the family's patronage, for example by resigning the living of Great Bowden, in Leicestershire. And in

5. Lichfield Joint Record Office, Register of Skirlaw and Scrope, B/A/1/6, fo. 76v.

6. Lincoln Wills, 1,, ed. C.W. Foster, (Lincoln Record Society, 5, 1914), p.16.

7. C.P.R. 1338 - 40, p.447; C.P.R., 1340-43, p.19.

his will, Master Geoffrey Scrope bequeathed Master Richard Scrope, two books; a Lectura in quinque Decretalium Gregorianorum Libros (a work on canon law by Henry de Susa) and a theological text of Berenger of Tours. According to his will Geoffrey was aware that Richard already had the book of Decretals in his possession. When he was bishop of Lichfield, Scrope acknowledged these and no doubt other debts to his uncle by including him amongst those who were to be remembered at his chantry foundation.⁽⁸⁾ Apart from his uncle, there was no tradition of ecclesiastical service within his family which Scrope could draw on for the majority of the family had excelled at secular service.

Of the early preparation for Scrope's career in the Church, we have little knowledge. Nevertheless the family resources were put at his disposal and the advowsons which the family possessed were used to promote and finance him. Some time after 1367 he was presented to the rectory of Ainderby Steeple in Richmondshire, one of several livings which the Scropes of Masham held the advowson. He resigned this in 1378 to take up the more lucrative family living of Great Bowden in Leicestershire, which his uncle had just resigned.⁽⁹⁾ It is very unlikely that Scrope exercised either of these offices in person. For he was already studying at Cambridge University by 1371 when he was described as 'Master' and in 1375 he entered Bishop Thomas Arundel's service. By 1371, however, Richard Scrope may already have attracted royal attention, for on 21 July 1371 he was granted the wardenship of the chapel of Tickhill castle. Perhaps Richard, lord Scrope of Bolton was able to put in a good word for his godson and secure for him this living in the royal gift. On 25 June 1372 the honour of Tickhill itself was granted to John of Gaunt, but there is no further evidence to connect the godson of Gaunt's retainer, lord

8. Reg. Scrope (Coventry and Lichfield), fo. 109v.

9. Emden, Cambridge, p.514.

Bolton, with Gaunt himself.⁽¹⁰⁾

In addition to the help that the young Richard Scrope derived from his family connections, he was apparently an able and talented clerk who subsequently acquired a posthumous reputation for being somewhat of a scholar. He was described by Thomas Walsingham in these terms 'quem cunctis commendabant et aetatis gravitas, et vitae praecedentis sanctitas, et incomparabilis litteraturae scientia'⁽¹¹⁾ Scrope attended Cambridge University before 1371, and although standard biographies suggest that Scrope had degrees from both Oxford and Cambridge, there is no evidence to suggest that he ever attended Oxford. It is generally accepted that he obtained a licence in civil law by 1375 and a doctorate in canon and civil law in 1379, both from Cambridge.⁽¹²⁾ With qualifications in both civil and canon law, Scrope was now well placed to achieve the highest offices in the church. As in secular affairs, so in the Church, legal qualifications were, of course, highly valued. As R.G. Davies has noted in his recent study of the English episcopate between 1375 and 1461 law was the discipline for those with a career to make in the church and increasingly from 1374 the English episcopacy was recruited from university graduates with qualifications in both branches of the law.⁽¹³⁾ Scrope's ultimate promotion was therefore altogether typical of this trend.

10. C.P.R. 1370-74, pp. 125, 175-6, 183.

11. The Loyal Martyr (London, 1722), p.3; Thomas Walsingham, Historia Anglicana, I, ed. H.T. Riley (Rolls Series, 28, London, 1863-4), p.269.

12. Emden, Cambridge, p.513; The Chartulary of the High Church of Chichester, ed. W.D. Peckham (Sussex Record Society, XLVI, 1943), p.190.

13. R.G. Davies, 'The English Episcopacy', in Profession, Vocation and Culture, ed. C.T. Clough (Liverpool, 1982) p.62.

In November 1375, when he was still studying at Cambridge Scrope entered the service of Thomas Arundel, bishop of Ely. It has been argued that Scrope owed this promotion to family influence; 'It seems quite possible that, when the Earl of Arundel had successfully engineered his youngest son into the hierarchy, Sir Richard put in a good word for his relative, who was almost the exact contemporary of the bishop of Ely and then probably on the look out for promotion during his studies in Cambridge.'⁽¹⁴⁾ Sir Richard Scrope of Bolton was certainly on good terms with the earl of Arundel and may well have exerted his influence on his cousin's behalf. Yet it is possible that Scrope's own talents and the proximity of the city of Cambridge to Ely, may have been other factors taken into consideration. Admittedly, Arundel attracted several promising clerks to his service, including Henry Bowet another future archbishop of York.

Whilst he was in the bishop's service at Ely Scrope was mainly occupied with legal administration. He acted as the Official of the bishop's court, overseeing legal matters and mainly matrimonial cases.⁽¹⁵⁾ At this stage Scrope was only in minor orders, having been ordained in acolyte in 1376, however, on 14 March 1377 he was ordained priest by Arundel himself.⁽¹⁶⁾ While at Ely Scrope maintained very close links with Cambridge and in fact conducted the bishop's court there. On 23 April 1378 Scrope was elected Chancellor of Cambridge university despite his position as bishop's Official. Arundel granted Scrope a special dispensation to take up the office where he remained until 1380.

14. Aston, Thomas Arundel, p.305.

15. Aston, Thomas Arundel, p.60.

16. Emden, Cambridge, p.513.

As chancellor Richard Scrope became the chief official of the university and head of the corporation of masters and students. By 1383 the chancellor had complete cognisance of all pleas and trespases relating to the Masters and students, which he heard in his own court. He had the power to imprison and excommunicate offenders. In theory at least very little of his power was delegated to the vice-chancellor, and because of this the chancellor was not permitted to be absent for more than one month.⁽¹⁷⁾ Scrope's appointment to the chancellorship may have been an attempt to encourage good relations between the university and the bishop of Ely. In the past there had been disputes between the two; and although the chancellor was required to take an oath of obedience to the bishop, he rarely did so. Because of these disagreements the university statutes required that the chancellor should not also be a bishop's official, Scrope, however, was clearly an exception to this rule and his appointment to the chancellorship may well reflect Arundel's influence at the university. In any event Richard Scrope's connection with the university remained close and subsequent generations of his family were to follow him at Cambridge. His nephew Stephen, also a doctor of law, became chancellor of the university in May 1414. Similarly Richard Scrope, born in 1419, great grandson of the first lord Scrope of Bolton, became chancellor of the university between June 1461 and March 1462, later being promoted to the archbishopric of Carlisle on 1 February 1464.⁽¹⁸⁾

It is likely that throughout this period Scrope and Arundel developed a personal friendship. Evidence for this relationship remains tentative but Arundel granted Scrope several small favours and the two men seem to have been in each other's company from time to time. In June 1405, on the eve of Scrope's execution Arundel is said

17. V.C.H. Cambridge, III, pp. 150-57.

18. Emden, Cambridge, p.514.

to have pleaded for his life. Yet Scrope, on the other hand, is not known to have opposed Arundel's exile in 1397.⁽¹⁹⁾

In 1381 Scrope is to be found once more continuing his career as an ecclesiastical lawyer. He travelled to Rome sometime during this year and was appointed papal auditor of causes, it is hard to detect any family influence here. In 1386 Scrope was appointed apostolic prothonotary.⁽²⁰⁾ According to one biographer Scrope specialised in representing the poor, but it has not been possible to establish the truth or otherwise of this statement, which may have been made simply to create a saintly impression of Scrope.⁽²¹⁾ While in Rome Scrope was elected dean of Chichester and was admitted to the deanery on 2 August 1382 through his proctor Master William Wolstanton. The following year Scrope returned to England and visited Chichester in person with his brother Sir Stephen Scrope. On 14 December 1383 Scrope appeared in the chapter at Chichester and was formally installed as dean.⁽²²⁾

In the autumn of 1385 while he was still in Rome, Scrope was elected to the see of Chichester and was granted the see by papal provision. However, he failed to secure his promotion to the bishopric of Chichester, despite his election, since Richard II secured the translation of his confessor Thomas Rushook to the see on 16 October 1385. Scrope had already resigned the deanery in preparation for this promotion. In August 1386, Urban VI provided Scrope to the bishopric of Coventry and Lichfield and, in order to avoid a recurrence of the last episode, consecrated Scrope as bishop

19. Aston, Thomas Arundel, p.305.

20. Emden, Cambridge; p.514 Chartulary of the High Church of Chichester, ed. Peckham, p.190.

21. The Loyal Martyr, p.3.

22. The Chartulary of the High Church of Chichester, ed. Peckham, p.190.

the next day at Genoa. Scrope was in London by October, staying with the bishop of Ely and appointed his vicar-general, Richard de Bermyncham, using Arundel's seal. Scrope was finally installed in Lichfield on 29 June 1387.⁽²³⁾

B. Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, 1387-1398

'Et rex celebravit convivium et vocari fecit ad illud omnes canonicos vicarios et ministros ecclesie Lich' ac omnes et probatissimos civitatis in palatio Episcopi Lich' pro tunc palatio Regis'
(Dean and Chapter Act Book I, Lichfield, fo. 15)

Richard Scrope was consecrated Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield on 18 August 1386, at Genoa. By October he had returned to London and he received the spiritualities of the see on 12 October. The following day he appointed Richard de Bermyncham, canon of Lincoln, his vicar-general, who was to supervise the administration of the see for the next nine months.⁽²⁴⁾ Scrope was finally installed as bishop in June 1387, an event which was the occasion of a royal feast, which the canons of Lichfield evidently regarded with some pride. Richard Scrope's installation was attended by Richard II and Queen Anne and a large contingent of household knights. None of Scrope's relatives are known to have attended. It was unusual to celebrate a bishop's installation with a royal feast and Scrope's successor, John Burghill, was not similarly honoured.⁽²⁵⁾

The see which Scrope now held was not one of the richest prizes in the medieval church. Geographically it was extensive, if not

23. D.N.B., p.144. Lichfield Joint Record Office, Dean and Chapter Act Book, 1, fo. 15.

24. Reg. Scrope (Coventry and Lichfield) fo. 1v.

25. Amongst those who attended were; Robert de Vere, Michael de la Pole, Simon Burley, John Beauchamp, John Golafre. Lichfield Joint Record Office Dean & Chapter Act Book, fo. 15.

sprawling. It encompassed some of the least populous and relatively poorest counties in the country; Staffordshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, part of Warwickshire, part of Shropshire and Lancashire south of the Ribble. It was divided into five archdeaconries; Salop, Derby, Stafford, Chester and Coventry. And according to the Valor Ecclesiasticus, of all the English sees only Rochester and Chichester were poorer.⁽²⁶⁾

Despite the fact that such a see was likely to be very difficult to manage and the financial rewards were probably small, Scrope seems to have devoted most of his energies towards supervising it. For the first few years of his episcopacy, Scrope apparently rarely left his diocese, though he probably did not travel extensively within it. From his manors of Haywood and Eccleshall, his palace of Beaudesert in South Warwickshire near Stratford-on-Avon and occasionally from Lichfield itself, he occupied himself with the routine administration of his see; issuing licences for marriage within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, dispensing illegitimate priests, promoting to benefices and conducting ordinations. Most ordinations, however, seem to have been the responsibility of Scrope's suffragan bishop, William Northbrugge, bishop of Pharensis only on rare occasions did Scrope perform them himself. Of the 46 ordination ceremonies Scrope performed 8.⁽²⁷⁾ Scrope may have had a personal preference for the manors of Eccleshall, Haywood and his palace of Beaudesert, but it is also likely that these were the most habitable of the Lichfield episcopal residences. In 1448, the Bishop of Lichfield was to have demolished all episcopal residences except for Haywood, Eccleshall, Beaudesert, Lichfield, Coventry and his palace in the Strand.⁽²⁸⁾

26. V.C.H., Staffs., 3, ed. M.W. Greenslade (London, 1976), p.22.

27. Reg. Scrope (Coventry and Lichfield), fo. 141r.

28. V.C.H., Staffs, 3, p.22.

Scrope's episcopal register contains largely routine administrative material, much of which Scrope would have delegated to his vicar-general. Besides the routine episcopal business, there is evidence in the register to suggest that Scrope clearly played a generally active role in his see, particularly in guarding and extending his episcopal rights. The first sign that Scrope was asserting such rights appears in a conflict with certain inhabitants of Lichfield. In 1388 a commission of oyer and terminer was set up to investigate the complaint of the bishop of Lichfield, 'who claims right of frankpledge as lord of Lichfield and a weekly court there; but certain craftsmen leagued by oath assaulted the bishop's ministers holding court there and frightened his tenants and servants there'.⁽²⁹⁾ This type of opposition to a spiritual lord was also acting as a seigniorial lord is common enough and can be seen clearly in the events of 1381. However, there is no indication as to what precisely lay behind this opposition. The complaint was not repeated, and it may be that Scrope was successful in asserting a right which bishops of Lichfield had claimed since the thirteenth century. It may also explain the inclusion in Scrope's register of documents relating to the successful claim by Roger Longspee, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield (1257-1295) to the view of frankpledge in 'Tachebrook' probably Tachbrook Mallory near Warwick at the time of Edward I.⁽³⁰⁾

Two years later, Scrope faced further opposition from a group of parishioners at Burton on Trent. In 1390 Scrope conducted a visitation at Burton, but it is not possible to tell whether this was part of a full scale ecclesiastical visitation of the archdeaconry or a more specific visit. On this occasion seven men from Burton on Trent were indicted to appear before the bishop's court on charges of adultery and fornication. They refused to appear before the bishop's court and challenged his jurisdiction by appealing to the court of Canterbury. It was not until 1392, before the bishop's court at Repton, that they finally accepted episcopal authority and withdrew

29. C.P.R., 1385-89, p.544.

30. Reg. Scrope, (Coventry & Lichfield), fo. 74v.

their appeal. Penances were imposed upon them for contumacy and the other charges were either dropped or suspended. On the face of it, the dispute seems to argue for a remarkable display of assertiveness by the men of Burton. However, it almost certainly has its origins in the disputed jurisdiction between the abbot of Burton and the bishop. The abbot of Burton had long claimed rights of visitation within his peculiar jurisdiction in the parishes of Burton, Bromley and Mickleover. Throughout the fourteenth century the abbot's rights had been challenged; and it would appear that Scrope was still continuing to question the abbot's rights of jurisdiction when he pressed his episcopal right to visit there in 1390. It would seem that either these parishioners were exploiting the conflicting jurisdictions or were a test case. Scrope however seems to have had the final word. He may well have been far more concerned with establishing his right to visit there than with the moral welfare of his parishioners.⁽³¹⁾

There is very little evidence that Scrope was concerned with the pastoral side of his office, though it would in any case be surprising if this aspect of Scrope's work had left its mark on the surviving sources. In 1387 Scrope was empowered to arrest and imprison all preachers of unsound doctrine.⁽³²⁾ No references to such preachers are to be found in Scrope's register. The records of the bishop's court which would record the trials of this type are not extant and so it cannot be safely said that Scrope was not interested in heresy. However, his register might be expected to record some attempt to deal with heretics, yet it contains no evidence of this at all. Such is all the more regrettable since a century later Coventry was a notorious centre for Lollards.

Scrope seems to have been mainly preoccupied in regulating the administration of his diocese, particularly the cathedral church of Lichfield. On 22 April Scrope informed the canons of his intention to

31. Reg. Scrope, (Coventry & Lichfield), fo.40v.; V.C.H. Staffs., 3, p.210.

32. C.P.R. 1385-88, p.200.

hold a visitation. He cited them to appear before him on 29 June. The visitation seems to have occurred without dispute and may have been intended to coincide with the vacancy in the deanery which the canons were ordered to fill. Probably as a result of this visitation Scrope issued an ordinance on the vicars' commons. This raised the vicars allowance to 3d per day, provided that they and the succentor ate together in a hall in the cathedral close. There were stern penalties for absenteeism.⁽³³⁾ This reform, however, was probably not due to Scrope's personal initiative. The rate of the vicars commons had been established in 1374, but it had not been implemented until this date.⁽³⁴⁾

Despite Scrope's apparent concern with detailed procedure, particularly within the cathedral church of Lichfield, he was not always concerned to abide by the established routine. In 1393 Master Richard Conyngston, doctor of canon and civil law, applied to take up residence in the cathedral. He was one of Scrope's most trusted colleagues. Conyngston had been Alexander Neville's vicar general at York in 1388, but had moved to Scrope's administration and was bishop's Official by 1393. He announced his intention to take up residence in November 1393, but was clearly not prepared to leave the bishop's household where he was currently resident. On 12 December the Dean and Chapter met to discuss Conyngston's application: he was then referred to as 'familiarius domini Episcopi et Offic' and 'in aula domini Episcopi supradicti tunc personaliter resident', the chapter stated that this was against the custom of taking up residence. However, they could hardly refuse to admit Conyngston without offending Scrope, and they eventually approved his residence out of reverence for the bishop and respect for Conyngston 'qui legum doctor existit'. They were naturally anxious that this should not

33. Lichfield Joint Record Office, Vicars Muniments, K.4, a vicar was to forfeit 1 1/2d for missing matins without a good excuse and 3d for missing mass, the vicars-choral were also to say various masses and offices for the bishop, dean and chapter, for which they were to receive 4d.

34. V.C.H., Staffs., 3, p.156.

create a precedent. On 25 December Conyngston was admitted to his commons and on the following day invited the canons to a feast at the bishop's palace. It was standard practice for key figures in episcopal administration to take up residence in the cathedral chapter. Scrope's Official at York, for example John de Newton, was one of the three residentiary canons there.⁽³⁵⁾

It has been argued that in 1396 Scrope established another episcopal prerogative, 'In 1396 after protracted resistance by the chapter, the bishop established his right to visit the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield at ten yearly intervals, reduced to seven years in 1428.'⁽³⁶⁾ In fact the resistance which Scrope encountered in 1396 was due to his flouting the already established principle of episcopal visitation every ten years, for Scrope had already visited in 1390. Six years later the announcement of Scrope's impending visit in March 1396, 'propter quadam arduam manifestam utilitatem', provoked protest from the canons. They claimed that this visit was in violation of an agreement made with Walter, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, which stated the bishops should visit only once every ten years.⁽³⁷⁾ Scrope stated that he did not intend to subvert their agreement or liberty. In this case Scrope's purpose for the visitation may have been quite specific, to judge by what is recorded of it. Walter Langton had left the chapter 200 marks for the use of the residentiary canons, vicars and other ministers, to be kept in the Chapter Treasury. The dean and chapter had lent this money to Edward III for his campaigns. However, the debt had now been recovered and in 1396 on the occasion of his visitation Scrope promulgated the regulations governing its use.⁽³⁸⁾ The money was to be kept in a bag of grace, within a chest of grace, which had two locks. One key was to be held by the commoner

35. Lichfield Dean and Chapter Act Book, 1, fo. 37r.

36. V.C.H. Staffs., 3, p.30.

37. Lichfield Dean and Chapter Act Book, I, fo. 48r.

38. Lichfield Dean and Chapter Act Book, I, fo. 49r.

(communarius) and another canon, the other by two vicars elected by the succentor and the vicars, the succentor and the vicars are to have two other keys. Each month, if the commoner did not have enough money to pay for the commons, he could take the money from the chest, filling in an indenture recording the date and amount, one part remaining in the chest the other with the vicars. This was provided that no more money is taken than can be repaid without difficulty out of the commons every quarter. The money is to be repaid before the chapter, within two months after the election of a new commoner. Each time he went to the chest he was to say a prayer for the soul of bishop Walter, the king and all the benefactors. Every canon admitted to residence was to swear to observe this statute. The money was intended to supplement payments for the commons, if sufficient funds were not available. This may suggest the chapter did have financial difficulties, and undoubtedly the recovery of this debt was very welcome to them. The only other business known to have been dealt with on this occasion was a project dear to the hearts of both the bishop and the chapter - the appropriation of Worfield church, in the archdeaconry of Salop.

Worfield church had been granted to the church of Lichfield by Edward III, to found a royal chantry. This project had never been fulfilled and it was Scrope who finally dealt with it, not without considerable personal gain. In 1393 Richard Conyngston and Thomas Hilton negotiated with the chapter on the arrangements concerning the church. Scrope appropriated the church to the dean and chapter and in return they granted him £80 'pro diligencia et laboribus suis'. They agreed to pay 20 marks per annum to the vicar of the church and from the revenues to maintain a chantry which had been founded by Scrope in honour of his family and Richard II. Scrope rejected the suggestion that the chantry be served by one of the vicars and insisted on a chantry chaplain.⁽³⁹⁾ The criticism levelled at Roger Longspee, who received 200 marks in alms for appropriating Bradbourne church to

39. V.C.H. Staffs., 3, p.154. Lichfield Dean and Chapter Act Book, 1, fo. 42r.

Dunstable Abbey, that, 'the evidence against his integrity is considerable and varied', may equally well apply to Scrope in this case.⁽⁴⁰⁾

The chantry was dedicated to Christ, St. Chad and Archbishop William - probably St. William of York. First and foremost it was to commemorate Scrope's family, naming specifically his mother Joan, father Henry and uncle Geoffrey. The chantry was also to commemorate Richard II. This may indicate Scrope's political loyalties, but equally could be a conventional mark of respect or an attempt to fulfil the original conditions of the grant of the church. Scrope's regulations covering the chantry are unexceptional. They require the chaplain's residence within Lichfield, no absence without licence, and no other benefice or office to be held with this position. The priest was to be paid 100s per annum from the proceeds of Worfield church.⁽⁴¹⁾ These arrangements, together with the services to be performed were not unusual and give an insight into Scrope's personal convictions, other than that they were fairly conventional. It is highly questionable whether Scrope was entitled to use the revenues of the church to found a family chantry, and he appears to have been taking advantage of the situation. There is no doubt, however, that the dean and chapter welcomed this addition to their finances: Scrope was still remembered in prayers at canonical hours in 1426 and may be referred to in the calendar of saints in the dean and chapter act book.⁽⁴²⁾ The dean and chapter were not alone in receiving financial benefits from Scrope for in 1392 he granted the vicars of the cathedral unspecified lands in Lichfield, not held by military service, to the value of 100s, to pay their necessary expenses. There may have been some controversy over this donation since the grant is endorsed in a later land to the effect that the lands were not Scrope's to give.⁽⁴³⁾

40. V.C.H. Staffs., 3, p.25.

41. Reg. Scrope (Coventry and Lichfield) fo. 109r.

42. Lichfield Dean and Chapter Muniments, fo. 113b.

43. Lichfield Vicars Muniments, A10.

A criticism which could be levelled at Scrope's administration of the Coventry and Lichfield diocese concerns the number of appropriations of churches he sanctioned to various monastic houses. One of the main beneficiaries was the house of St. Werburgh, Chester, which gained the churches of Astbury, Aston and Weston, in return for their granting Scrope the advowson of Denford church in Northants. The church of Wolfhamcote was appropriated to the Dean and Chapter of St. Mary's, Warwick, Norwich diocese. Biddulph church, Staffordshire, was annexed to the convent of Hulton. Playmonstow church was annexed to the collegiate church of St. John, Chester, while Scrope was staying there.⁽⁴⁴⁾ In 1393, Scrope as papal 'exequtor unicus', supervised the grant of the church of Mateshale to the college of St. Mary's, Cambridge. Another foundation which benefitted from royal and episcopal grants was the Carthusian foundation at Coventry. At St. Paul's Cathedral in November 1386, Scrope again as 'executor sive iudex unicus a apostolica sede', with the chancellor of Chichester and the archdeacon of London, presided over Richard II's grant of Ecclesfield church to the Charterhouse at Coventry to commemorate Queen Anne of Bohemia. The formal grant of the church took place in the bishop's hospice of St. Mary le Strand, with compensation to the archbishop of York. One of the witnesses to this grant was Scrope's kinsman, John Scrope, knight.⁽⁴⁵⁾

These appropriations, while undoubtedly profitable to their beneficiaries, were no doubt, damaging to the interests of the parish clergy. In a diocese which was already relatively poor, this must have been harmful, but it may be unfair to criticise Scrope for his share in this notorious contemporary practice. In allowing St. Werburgh's to appropriate Aston and Weston on Trent and Astbury churches, he received in return the church of Denford, more valuable

44. Reg. Scrope, (Coventry & Lichfield), fos. 75v, 76r, 105r, 97v, 120r.

45. Reg. Scrope, (Coventry & Lichfield), fos. 85v, 114r.

than the other three put together, whose income was used for the bishop's mensa.⁽⁴⁶⁾ When he annexed Biddulph church to Hulton Abbey, he received a grant of 2s 4d per annum. St. Mary's, Warwick, agreed to pay 13s 4d per annum in return for Wolfamcote church.⁽⁴⁷⁾ In the case of St. Werburgh is however, the monks had long enjoyed the revenue of these churches.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Whether Scrope was justified in appropriating the revenues of the church of Denford towards paying for his household, depends on the state of the episcopal finances, which were never great. The grants in favour of the Carthusian house at Coventry reflect the fact that it was a new and popular foundation.

Apart from Scrope's intervention in the episode at Burton on Trent, there is very little evidence by which to judge his interest in judicial affairs within his diocese. The only instances relating to criminous clerks, for example, occurred when Richard Conyngston was vicar-general, and was empowered to deal with gaol delivery. Of the small number of clerks involved, most were accused of theft, with the exception of Henry Carleton, who was implicated in a particularly gruesome murder perpetrated by his brother. He seems to have been acquitted.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Of the small number of clerks to appear before the dean and chapter most were *accused of fornication or adultery*. There are so few examples, however, that it is impossible to draw any conclusions from the evidence.⁽⁵⁰⁾

On the whole Scrope seems to have been fairly diligent in performing his episcopal duties. He seems to have been protective of his episcopal rights and attentive towards routine administration. If

46. V.C.H., Staffs., 3, p.16.

47. Reg. Scrope. (Coventry & Lichfield) fos. 74v, 76r, 97v, 105r, 120v, 121r.

48. R.V.H. Burne, The Monks of Chester (London 1962) p.45.

49. Reg. Scrope. (Coventry & Lichfield), fo. 97r.

50. Lichfield Dean and Chapter Act Book, 1, fo. 38r.

he did not visit his entire diocese, he may at least have visited the archdeaconry of Stafford, but on the evidence available was not very interested in lengthy tours of his see, venturing only as far as Chester. Of his pastoral work there is no evidence and it is perhaps not in the nature of the surviving sources to provide such information.

Most episcopal appointments involved some degree of extra diocesan commitments. In Scrope's case, as throughout his career and not just at Lichfield, this occurred on an ad hoc basis. Scrope had never been a royal clerk and was never a royal minister. This is not necessarily a reflection on Scrope's abilities nor his political reliability. His lack of royal employment while at Lichfield is probably explicable in terms of the poverty of the see which was not customarily expected to support a great officer of state. More generally it is difficult to assess Scrope's political activities at national level. Early in his career Scrope may have come more directly into contact with the king through supervising his grant to the Charterhouse at Coventry. Small marks of royal favour towards Scrope while he was at Lichfield, may also suggest that Richard II was favourably disposed towards him. For example he received in 1397 a grant of the wardship and marriage of Richard, heir to the Earl of Stafford: Scrope paid £90 for these grants. In 1390 Scrope was granted 2 deer leaps in each of his parks at Haywood and Beaudesert. This together with Scrope's forfeiture in 1405 of two young 'coursers', suggests that he did some hunting.⁽⁵¹⁾

Although Scrope was certainly not an absentee prelate he was sometimes away from his see. His absences were generally to attend Parliament, a council meeting, convocation or to participate in a diplomatic mission. During his absence the administration was placed in the hands of his vicar-general. His first vicar-general was Master Richard Bermyncham, canon of Lichfield, probably a local man. More

51. C.P.R., 1388-92, p.188; C.P.R. 1405-8, p.182, Robert Babthorpe was granted Scrope's two young coursers in 1405. C.F.R.1391-99, p.209.

often than not Master Richard Conyngston was appointed with extensive powers including gaol delivery. William de Neuhagh later archdeacon of Chester, was acting as commissary general in 1388. All those who held the office of vicar-general, were qualified canon and civil lawyers. They included Master William de Ashton, doctor of law, dean of the free chapel of St. Martin le Grand, who was appointed jointly with John Garton, canon of Lichfield, in 1392, and Thomas Downe licentiate in both laws appointed in 1391.⁽⁵²⁾

There is no evidence that Scrope went to his see before his installation. He probably spent this time in London. After his installation he began a pattern of activity, which persisted throughout his career at Lichfield, spending many months of the year in his diocese but making frequent short visits outside. From June 1387 to December he remained in his see and probably spent much of 1388 there too. In February 1388 he was acting as co-feoffee with his brothers in acquiring the manor of Castle Carlton, part of his mother's inheritance.⁽⁵³⁾ In February 1389 Scrope was staying in the London hospice of Thomas Brantingham, bishop of Exeter, but he was still occupied in diocesan business. He collated a clerk in minor orders to the church of Rolleston, whose patron was John of Gaunt and on 11 February he presented Master John de Garton, bachelor of law, to the church of Legh.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Garton seems to have been favoured by Scrope. On 20 December 1390 he was collated to the prebend of Dernford, which he resigned in August 1391. By May 1392 he was Scrope's sequestrator-general and the following month was again presented to Dernford prebend, when he was described as vicar of spiritualities. In 1392 Scrope appointed Garton his commissary-general and later vicar-general.⁽⁵⁵⁾ After an initial period of two

52. Reg. Scrope (Coventry & Lichfield), fos. 76v, 80r.

53. C.P.R., 1385-89, p.410.

54. Reg. Scrope, (Coventry & Lichfield), fo. 36v.

55. Reg. Scrope, (Coventry & Lichfield), fos. 37v, 40r, 41v.

years Scrope's trips outside his see may have become more frequent. He was in his London hospice on 5 December 1390 but at Haywood by 20 December.⁽⁵⁶⁾ In April 1392 Scrope attended convocation at St. Paul's, where he celebrated mass and met up with Archbishop Arundel. He returned to Eccleshall in May and immediately went north to see his father Henry Scrope.⁽⁵⁷⁾ In October Scrope went down to Westminster for Parliament.⁽⁵⁸⁾ In May 1392 Scrope was at the council meeting near Stamford and may have attended the meeting of the clergy to discuss the teaching at Oxford. He was away for June and most of July on a mission to Scotland.⁽⁵⁹⁾ By the end of July he was back in London and attended the council meeting at Windsor after London's liberties had been revoked.⁽⁶⁰⁾ In September he was in Chester where he conducted ordinations in the collegiate church of St. John.⁽⁶¹⁾ He was back at Haywood for the end of the year, but in January 1393 set off again for Parliament.⁽⁶²⁾ From 1393-95 Scrope probably spent most of his time in his see. There is not, however, a great deal of evidence about his activities during this period. He was clearly in his see of Lichfield in July 1394 and in August 1394 and May 1395 he was ordered to appoint collectors for the subsidy.⁽⁶³⁾ In November 1394 he was involved in his family's land transactions

56. Reg. Scrope (Coventry & Lichfield), fo. 37.

57. Reg. Scrope (Coventry & Lichfield), fo. 76v.

58. Reg. Scrope (Coventry & Lichfield), fo. 76v.

59. Reg. Scrope (Coventry & Lichfield), fos. 40r, 80r.

60. C.C.R. 1392-96, p.88.

61. Reg. Scrope (Coventry & Lichfield), fo. 141v.

62. Reg. Scrope (Coventry & Lichfield), fo. 81r.

63. C.F.R. 1391-99, pp. 130, 148.

when the escheator for Lincolnshire was ordered to take the fealties of Scrope and his brother for the manor of Castle Carlton.⁽⁶⁴⁾ On October 16 1394 Scrope was asked to pray for Richard II's Irish expedition.⁽⁶⁵⁾ But from 1396 onwards Scrope was increasingly in London and this perhaps reflecting a growing involvement in politics. He appointed Conyngston his vicar general in January 1396 and spent February in London. Returning to his see in March. In October, he returned to London explaining his absence in terms of, 'certis negociis regis atque aliis arduis nostrarum cath' ecclesiarum et causantibus a nominis civitatibus'.⁽⁶⁶⁾ He was at Dover castle in November 1396 when Edmund Stafford became chancellor.⁽⁶⁷⁾ In April 1397 Scrope was appointed by the Pope to go to York to test the validity of the miracles of St. John of Bridlington.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Interest in the future cult of St. John of Bridlington had emerged immediately after the death of John de Twenge, canon of Bridlington, on 10 October 1379. Many miracles were reported to have occurred at his tomb and the cult soon attracted royal support, for in 1386 Alexander Neville was appointed to investigate the miracles. A further commission was issued in 1391 at the request of Richard II and again in 1397. In 1388 the king granted the priory a licence to crenellate its building 'out of regard for John de Thweng late prior' and in 1392 the king extended the priory's manorial rights.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Not until after Richard's death was John de Tweng canonised on 24 September 1401.

64. C.C.R. 1392-96, p.341.

65. C.C.R. 1392-96, p.364.

66. Reg. Scrope (Coventry & Lichfield), fo. 110v.

67. C.C.R. 1396-99, p.73.

68. Reg. Scrope (Coventry & Lichfield), fo. 111v.

69. J.S. Purvis, A Life of St. John of Bridlington (1924), p.48.

On 15 June Scrope was staying in London at the hospice of John Buckingham, bishop of Lincoln.⁽⁷⁰⁾ On 16 July Conyngston was made vicar-general while Scrope was 'in remotis agente' and was still conducting the administration in December. On 6 January 1398 Robert Waldby, archbishop of York, died having never visited his province. Scrope was appointed to the vacancy almost immediately and never returned to Lichfield, Richard Conyngston was still acting as vicar-general in April and May 1398.⁽⁷¹⁾

This survey of Scrope's activities at Lichfield, largely based on his episcopal register suggests that he performed his episcopal duties adequately and efficiently, if not perhaps with great inspiration. At this stage of his career he was hardly to the fore in political life but one receives the impression that he was in contact with the king and his court. More generally, Scrope's episcopate at Coventry and Lichfield conforms well with the view of R.G. Davies that the English episcopate of the later middle ages performed their functions well, as far as they perceived their responsibilities.⁽⁷²⁾ Rarely absent from his see, a regular attender at parliaments and convocation, the head of an apparently efficient administration, as a diocesan Scrope cannot be easily criticised. If he was not a scholar and a theologian, then he was in no way untypical of his contemporaries. It is difficult, however, to argue that Lichfield necessarily provided a good apprenticeship for Scrope before going to York. The smaller and poorer sees were usually reserved for the worthy clerics, such as kings' confessors, who were often among the more scholarly element in the church. The greatest prizes in the church were, however, almost always reserved for the greatest figures.

70. Reg. Scrope, (Coventry & Lichfield), fo. 120v.

71. Reg. Scrope, (Coventry & Lichfield), fo. 28v.

72. R.G. Davies, 'The English Episcopacy', in Profession, Vocation and Culture, ed. C.T. Clough, p.51.

C. Archbishop of York, 1398-1405

'Notwithstanding the multitude of Busines he was to dispatch, (he) preach'd frequently and devoted several hours to private Prayer, Fasting much, and practising several other Acts of Mortification.'

(The Loyal Martyr, London, 1722, p.3)

Late in the year 1397 or in the early days of 1398, Robert Waldby died without once having visited his province of York.⁽⁷³⁾ At the time of Waldby's death Richard Scrope was at the papal curia on a mission at the behest of Richard II. The precise sequence of events which led to Scrope's appointment as Waldby's successor has not proved easy to clarify and it has been especially difficult to establish whether Scrope's provision was at the wish of the king or not. Recent historians have been reluctant to commit themselves as to whether Scrope was a 'governmental' candidate. In the first volume of his calendar of Scrope's archiepiscopal register, Dr. R. Swanson argued that Scrope, had gained the archbishopric of York very much as the 'governmental candidate'. Later, he modified his view, 'it is possible that Scrope was less of a royal candidate than implied, his provision having been effected while he was absent at Rome, and Richard II being too embroiled in domestic political difficulties to offer any effective opposition'.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Dr. R.G. Davies is doubtful as to whether Scrope should be considered a royal candidate, arguing in particular that Scrope was never one of Richard II's inner advisers.⁽⁷⁵⁾ It may be argued, however, that this in itself would not

73. A Calendar of the Register of Archbishop Waldby 1397, ed. D.M. Smith, (Borthwick Texts and Calendars, 2, 1974), p.i.

74. A Calendar of the Register of Richard Scrope, Archbishop of York, 1398-1405, I, ed. R.N. Swanson, (Borthwick Texts and Calendars, 8, 1981), pp.i., xvii.

75. R.G. Davies, 'Richard II and the Church in the years of 'tyranny,' J.M.H., 1 (1975) p.346.

preclude Scrope as the king's choice, since it presupposes that Richard II's motives for appointing Scrope were purely political and ignores the fact that he may have wished to secure an able and trustworthy diocesan for York.

Scrope, however, was not the choice of the dean and chapter of York, they had elected the veteran bishop of Durham, Walter Skirlaw, on 3 March 1398. In the course of the entire century the chapter had never failed to elect a royal candidate and this, together with Scrope's absence in Rome, might suggest that he was less of a royal candidate than previously supposed.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Richard II did not, however, support Skirlaw's appointment in the face of Scrope's provision to York on 27 February 1398. In view of this perhaps the circumstances of Scrope's elevation to York needs to be seen in a wider context. It would be very surprising if Scrope not entirely acceptable to Richard II for the two men had established a friendly relationship while Scrope was at Lichfield. The favour which the king had shown to other members of the family in the very recent past, for example by making William Scrope earl of Wiltshire on 27 September 1397, may well have extended to the bishop of Lichfield. Scrope was admittedly not a 'civil servant' bishop in the way that Arundel had been, but Richard II was probably less concerned at this stage with building up a politically reliable episcopate, than with establishing a loyal nobility. Moreover Scrope was barely in office a year before Richard II's government collapsed, so the fact that he did not hold high political office under him is not particularly telling. Despite their election of Skirlaw, the chapter at York would probably have found Scrope an equally acceptable candidate given his northern connections.

Scrope was installed as archbishop on 10 July 1398. Unfortunately less than one might hope can be said about the administration of the province from this date until his execution on 6 June 1405. In her Thomas Arundel, Margaret Aston devoted only a brief

76. ibid., p.346.

chapter in an otherwise extensive survey of his career to Arundel's tenure of the archbishoprics of York and Canterbury. This reflected the limited availability of the material on this aspect of his life and its resistance to yielding information on any personal initiatives. To borrow a phrase of A. Hamilton-Thompson, late medieval York archiepiscopal registers contain, 'a halfpenny worth of information to an intolerable deal of common form'.⁽⁷⁷⁾ Such a problem is certainly encountered in a study of archbishop Scrope. Although his archiepiscopal registers have survived and have been calendared, they can tell us little about his personal management of the province. All in all, they reveal very little evidence of a personal interest in pastoral and diocesan affairs. The intention of the archiepiscopal register was to record the formal business undertaken in the archbishop's name. Personal initiatives may have been recorded elsewhere in separate volumes now lost. The surviving register is accordingly not at all a full account of the archbishop's activities. As Dr. Margaret Aston has indicated, Archbishop Arundel was a much more personally committed diocesan than is revealed in his registers. For example, he undertook archiepiscopal visitations which went unrecorded in his register and which emerged only in casual references in other sources.⁽⁷⁸⁾ The archiepiscopal register is not therefore a full and reliable account of the diocesan's activities; and its usefulness is necessarily limited. The existing material supports only a general outline of Scrope's attention to diocesan business and a detailed account of the administration of the province of York cannot yet be attempted.

As at Lichfield Scrope's record for residence was extremely good, particularly when he is compared once more with Archbishop Arundel, who was absent from his province of York for six out of his eight years of office. According to his appointments of vicars-general, Scrope was absent from his see ten times, one of these occasions being prior to his installation. Some of these absences lasted only

77. Quoted by Dr. D.M. Smith in Cal.Reg. Waldby, p.i.

78. Aston, Thomas Arundel, p.287.

a few days, the longest being three months.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Most often Scrope was absent from York for periods of less than a month, for example, from 25 May 1403 to 3 June 1403. His last absence was particularly brief, for John de Newton acted as vicar-general for only two days, from 25 April 1405 to 27 April 1405. On all these occasions the reason behind Scrope's absences was matters of state, either in attending council meetings or Parliaments. However, residence in the province was not necessarily a guarantee of attention to administrative business. For example in the first ten years of his archiepiscopate Alexander Neville was absent from the province of York for only ten months, but his record of diocesan management was not particularly good.⁽⁸⁰⁾ In order to supervise an extensive province like York, it was necessary to travel, but Neville rarely ventured beyond Cawood castle. Richard Scrope, however, was more mobile. His favourite manors were Cawood (in the East Riding, to the south of York) Rest, Bishop Burton (near Beverley), Scrooby, Nottinghamshire, and Bishopthorpe at York. He often spent several months at a time at these manors, but does not appear to have visited the more remote parts of his province.⁽⁸¹⁾

Dr. R.N. Swanson, has also remarked that Scrope's register is probably not complete and does not therefore adequately reflect Scrope's activities.⁽⁸²⁾ Certainly from what is known of Scrope's past activity at Lichfield it would be very surprising if he did not initiate some business beyond what was purely routine. However, he does not seem to have conducted a visitation or to have had much contact with the Dean and Chapter.

79. Cal. Reg. Scrope, 2, ed. Swanson, p.xiii.

80. R.G. Davies, 'Alexander Neville, Archbishop of York', Y.A.J., 47 (1975), pp. 87-101.

81. Cal. Reg. Scrope, 1, ed. Swanson, p.v; Scrope's itinerary is given in Diana K. Smith 'Archbishop Scrope of York', (unpublished MA thesis, York, 1976)

82. Cal. Reg. Scrope, 1, ed. Swanson, p.iv.

One obvious reason why Scrope himself is rarely seen to have taken a personal initiative in his own register is that he clearly delegated much responsibility to a circle of reliable officials like William Northbrugg on whom he could depend. On 30 June 1398, prior to his installation, Scrope issued a commission to his suffragan bishop at Lichfield, William Northbrugg, bishop of Pharos, (Pharensis), to act as his suffragan at York. The powers delegated to Northbrugg were wide ranging and included ordinations to minor and major orders, the veiling of widows and acting as Scrope's penitentiary. In fact, as was noted by Dr. R. Swanson, Northbrugg, 'was deputed to perform many of the more mundane episcopal tasks in the administration of the see'.⁽⁸³⁾ In particular Northbrugg took complete responsibility for ordinations. Of the thirty eight ordinations performed during Scrope's episcopate he did not perform one himself. Scrope's household consisted itself of a nucleus of ten household clerks. They were part of his itinerant secretariat, accompanying him inside and outside the province. Although these men are readily identifiable, beyond their names little information is usually available about them. For example, almost none of their wills are recorded as having survived.⁽⁸⁴⁾ However, of Archbishop Scrope's household clerks one of the most important was Thomas Parker. He was first described as a household clerk in 1401 when he was instituted to the rectory of Huggate near Pocklington, East Riding. In 1405 he exchanged the living of St. Mary and the Holy Angels, York Minster for a prebend in Lincoln cathedral with Thomas Hilton another household clerk. In 1405 Parker, like many household clerks found it wise to take out a pardon following Scrope's revolt. Thereafter he found himself sufficiently trusted by Henry IV to collect all the issues and arrears owing to Scrope for the benefit of the king. Parker, however, undoubtedly retained some affection and loyalty to Scrope for in 1408 he was one of the founders of a chantry at St. Chad, Stowe, and included Scrope

83. Cal. Reg. Scrope, 1, ed. Swanson, p.vi.

84. Of ten household clerks only the wills of three have survived: Thomas Parker, Richard Conyngston, John de Welton.

among the souls to be prayed for.⁽⁸⁵⁾ Scrope included among his household clerks, Geoffrey Scrope, who was a younger son of Stephen Scrope, the archbishop's brother. In November 1401 Geoffrey was presented to the prebend of North Newbald. He likewise found it sensible to take out a pardon in 1405, and was the only blood relative of Scrope's to be at all implicated in the events of 1405.⁽⁸⁶⁾ Robert Wolveden another household clerk had accompanied Scrope to York from Lichfield, where he had been a precentor of the cathedral. Wolveden on one occasion acted as Scrope's vicar-general. On the whole Scrope's household clerks did not proceed to high office within the church in their subsequent careers and none of them were university graduates.⁽⁸⁷⁾

In contrast, the major figures in Scrope's administration were very highly educated men with much experience in the church. John de Newton LL.D. was an old acquaintance of Scrope's, he had been the Official of the Bishop of Ely in 1379 and Master of Peterhouse 1382-87. He remained at Ely under Bishop Fordham, but in 1388 had become Archbishop Arundel's Official at York.⁽⁸⁸⁾ During Scrope's administration Newton was Official of the court of York, Treasurer, and almost always his Vicar-General. The only exceptions being the appointments on one occasion each of Robert de Wolveden and John de Suthwell.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Newton was also one of the three residentiary canons of York. In the absence of the dean, Thomas Langley, Newton and his fellow canons exercised a good deal of authority. Apart from the routine business of admissions and licences the Dean and Chapter Act

85. Cal. Reg. Scrope, 1, ed. Swanson, no. 420; C.P.R. 1405-8, pp. 19, 24.

86. Cal. Reg. Scrope, 1, ed. Swanson, no. 38. C.P.R. 1405-8, p.19.

87. Cal. Reg. Scrope, 1, ed. Swanson, nos. 28, 30, 31, 367, C.P.R. 1405-8, p.19.

88. Emden, Cambridge, p.421.

89. Cal. Reg. Scrope, 2, ed. Swanson, p.xiii.

Books occasionally refer to instances where it is quite clear that the canons residentiary are conducting business. On 12 May 1400 Master John de Newton, Thomas Walworth and William de Waltham, canons residentiary, appointed a deputy for Roger de Welton who was too old and infirm to carry out his duties. On 31 January 1401 John Cave of Middleton confessed that he had violated the liberty of St. Peter's. On 4 December 1403 they met with the church of Misterton to discuss the maintenance of the fabric and lights of the Minster. The church had been appropriated to the Dean and Chapter for this purpose in April 1403. On 24 November 1404, the chapter made a declaration on the distribution of commons to the vicars choral, stating that absentees from the services are not to receive a share in the commons.⁽⁹⁰⁾ This was exactly the type of reform to interest Scrope, but there is no evidence of his personal initiative here. It might be argued that capitular organisation, while in the hands of John de Newton, was likely to meet with Scrope's approval. Newton, as Scrope's vicar-general was clearly reliable and dependable and Scrope's interference in chapter affairs may have been rendered unnecessary. When John de Newton died in 1414 he bequeathed to the Minster a share in his personal library. It included the works of the mystics Walter Hilton and Richard Hampole, works of history such as Bede and William of Malmesbury, the texts of John of Salisbury, Augustine and Aquinas and books on civil and canon law to be used by any of his nephews who might study law.⁽⁹¹⁾

Newton of course was already at York when Scrope was promoted to the primacy and he must have enabled some administrative continuity. The archbishop did however bring some of his officials from Lichfield with him. Scrope's promotion to York had involved promotion for Richard Conyngston L.L.D. too. He was now appointed the archbishop's

90. York Minster Library MS, H2/1.A 17th century copy of the dean and chapter Acta, 1401-1434, fos. 15, 17, 18.

91. Emden, Cambridge, p. 421.

chancellor, one of the most prestigious posts in the administration. Conyngston, as part of the household travelled around with Scrope, probably supervising the household clerks. He is found as a witness on several occasions to oaths of obedience, absolution or dispensation from excommunication.⁽⁹²⁾ He was well rewarded with prebends in York and Southwell Minster. He also seems to have been recruited to the service of Henry IV fairly late in his career. For in 1402 he was described as a royal clerk and given the prebend of Norwell Palishall in Southall Minster, there is no reason to suggest that he was a royal clerk before this date.⁽⁹³⁾ Despite the fact that Conyngston was a university graduate, he does not appear in either of Emden's register. It may be that he graduated from a European university. As a patron there is no doubt that Scrope used his position to advance his family. It has been noted that a member of the family was in Scrope's household. The archbishop also continued the advancement of another of his nephews, Stephen, whose career had begun at Lichfield. In 1399 Stephen Scrope, D.C.L. was given the prebends of Langtoft and Bishophill with Knaresborough. He held the latter as security for the prebend of Driffield which he obtained on 4 March 1401. On 18 October 1401 he was granted the prebend of Studley in Ripon Minster.⁽⁹⁴⁾ His major prize, however, was probably the most wealthy position within Richard Scrope's patronage - the exceptionally wealthy archdeaconry of Richmond. It had however, already been granted to Nicholas Bubwith, a royal protege'. Nevertheless, Scrope had his way. Bubwith resigned the archdeaconry in exchange for the prebend of Driffield and Stephen Scrope was collated to the archdeaconry in 1402, where he remained until 1418. Unfortunately, no record of Stephen

92. Cal. Reg. Scrope, 1, ed. Swanson, nos. 15, 21, 23.

93. C.P.R. 1401-5, p.91.

94. Cal. Reg. Scrope, 1, ed. Swanson, nos. 29, 31, 37, 56; C.P.R. 1401-5, p.27

Scrope's activities as archdeacon of Richmond survives.⁽⁹⁵⁾ When Stephen died in 1418 he commemorated his uncle's help in his will expressing gratitude for the helping hand which had been extended to him. He bequeathed texts on canon and civil law, the Decreta Decretales and Hostiensis in Lectura, the same titles bequeathed by Geoffrey Scrope, canon of Lincoln, to his favourite nephew. These texts, however, Scrope bequeathed to his own protégé, William Alnwick, the future bishop of Oxford.⁽⁹⁶⁾ Perhaps it is some measure of Scrope's abilities as a diocesan that he was able to appoint talented men to his administration and to command the loyalty of his officials and household. There was a strong element of continuity between Scrope's administration at Lichfield and York and this may well have helped the administration to run smoothly. The calibre of Scrope's administration must in some way reflect his conscientiousness as a diocesan and is one of the few yardsticks by which he may be judged. Without an extensive survey it is impossible to indicate whether Scrope's attempts at York to curb abuses such as non-residence was any better or worse than his predecessors or than his own previous record at Coventry and Lichfield. Scrope issued 55 licences for non-residence over seven years, fifteen of which were in order to study at university. This does not appear to be a very large figure, but as there is no information to indicate the provisions made in such cases of absence, no easy conclusions can be drawn. There is some evidence of the economic difficulties faced by the church, though this too is not particularly easy to interpret. Scrope issued three licences for the celebration of private masses on account of the poverty of individual priests to John Coulthorn and William Sawyer both holding rectories and to Nicholas Harpame a chantry priest.⁽⁹⁷⁾ The inadequate funding of chantry foundations is illustrated on only

95. A. Hamilton Thompson, 'The Registers of the Archdeaconry of Richmond', Y.A.J. 25 (1920), pp.138-253.

96. Testamenta Eboracensia, I, ed. J. Raine, pp. 388-89.

97. Cal. Reg. Scrope., 1, ed. Swanson, nos. 102, 363, 377.

two occasions. William Swerde, chantry priest of All Saints, Pavement, was permitted in 1399 to celebrate mass only on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday for 7 years because of the inadequacy of his endowment.⁽⁹⁸⁾ In 1402, two chantries, one in Stillingfleet church and one in the chapel of St. Nicholas, Naburn, were united because, 'their income (is) so reduced as to be barely sufficient for the maintenance of one priest.'⁽⁹⁹⁾ In January 1404 the parishes of Kneesall and Boughton were united because of the difficulty of collecting tithes and because the revenues of Boughton amounted to only 40s, insufficient to support the rector.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ However, this type of evidence remains a very small proportion of the material in the register and it is difficult to estimate how extensive and severe these problems were.

Chantry foundations continued to be made at parish churches throughout this period. Interestingly, however, some patrons clearly preferred to combine their chantry foundations with some form of 'social welfare' provision. Sir Robert Knolles, the famous warrior, founded an ambitious chantry college for seven chaplains and an alms house in Pontefract in 1398.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ John de Plumptre endowed a chantry with 100s in the chapel of his hospital for poor women in Nottingham.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Archbishop Scrope himself was to be remembered in one chantry founded in the church of St. Mary Magdelene, Newark, by John de Leek, knight, in 1402.⁽¹⁰³⁾

98. ibid., 1, no. 125.

99. ibid., 1, no. 326.

100. ibid., 1, no. 600.

101. ibid., 1, nos. 97-100, 155.

102. ibid., 1, no. 499.

103. ibid., 1, no. 572.

A rare example of Scrope's personal intervention is to be found in an incident at Hemingborough in March 1399. Two parishioners appeared before the archbishop, having incurred excommunication for enjoining, 'their co-parishioners not to offer more than 1d for mortuaries, marriages and purifications'. Scrope succeeded in persuading them to advise their followers to make the full payments, but they were unrepentant. The rector of Hemingborough at the time was Master Thomas Walworth, residentiary canon of York, who seems to have had difficulty receiving payment of tithe from another parishioner in Hemingborough.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ It may be that such parishioners were especially unwilling to pay tithe and other incidents to an absentee rector, who did nothing for their own cure of souls.

One aspect of Scrope's responsibilities at York clearly gave him some difficulty. As northern primate he was responsible for persuading the northern clergy to make grants of taxation. In seven years the clergy made five grants to the king, including one under Archbishop Waldby intended for Richard II and one grant to Scrope himself on becoming archbishop.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ This amounts to something like annual taxation, though it should be remembered that large sections of the northern clergy were traditionally exempt from taxation on account of their poverty. There is no doubt that the northern clergy were reluctant to pay up. In 1401 Henry IV was notified that a provincial convocation had been summoned for 3 June 1401 but had delayed granting a subsidy, 'despite the urging of the archbishop', and did not agree to it until 26 July when the archbishop appeared, 'and expounded the arguments in favour of a grant'. The reluctance of the clergy to pay this subsidy may be explained by the fact that they had only paid the last part of the previous subsidy a month before.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ In June 1404 convocation was equally reluctant to pay the subsidy, making it conditional on the, 'cessation of inquisitions and distrains carried

104. *ibid.*, 1, nos. 669-70.

105. *ibid.*, 2, p.iii.

106. *ibid.*, 2, no. 720.

out by royal commission contrary to the liberty of the church.'⁽¹⁰⁷⁾
The difficulties which Scrope encountered in raising the subsidies demanded by Henry IV may well have contributed to his disaffection by 1405.

Scrope was, however, probably not very involved in national politics at this period and there are few references to him in central governmental records after his promotion to York. On the whole he was probably a fairly conscientious primate. For example, while he was at York the work on the choir of York Minster was completed and Scrope may well have taken a personal interest in the building, for in 1404 he gave £7 16s in alms for the wages of a mason.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Throughout this period Scrope nevertheless remains an inscrutable figure in surviving records and there was little to suggest before June 1405 that he would meet such a violent and dramatic end.

D. The Revolt of 1405 and the Martyrdom of an Archbishop

The motives which prompted Archbishop Scrope's notorious and fateful participation in the northern rebellion of 1405 still remain ambiguous. For Peter McNiven, the most recent historian to examine the 1405 revolt in detail, Scrope remains an enigma and a pawn of Percy pretensions.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ Dr. Robert Swanson, in the introduction to his calendar of Scrope's archiepiscopal register, rejects the suggestion that Scrope may have been in any way a "Ricardian" and suggests that it was the high level of clerical taxation which may have prompted Scrope's collaboration with those who most consistently opposed Henry IV.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Neither of these explanations is perhaps

107. ibid., 2, no. 767.

108. York Minster Fabric Rolls, ed. J.Raine (Surtees Society, 35, 1858) pp.24, 32, 36.

109. P. McNiven, 'The Betrayal of Archbishop Scrope', B.J.R.L., 54 (1971-2), pp. 173-213.

110. Cal. Reg. Scrope, 2, ed. Swanson, pp.iii-iv.

altogether satisfying or convincing. Although it may be impossible to elucidate the precise motives behind Scrope's participation, some consideration of the events and circumstances of the rebellion may enable Scrope's role to be seen and appreciated more fully than hitherto.

In the first place it is clear that Scrope had some reason to feel a sense of attachment to Richard II and there are signs that Richard II took a personal interest in Scrope. However, the deposition of the king was apparently accepted by Scrope without major demur and Scrope was personally implicated in the proceedings.⁽¹¹¹⁾ In any case Henry IV could not purge members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy without cause; and in 1399 he was probably careful to conciliate a potential opponent in an influential position. Yet this is probably to judge with hindsight. Although there are signs of friction between Scrope and royal authority in the years before 1405, it is doubtful that they would seem significant except in the light of later events.⁽¹¹²⁾ In many ways Scrope was co-operative. He regularly attended Parliament and council and in 1402 he acted as a creditor to the king and loaned him £200.⁽¹¹³⁾ Perhaps for that reason in the same year Scrope was pardoned the sum of 1,000 marks lent to him by the earl of Wiltshire, a loan which was repayable to the crown.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ There is no evidence to suggest that either Scrope or the city of York were implicated in the revolt of 1403. In fact the evidence

111. Rotuli Parliamentorum, III, pp.416-426 according to this source Scrope and the bishop of Hereford were appointed as Richard II's procurators to announce his resignation of the throne.

112. For example at the Coventry Parliament of 1404 Scrope supported Arundel's criticism of the king. Annales Ricardi Secundi, p.391.

113. C.P.R. 1401-1405, p.50, The loan was used to pay the earl of Northumberland.

114. C.P.R. 1401-5, p.164.

suggests the reverse. The mayor and sheriff of York were ordered to receive and display the head of Henry Percy.⁽¹¹⁵⁾ And from 9 to 13 August Henry IV stayed in the city, during which time he and his household unprecedently occupied the houses in the close of the dean and chapter. Henry also used this occasion to raise a loan of 600 marks from the city.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ In a gesture, maybe of public solidarity, Scrope, celebrated mass with Henry IV at the high altar in the Minster and Henry made an offering of 6s 8d in gold.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ This was on the day before the earl of Northumberland came to York to make his peace with the king.

In the following year, however, two issues arose which may have sharpened Archbishop Scrope's hostility to the Lancastrian king. Although the circumstances are not clear it is apparent that the king was meddling in some way within Scrope's liberty of Beverley. In August 1404 the archbishop was assured that the marshals and steward of the royal household should not enter his liberty of Beverley as they had previously done on the pretext of some ambiguities about its status.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Later in the year he was granted an exemplification of his rights in the liberty of Beverley.

Potentially a more constant source of friction was the continuing pressure from Henry IV for grants of taxation. The demands made on the clergy through convocation, to contribute to the national taxes were more onerous and more frequent under Henry IV than they had been under his predecessor.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ In fairness allowances were made for the northern province on account of its relative poverty and it was

115. C.P.R. 1401-5, p.229.

116. C.P.R. 1401-5, p.251.

117. Cal. Reg. Scrope, 1, ed. Swanson, no. 54.

118. C.P.R. 1401-5, p.395.

119. A. Rogers, 'Clerical Taxation under Henry IV, 1399-1413', B.I.H.R., 46 (1973), pp.128-132.

taxed much less heavily than its southern counterpart. Nevertheless Scrope apparently often experienced difficulty persuading the convocation of York to grant the money. The northern clergy's reluctance may have reached a peak in 1404, when they attached a demand for the preservation of church liberties to their grant of taxation. Accordingly a grant of subsidy was made in April 1404, 'sub conditione quod Rex proclamari faceret Ecclesiae vetusta privilegia, ut parcatur bonis eorum, et cariagiis, ne per provisos, sicut hactenus molestentur'.⁽¹²⁰⁾

As a result of this on 12 June the king ordered the collectors of the subsidy, 'not to interfere with the prelates and clergy of that province contrary to the form and effect of this grant.'⁽¹²¹⁾ It is, however, difficult to decide precisely how much weight to give to financial causes in the conflict between Scrope and Henry IV. In fact the northern convocation seems to have been taxed on a level commensurate with its wealth, although of course reluctance to pay does not necessarily indicate an inability to do so. Scrope included the grievous level of taxation amongst the complaints of his later manifesto, but this would be an obvious issue to exploit in order to encourage popular support. Perhaps it is more significant that outside those members of Scrope's own household very few clergy appear to have participated in the revolt of 1405.

If the year 1405 proved disastrous for the archbishop it began badly for Henry IV. First there was an abortive attempt to kidnap the Earl of March, suggesting that some of the opposition to the king sought not simply to restrain but to replace him. In the spring of 1405 rebellion broke out in Wales, and was so serious that Henry was forced to intervene personally. In mid April Scrope was summoned to meet Henry in Worcester; for what purpose is unknown, but after his return Richard Scrope conducted no further archiepiscopal business

120. Annales Ricardi Secundi, p.388.

121. Calendar of Signet Letters of Henry IV and Henry V, 1399-1422, ed. J.L. Kirby, (London, 1978), no.200.

and within a few weeks the revolt in York had broken out.⁽¹²²⁾ In early May the earl of Northumberland, perhaps in a pre-emptive strike, had failed to capture the earl of Westmorland at the home of Sir Ralph Eure. On 10 May perhaps as a security measure Henry granted one of his most trusted Yorkshire retainers, Sir Robert Waterton, lands in Sowerbyshire. By this date though the king was well aware that parts of the North and Midlands were seriously disaffected. His response was to send writs to the sheriffs of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and to the mayor and bailiffs of York, 'to stop the malice of those who are daily trying to cause trouble in the realm'.⁽¹²³⁾ In an attempt to control the situation the king sent his trusted supporter Waterton northwards. This, however, simply exacerbated the situation, for Waterton was promptly captured and held hostage by Northumberland.⁽¹²⁴⁾ Thereafter events moved fairly swiftly. On 22 May the king ordered his troops to move north and meet him at Pontefract.⁽¹²⁵⁾ This was accompanied by the arrest on 22 May 1405 of known Percy adherents such as Gerard Salvan and John de Ask, together with their relatives.⁽¹²⁶⁾ By this date too the king had reliable intelligence of the main leaders of the rebellion - Northumberland, the earl Marshal and Bardolf. Scrope was not listed among the rebels at this point and was probably already in custody. Scrope's complicity was nevertheless publicised a few days later on 31 May when his goods were sequestered.⁽¹²⁷⁾

122. Cal. Reg. Scrope, 2, ed. Swanson, p.53.

123. Signet Letters, ed. Kirby, no. 348.

124. ibid., no. 370. The king knew that his envoy Waterton was in Northumberland's custody by 22 May 1405.

125. ibid., no. 373.

126. C.P.R. 1405-8, pp. 24, 67; Salvan's wife and Ask's servant acted as envoys to Northumberland.

127. C.P.R. 1405-8, p.66.

The chronology provided by the royal signet letters gives few details of the precise events occurring in Yorkshire in May and June of 1405. The work of Peter McNiven has established the earl of Northumberland as the ringleader of the revolt. From its inception the revolt had probably misfired when Northumberland had failed to capture Westmorland, thus leaving him ever loyal to Henry IV, in command of a large military force which would prove impossible to overcome. Peter McNiven has indicated that following this setback Northumberland failed to rally his supporters and join up with other rebel leaders. Ultimately Archbishop Scrope, at the head of a force of York citizens, found himself almost unaided by his noble allies on Shipton Moor on 19 May or thereabouts facing the earl of Westmorland. The rebellion itself never included a battle and was dispersed with very little violence having occurred. There were some minor skirmishes and some damage was inflicted for example at Scrooby, the archbishop's manor in Nottinghamshire.⁽¹²⁸⁾ As Professor Charles Ross argued, poor co-ordination by the rebels and the steadfast loyalty of Neville power meant that the rebellion could never seriously challenge the throne of Henry IV.⁽¹²⁹⁾ Yet the revolt was put down with considerable brutality and the king was reported to have been enraged with the citizens of York, a fury which may have led him to make an error of judgement in executing Scrope.⁽¹³⁰⁾

The subsequent course of events is fairly well known. The arrest of Scrope and Mowbray at Shipton Moor on 19 May by Westmorland led to their imprisonment in Pontefract castle, together with those members of Scrope's household who had also participated. Scrope was allegedly subjected to rough treatment while in Pontefract, supposedly having had his pastoral staff broken while in prison. This was probably a

128. Signet Letters, ed. Kirby, no.428. On 17 August 1405 the tenants of Scrooby were pardoned the loss of £14 17s 14 1/4d issues from the 'town', owing to losses suffered by the burning of houses and goods.

129. C. Ross, 'Yorkshire Baronage', p.385.

130. V.C.H. City of York, p.58. On 3 June the king threatened the city with destruction if it resisted him.

symbolic gesture of deposition, indicating that Henry was determined to get rid of Scrope at all costs. Indeed there is no doubt that as early as 1 June, the king had determined to get rid of him.⁽¹³¹⁾ Scrope of course represented a great problem for Henry IV for no English primate had ever been executed for treason. Although the obvious solution would have been to exile Scrope, Henry clearly did not regard this as a possibility. Perhaps Archbishop Thomas Arundel was too pertinent a reminder of the usefulness of exiled primates to political opponents. Later Henry was to argue that it was the state of the city of York, which forced him to execute Scrope, though this does not seem to be an argument against exiling him.⁽¹³²⁾ Henry may well have decided to take the opportunity of getting rid of Scrope whom he had not appointed and with whom he probably did not get on well. There is some evidence to suggest that Scrope was on bad terms with the king immediately before the revolt and had indeed threatened to excommunicate him. An account of the life of Richard Scrope explains that on many occasions the archbishop had asked the king to desist from molesting the church and infringing its liberties. However, 'His autem monitionibus et aliis magis ponderandis articulariter scriptis a praedicto rege spretis et neglectis, athleta Christi Ricardus, pater antedictus, in et contra quosdam injuriantes monitionem primo, secundoque sententiam majoris excommunicationis in genere fulminavit, eisdemque diem praefixit ad dicendum causam quare in aggravationem sententiae procedere non deberet'.⁽¹³³⁾ Accordingly the author of the chronicle argued Henry IV was so irritated with this threat that he sent John, duke of Bedford, north to deal with Scrope. On 19 May Scrope was seized and imprisoned in Pontefract castle

131. Signet Letters, ed. Kirby, no.376. On 1 June 1405 the king granted to John Tylton underclerk of the king's kitchen, 'the annual pension which the next archbishop of York will be obliged to grant one of the king's clerks because of his new elevation'.

132. R.G. Davies, 'After the Execution of Archbishop Scrope, 1405-8', B.J.R.L., 59 (1976), pp. 40-74.

133. Historians of the Church of York, II, ed. J. Raine, (Rolls Series, 1886) p.431-2.

and was later executed. Unfortunately there is no further evidence to corroborate this explanation of Scrope's rebellion. However, Scrope's brief visit to Henry IV at Worcester in April, his subsequent inactivity and the problems of raising taxation may well be signs of a deteriorating relationship between the two men. On 10 June Scrope was executed outside York's city walls. He had been kept in prison for twenty-two days and the choice of his day of execution may have been deliberate. It was the feast day of St. William, York's rival saint to Saint Cuthbert, and to choose this day may have been a calculated insult both to the city and to the Minster authorities. After the executions at York, which included those of Scrope's co-conspirators Mowbray and Plumpton, the king toured the north destroying the resistance to him. By the autumn most small northern towns were displaying the heads of those executed for their part in the rebellion.⁽¹³⁴⁾ Some of those who rebelled took out pardons and it is possible from their names to have an idea of the extent and nature of the unrest. In general few clergy took part in the rebellion but many of the Minster clergy took out pardons, including at least five vicars choral and Thomas Bugthorpe a chaplain in the Minster.⁽¹³⁵⁾ Several of the York canons including Scrope's nephew Geoffrey also took out pardons these being members of Scrope's household. The prior of the house at Monks Kirby, Warwickshire, was clearly implicated in the revolt, since he had fled from the house when the Earl Marshal was captured.⁽¹³⁶⁾ Hardly any of the rebels can be proved to have been craftsmen or artisans although unfortunately the names of those who were involved in the rising at York do not emerge in the general pardon granted by Henry IV. The occupations of only three rebels are known, those of John Saunderson, 'plummer', Robert de Helmesle, piper, and Robert Cook, smith. Estate officials of the archbishop of York also figure amongst those who rebelled, for example John de Burton, Scrope's parker at Rest and John Marchal,

134. C.P.R. 1405-8, p.69.

135. C.P.R. 1405-8, p.19.

136. Signet Letters, ed. Kirby, no.392.

parker of Hessay: the former received a pardon, but Marchal forfeited his office. Other officials to rebel were Hugh Kendale described as a warrener and John Colleson, forester of Rievaulx. However, many rebels have no indentifiable occupation or social status.⁽¹³⁷⁾ To judge by those executed, the revolt witnessed a certain amount of gentry involvement. Amongst those executed were: Sir John Fauconberg, Sir John Colville, Sir Ralph Hastings, Sir John Fitzrandolf, and Sir Henry Boynton.⁽¹³⁸⁾ Others who had been identified as ring leaders were William Fuster, a chaplain on Ousebridge, and Richard Ask and Ranulph del See, whose remains were put on display at York. In terms of personnel the revolt seems to have been broadly based both occupationally and socially; Scrope may have commanded the loyalty of a wide range of supporters, thus making his participation in the rebellion a genuine threat to Henry IV.

The king's itinerary following the rebellion also provides an indication of its geographical extent. After the executions of Mowbray and Scrope at York on 10 June, the king travelled extensively in the northern counties. From 12-15 June he was in Ripon, moving to Northallerton by 18 June and Darlington by 19 June, Durham by 20 June and Newcastle-upon-Tyne by 23 June. He had reached Warkworth by 2 July and Berwick by 10 July which marked the end of his tour. He returned south via Newcastle and Pontefract and was in the Midlands again in August, by which time he must have felt his position secure.⁽¹³⁹⁾

The main area of unrest had undoubtedly been the county of Yorkshire itself. Some idea of the distribution of activity can be gleaned from the geographical origins of those who sued for pardon, as well as the official account of events. According to the Parliament

137. C.P.R. 1405-8, pp. 70-72.

138. C.P.R. 1405-8, p.69.

139. Signet Letters, ed. Kirby, nos. 382-428, 462.

Roll of May 1405, Sir John Fauconberge, Sir Ralph Hastings, Sir John fitz Randolf and Sir John Colvile of Dale assembled men at Topcliffe, Northallerton and Cleveland and incited them to riot, but were defeated by Prince John, the earl of Westmorland and Lord fitz Hugh.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ In the same month Scrope, Mowbray, Plumpton, Sir Robert Lamplew, and Sir Robert Percy also assembled on Shipton Moor with a large force, of unknown composition, and apparently joined battle on 19 May, although news of Scrope's involvement was not mentioned in official sources until 31 May. Where they can be traced it would seem that many of the rebels came from places adjacent to those areas already mentioned and fairly close to York, for example several came from Ripon, Malton, Felton, Boroughbridge and Thirsk. The main area of rebellion then was the North Riding and particularly the areas to the north west of York, the exception being the manor of Scrooby. Although Peter McNiven was clearly correct to identify the earl of Northumberland's influence behind the rebellion, he may have underestimated the importance of the role of Archbishop Scrope himself. Scrope was clearly able to call on a wide range of support from among his household and estate officials and perhaps among his tenants, and in particular it may be no coincidence that the archbishop's liberty of Ripon was the home of many rebels. Scrope was also likely to have been influential in securing the involvement of the city of York in the revolt.

The role which the city of York played in the events of May 1405 is unclear, but Henry's subsequent treatment of the city indicates that they were seriously implicated in the unrest. Indeed it was clearly Scrope's intention to raise the city against the king. According to the Eulogium, Scrope preached sedition in the Minster appeared fully armed in the city and published his manifesto within the city inviting support.⁽¹⁴¹⁾ It may be that York citizens formed

140. Rot. Parl., III, pp.604-5.

141. Eulogium, III, ed. F.S. Haydon (Rolls Series, London, 1863), pp.405-6.

the core of Scrope's force on Shipton Moor. At any rate the king was furious with the city and threatened it with destruction. On his arrival at York the inhabitants abased themselves before Henry in a humiliating fashion. According to Adam of Usk, "Cives Eboracenses, femoralibus exceptis, nudi iacentes in terra ac si alter iudicii dies esset, propter eorum in hac parte favorem, a rege veniam petunt et habent".(142)

Henry's anger with the city did not subside in the aftermath of the revolt. Despite granting the citizens of York a general pardon on 24 August, the king suspended the liberties of the city until 3 June 1406, an action which was probably offensive to the city authorities.⁽¹⁴³⁾ William Frost, a former mayor of the city, was appointed keeper of the city on 25 August 1405.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ The suspension of York's liberties was undoubtedly a punitive measure and one designed to bring greater royal control over the city as well as financial advantage. In the course of the year the city was forced to buy back its privileges. On 2 November, Robert Clere, groom of the king's robes received 500 marks from Alan de Hamerton, chamberlain of York, "in part payment of a larger sum which certain people of that city have an obligation to pay into chancery". The following month William Frost described as lieutenant of the warden of the city paid out 200 marks on the same basis.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

142. Adam of Usk, ed. E.M. Thompson, (London, 1904), p.99.

143. C.P.R. 1405-8, pp.40, 183.

144. C.P.R. 1405-8, p.40.

145. Signet Letters, ed. Kirby, nos. 462, 520. Henry IV also received very large sums of money from the temporalities of the archbishopric of York. On 27 July Thomas Parker paid 400 marks to the king and a further 104 marks on 8 August 1405; at a later date Parker paid £602 13s 4d.

What motives can the city have had for becoming involved in the rebellion? Is York's participation to be considered as a solely urban phenomenon or were they likely to share the aspirations of the other rebels? Although the answers to these questions can only be tentative it is well known that during the reign of Richard II the city was cultivated lavishly, it received royal visits, was elevated to county status and for a short time was the administrative centre of England.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ Whatever reason it had for being grateful to Richard II the city of York was astute enough to make a loan to Bolingbroke in 1399 as he travelled south. Nevertheless after Henry's successful coup the city no longer received the favourable treatment it had enjoyed under his predecessor. It is hard however to detect any overt hostility between the crown and the city at this point.

From 1394 to 1406, almost without interruption the mayoralty was held by William Frost, about whom very little is known. He left no will and is never given an occupational title, though in 1404 he is described as "esquire". Frost first appears on the freeman's register in 1393 and became mayor in the following year for the first time. His period in office obviously straddles an important era in York's history. Frost was perhaps someone favoured by Henry IV, for example in 1404 he was given a life grant of two tuns of wine per annum from the port of Hull. Frost's appointment of keeper of the city in 1405 suggests he was politically acceptable to the crown.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ However, these examples could also indicate that Henry IV was trying to ingratiate himself with the city. In February 1405, Frost lost the position of mayor which he had held on the previous six consecutive occasions. The man who replaced him was Adam del Bank, a dyer, who had been city chamberlain in 1381-3, but had not held civic office since. His election is perhaps reminiscent of the situation in 1381-2, when the poorer trade guilds were trying to break the monopoly of

146. J. Harvey, 'Richard II and the City of York', in Essays in the Reign of Richard II, ed. F.R.H. du Boulay and C.M. Barron, (London, 1971) pp.202-217.

147. C.P.R. 1401-5, p.406; C.P.R. 1405-8, p.40.

civic government held by the wealthy merchants. Certainly Adam del Bank's election was uncharacteristic of the usual type of mayoral candidate and may well have contributed to unrest within the city, just as it had done slightly over a decade earlier. It may be significant too that Bank seems never to have held civic office again after his brief tenure of the office of mayor.⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

It has previously been noted that the account of events given by the Eulogium in particular suggests that Scrope was at the head of the rebels in York.⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ And Henry IV later justified his execution by saying that the situation in York was too unstable to allow Scrope to live. This then raises the question of the identity of interests and purpose between Scrope and the citizens of York, was it a purely opportunistic alliance or was there a closer relationship between their interests? Scrope himself did not reside in the city, but was rarely absent from his Yorkshire estates and frequently at his manor of Cawood. His relations with the city were not always cordial. In 1404 there was an incident where Scrope claimed a certain William Wistowe as his serf, thus provoking a violent intrusion into the Archbishop's court by the mayor and aldermen protesting that Wistow was a free man.⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ This incident probably provoked the recognisance made by the mayor and aldermen to Scrope for 200 marks on 1 July 1404, presumably to ensure their good behaviour.⁽¹⁵¹⁾ On the whole though, as Professor Barrie Dobson has recently argued, relations between the city and ecclesiastical authorities were normally relatively harmonious and the affection felt by York citizens for the Minster was at this very time demonstrated by their frequent testamentary

148. Register of the Freemen of York, ed. F. Collins, (Surtees Society, 96, 102, 1897-9) p.68.

149. Eulogium, pp.405-6.

150. York Memorandum Books, I, ed. M. Sellers, (Surtees Society, CXX, 1911) pp.249-50.

151. C.C.R. 1402-5, p.378.

bequests.⁽¹⁵²⁾ It is not improbable that Scrope, a member of a prominent Yorkshire baronial family, with family property in the city, and the canons of York, many of whom were probably local men, may have felt an affinity with the city which went beyond mere opportunism, while the citizens themselves may have felt the same sort of sympathy and loyalty towards their prelate. Finally it is possible to underestimate the connections between the urban rebels and their more rural leadership. The Percies had property in York and may well have been able to call on support there, while Sir William Plumpton, executed for his part in the revolt, had married Alice Gisburn the daughter of a citizen and merchant of York.⁽¹⁵³⁾

On the whole, it would accordingly appear that short-term factors were primarily responsible for Scrope's rebellion in 1405. Fundamental opposition on the archbishop's part to Henry IV or simple Percy partisanship would presumably have led to his rebellion in 1403, moreover the reasons for rebellion must have been peculiar to himself and his own position, since none of the other members of the family were implicated, except his nephew who was part of his household. A final disagreement with Henry IV may have precipitated Scrope into rebellion, especially if the political atmosphere in the city was already uneasy. Perhaps the most striking feature of the rebellion of 1405 is the alliance produced between the city and its archbishop, a connection which was not in fact to be severed even after Scrope's own death.

152. R.B. Dobson, 'Cathedral Chapters and Cathedral Cities: York, Durham, and Carlisle in the Fifteenth Century', Northern History, XIX (1983) pp.15-44.

153. Testamenta Eboracensia, I, ed. J. Raine, p.387, note 2.

E. The Cult of Archbishop Scrope

'Item lego beatissimo dilecto meo Sancto Ricardo Scrop unum par precarum de currall de numero quinquaginta cum gaudiis deauratis ad iuvamen suae canonizacionis, quo Deus concedat pro sua magna gracia'

(Testamenta Eboracensia, II, ed. J. Raine, p.233)

In this way, the executed archbishop was remembered in the testament of William Langton, rector of St. Michael's Church, Ousebridge, York. The hopes of canonisation for Richard Scrope, here expressed as late as 1464, were aroused immediately after his execution. His cult manifested itself in several ways and it began with pilgrims flocking to visit Scrope's tomb in the Minster. In addition rumours of the miracles associated with Scrope began to circulate. One such miracle was recorded about Scrope's execution itself. According to the Annales, Scrope was taken outside the city, 'in campum satum hordeo tunc virenti'. The owner of the field protested that his crop had been trampled underfoot and ruined by the assembled crowd. Scrope thereupon blessed the field and the next year it yielded a bumper crop. (154)

The reaction to the cult by the royal and ecclesiastical authorities was swift and hostile. Six months after Scrope's execution Archbishop Arundel of Canterbury and Thomas Langley, then the dean of York, wrote to the chapter asking them to prevent discussion of Scrope's miracles and not to encourage people to visit the tomb,

'vestrae discretioni pro firmo damus consilio ut clerum sive populum in honorem domini Ricardi ultimi Eboracensis archiepiscopi ad ipsam ecclesiam confluentes minime invitatis, seu ad sic confluendum sollicitetis, opere aut sermone, nec

154. Annales Ricardi Secundi, p.410.

aliqua miracula praetensa ipsi clero aut populo adhuc propalari curetis'.⁽¹⁵⁵⁾

Royal orders were less polite and insisted in addition that all offerings made at Scrope's tomb should be transferred to those of St. William.⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ Either the chapter ignored or could not implement these instructions for in September 1406 Prince John commanded that Scrope's tomb should be covered over with planks,

'Vous mandons fermement enchargeantes que tost venes ces presentes, tous excusacions cessantes, faces abatre tout la clausure de charpententrie fait entour le sepulture de Richard nadgarres archevesque d'Everwyk, qui mort est, et y faces mettre sur la terre entre les pilers et par bonne espace de hores veilles fuystes et grosses piers de bonne hautesse et lature issint gils i soyent continuelment, pour fare estoppoill a les faux foles que y veignent par colour de devocion'⁽¹⁵⁷⁾

This promptly precipitated another miracle associated with the cult whereby an aged and infirm man was given the strength to remove the planks.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾

The tenacity of the cult and royal opposition to it has led one historian to interpret this phenomenon as an aspect of national political opposition to Henry IV and to the Lancastrians in general throughout the later fifteenth century. According to J.W. McKenna, support for Scrope's cult was a way of indicating political opposition without inviting punishment. He argues also that, 'adherence to the

155. The Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops, III, ed. J. Raine, (Rolls Series, 1894) p.292.

156. ibid., III, p.293.

157. ibid., III, no. CLXIII, p.294.

158. T. Gascoigne, Loci et Libro Veritate, ed. Thorold Rogers, p.220.

cult of Richard Scrope and support of his shrine at York Minster was a touchstone of opposition to Lancastrian rule. The rise and fall in the popularity and intensity of this veneration is one measure of the waxing and waning of the opposition to the crown in those years'.⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ This argument has something to recommend it, especially as an explanation of why Scrope's cult was patronised by supporters of Edward IV. On the whole, however, there are certain limits in this interpretation. For one thing it overlooks the capacity of York citizens to express political opposition in other ways, as they had done and were able to do in the future. Also it was not necessarily politically advisable to participate in Scrope's cult since Henry IV monitored all those who visited the tomb. Moreover in so far as the cult was an aspect of political opposition, McKenna may misinterpret the nature of that opposition, which often consisted not so much in opposition to the Lancastrian regime as much as in the struggle between royal, ecclesiastical and urban authority. Nor can the waxing and waning of the cult over the decades be any reliable indicator of political feeling. In the first place the evidence of attachment to the cult is too exiguous to provide the basis of any firm quantitative judgements. Secondly, as McKenna points out, the cult appears to have become *more popular under Henry V*, although this too may simply be an impression conveyed by the fortuitous survival of evidence. In any case such popularity is less likely to be evidence of increasing opposition to Henry V than reflection of this king's far more conciliatory attitude and his relaxation of restraints on the cult. Finally to see this cult in terms of political opposition alone neglects the strength of spirituality and local feeling which it *surely demonstrates*.

Perhaps a more revealing way of discovering the nature of the attachment shown to Scrope lies in a consideration of the motives of those who appear to have promoted or supported the cult. It was members of the vicars choral from York Minster who seem

159. J.W. McKenna, 'Popular Canonisation as Political Propaganda : The Cult of Archbishop Scrope', *Speculum*, 45 (1970), pp. 608-23.

to have laid the foundations of the cult by bringing Scrope's body back for burial. It is highly likely that members of the chapter and especially the vicars choral actually promoted the cult, for they were clearly ordered not to do so by the king and the national church hierarchy. There can certainly be no doubt that the Minster authorities had much to gain from Scrope's cult. By 1415 the Minster was receiving at least £73 8s per annum from offerings made at the tomb, which was enough to pay for the wages and materials of eight masons. In 1419 receipts from the tomb had reached a minimum of £150.⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ In 1409 the chapter had decided to use all the offerings at Scrope's tomb for the rebuilding of the choir. This incidentally indicates that by 1409 the cult had been institutionalised and was surely no longer considered a threat.⁽¹⁶¹⁾ By the reign of Henry V a keeper of Scrope's tomb had been appointed, which again indicates that the cult was now accepted and no longer considered a political threat.

Not all the offerings received at Scrope's tomb were in cash. An inventory of the shrine's goods made in 1509 gives a wide range of the gifts made by pilgrims. Amongst the offerings were personal bequests including rings as well as devotional images. However the majority of objects recorded were feet, legs, teeth, eyes and hands.⁽¹⁶²⁾ These presumably were representations of the parts of the body which pilgrims hoped that Scrope would heal. It would appear then that many of those visited Scrope's tomb for highly personal or devotional reasons, without any covert political purpose. Significantly, among the items held in the common chest was an offering of a Lancastrian SS collar made at Scrope's tomb by Sir Nicholas Bowet. It would appear that devotion to Scrope's cult could transcend political affiliations

160. York Minster Fabric Rolls, ed. J. Raine, (Surtees Society, XXXV, 1858), pp.32, 36.

161. ibid., pp. 37, 200.

162. ibid., p.235.

or was in fact not indicative of them.⁽¹⁶³⁾

Support for the veneration of Archbishop Scrope also appears to have come from another quarter. On 7 February 1407 a petition was sent to Henry IV by Thomas Serebarn, Thomas Fetherstane, Richard Middilton and John Peek sergeants of the city of York, complaining that they had twice been ejected from office for enquiring, on the king's orders, in York and the surrounding area, into who was making offerings at Scrope's tomb.⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ They also added that they had been wearing the king's livery. The king's attempts to find out who was visiting the tomb appear to have backfired. Henry replied to the petition by demanding the restoration of the officials and ordering that the mayor and aldermen should choose officers acceptable to the king. The king had clearly been unable to secure the return of officers personally loyal to him, symbolised by the wearing of royal livery. The response of the mayor and aldermen was perhaps predictable: at the next election of the sergeants they were forced to take a new oath, that they would not appeal against the election of those who might replace them to anyone except the mayor on pain of paying £100.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ Protection for those who visited Scrope's tomb was a by-product of the city's sustained attempts to appoint its own officials without royal interference.

Until about 1409 sanctions were taken against the cult and the king did try to suppress it. Thereafter it received little royal attention and the cult flourished at a local level. The king's change in attitude may have been something to do with his negotiations with

163. ibid., p.235.

164. York Memorandum Book, I, ed. M. Sellers pp. 236-38.

165. ibid., p.238.

the Pope. Very soon after Scrope's execution Henry dispatched an envoy to the Pope to secure his pardon and to facilitate the appointment of the next archbishop. The Pope remained un-cooperative for several years refusing to allow Henry's preferred candidate to become the next northern primate. In these circumstances a cult flourishing at York around Scrope's memory would have become politically embarrassing for Henry in his dealings with the Papacy.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ When the issue was eventually settled by 1408, there was no need to suppress the cult any further. Attachment to the cult remained strong throughout the fifteenth century independent of dynastic changes. Indeed, it was precisely because the cult was already well established that it could be exploited by the Yorkists. It must, however, be admitted that it was probably the more politically auspicious circumstances of the Yorkist monarchy which brought Scrope closer to canonisation under Edward IV than previously.

It is accordingly not necessary to seek an exclusively political explanation for the veneration of Archbishop Scrope. The loyalty he commanded was evident before his death and it was no doubt predictable that the citizens of York would feel a sense of loyalty to his memory. More generally it is impossible not to see his cult in the context of the spirituality of an age which displayed a great enthusiasm for relics and saints. Moreover Yorkshire itself displayed a particular attachment to local saints, for example St. John of Beverley and St. John of Bridlington. The latter was the last Englishman to be canonised before the Reformation and Scrope himself had been actively involved in the proceedings and presided over the translation of his relics. The cult of Richard Scrope, like those of the previously mentioned saints was an aspect of the regional identity of this part of the north. It was this perhaps which Henry V was attempting to overcome when he ascribed his victory to the intervention of St. John of Bridlington, demonstrating that the cults of saints originating in popular piety, clearly had their political uses.

166. R. Davies, 'After the Death of Archbishop Scrope', pp. 40-74.

In the context of a study of the Scrope family the career of Archbishop Richard Scrope raises several important points. He was uniquely and outstandingly successful in his ecclesiastical career and at least some of this success must have been due to his membership of a noble family for aristocratic connections undoubtedly still played a part in promotion in the episcopal bench. The contribution which the archbishop was, however, able to make during his lifetime to enhancing the family's position is more difficult to measure, except in terms of the practical support which he was able to offer his nephews. It is striking that the primate's rebellion and execution in 1405 had no discernible effect on the family's position, as will become especially apparent in the following chapter. Although the archbishop received no support from his kinsmen in 1405, however, they were clearly neither embarrassed nor afraid to identify with his cult. In 1418, Stephen Scrope archdeacon of Richmond, remembered his uncle 'qui mihi in vita sua manus porrexit adjutrices' and asked to be buried next to him in the St. Stephen's chapel, York Minster.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ Thereafter several members of the Scropes of Masham requested to be buried there including John, fourth lord Masham and his eldest son John, and this chapel became 'vulgariter vocata Scrop Chapell'.⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ Far from causing his family any difficulties it would appear that Richard Scrope by his death had added to the dignity of his kinsmen.

167. Testamenta Eboracensia, I, ed. J. Raine, p.385.

168. Testamenta Eboracensia, II, ed. J. Raine, pp.160-61, 184-85.

CHAPTER SIX

AFTER THE DEATH OF THE ARCHBISHOP : THE SCROPE FAMILY IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

By the early fifteenth century the Scropes of Masham and Bolton were securely established among the leading Yorkshire baronial families, a position which was reflected in their continuing involvement in national political life. However, the vicissitudes of fifteenth century national politics were to prove a challenging and difficult experience for the Scropes, in a way not untypical of the fortunes of many of their contemporaries. The executions of three members of the family between 1399 and 1415 serve as an indication of the difficulties which the family had to confront. This chapter will examine two specific problems experienced by the family after the death of Archbishop Scrope. The first was the involvement of Henry lord Scrope of Masham in the Southampton plot of 1415, and the enduring implications of his forfeiture for treason of that year for the Masham branch's estates and position. The second was a more general problem which was common to most noble families, that of dynastic failure together with the difficult question of the survival of dowagers and their re-marriage. These problems were acutely felt by the Scropes of Bolton and a cadet branch of the Bolton Scropes which became established at Castle Combe in Wiltshire. During the course of this chapter it will become clear that dynastic problems meant that the Scropes of Bolton were unable to play a full role in national politics again until the 1470's. For this reason the political activities of the Scropes of Masham in the fifteenth century have been considered to merit more attention.

A. Riches and Rebellion : The Career of Henry Scrope, Third Lord Masham, c. 1403-1415

Of all the members of the Scrope family in the fifteenth century after Archbishop Scrope much the most prominent was Henry Scrope, third lord Masham, whose career is an excellent illustration both of the profits and the penalties of involvement in national politics during the early Lancastrian period. Our knowledge of Henry's life prior to 1399 is negligible. He was born about 1373, but almost the only reference to him before the accession of Henry IV occurs in August 1390 when Richard II granted him £20 towards his expenses "in lately coming from Barbary"; but he was in receipt of a royal annuity of £40 from 3 October 1397⁽¹⁾. During the reign of Richard II, there is a possibility that Henry Scrope like Richard, first lord Bolton, was sympathetic towards Thomas Duke of Gloucester, for Henry asked for masses to be said for the Duke's soul in his will of 1415, and he bequeathed to the bishop of Winchester a small Portoforium given to him by the duke⁽²⁾. There is no evidence of a close relationship between Richard II and Henry Scrope, a factor which may help to account for Henry's success under Henry IV.

As the eldest son of Sir Stephen of Masham, Scrope was eventually to inherit the Masham estates but he had to wait until his father's death in December 1405. As it is not clear what his financial resources were before this date, he was fortunate to marry, on 11 July 1398, Philippa de Brienne, a substantial west country co-heiress, who brought with her property in Devon, Dorset and Somerset⁽³⁾. Like his

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1. F. Devon, Issues of the Exchequer Henry III to Henry VI, p. 245. C.P.R. 1399-1401, p.63. P.R.O. E 404/16/184; E 404/14/356.
 2. T. Rymer, Foedera, iv, p. 131.
 3. Cal. Reg. Scrope, 2, ed. Swanson, p.1. C.C.R. 1369-99, p.376.

cousins, the Scropes of Bolton, Henry did not, as might be expected, marry into an influential northern family. In this instance it seems that the potential financial gains from the match outweighed the influence of local and territorial ties.

Throughout his ensuing career, Henry Scrope remained steadfastly loyal to Henry IV. He had entered royal service before 1403 when he was already a king's knight. Certainly by that time he was in the king's service in Wales, presumably serving under Henry, Prince of Wales, and in 1403 he was given the custody of Laugharne castle, Carmarthenshire and fought against the Percies at the battle of Shrewsbury, after which he received property forfeited by the rebels⁽⁴⁾. Henry was still serving in Wales in 1406 when he received livery of his father's inheritance. For the next three years Henry Scrope's activities are unclear but he may have remained in Wales. In 1408 he was appointed to some minor commissions in the north, but these were trivial compared with the appointments he was about to receive⁽⁵⁾.

From 1408 onwards Scrope was particularly active in the diplomatic embassies of both Henry IV and his son. The first of these embassies was made in 1408, when Scrope accompanied Philippa, the king's daughter, to Denmark for her forthcoming marriage⁽⁶⁾. In the year following his Danish expedition Scrope was sent to Paris to negotiate with the French ambassadors. His stay was a lengthy one since he received expenses of £120⁽⁷⁾. Scrope's diplomatic career was interrupted when in January 1410 he was appointed Treasurer of England. Managing Henry IV's finances was not an enviable task and Scrope remained in office for about a year. During that time he

4. C.P.R. 1401-5, pp.298, 385. C.C.R. 1402-5, p.111.

5. C.C.R. 1405-9, pp.341, 408.

6. P.R.O. E 403/596. On February 4 1409 Scrope was paid £82, the balance of his expenses for his expedition to Denmark.

7. P.R.O. E403/599.

presided over the farming out of royal lands. There is no doubt that Scrope made sure he was not out of pocket during his tenure of office. He ensured that all fees and annuities due to him were amongst the first to be paid. He appears to have received substantial sums of money in his capacity as Treasurer. For the period 6 January 1410 to 31 March he paid himself in fees and increments the sum of £115 10s 2d. On 23 February 1411 he received £100 for his wages. On 7 May 1411 he received £8 1s 11d from his fee as Treasurer of 100 marks. In addition he received £170 19s 3d out of a £300 increment. He also obtained regular payments of his £40 annuity and his wife's dower share of an annuity worth £94 8s 9d. Among other sums received by Scrope was £50 paid to him by the bishop of London. In 1410 the council ordered 1000 marks to be paid to Scrope and the earl of Warwick from the subsidy of four counties. It seems likely that this was the repayment of a loan. In 1411 Scrope received payments amounting to £397 14s 5d; of which £133 6s 8d was 'a special regard for his costs'. There seems to be no way to gauge what these costs may have been but there is no doubt that while he was Treasurer Scrope was receiving very large sums of money⁽⁸⁾.

Scrope was in fact an extremely wealthy man. He probably had an income from land of about £600 per annum⁽⁹⁾. The greatest testimony to his wealth must be his will and the inventory of his goods made on his death. His will lists numerous gifts in cash to religious houses, relatives and members of his household, while the inventory of his goods enumerates many books and hundreds of ecclesiastical vestments.

In 1415 Henry V summoned former members of Henry Scrope's household and interviewed them concerning the possessions of Lord Masham. Robert Newton described as a former 'decanus capelle' of Henry Scrope, and by 1415 a canon of Westminster Abbey, declared that

8. P.R.O. E 403/606, 608, 609.

9. C. Ross, 'Yorkshire Baronage', p.447. In 1406 however, Scrope's inherited lands were valued at £305 3s 3 3/4d, P.R.O. E 136 57/6.

Scrope had at least 120 great and small ecclesiastical vestments. Newton also stated that in 1411 when Scrope was Treasurer he bought many jewels and 'apparatus capelle'. Thomas Blase, formerly steward of lord Scrope's household declared that Scrope had six dozen ('duodenas') silver vessels⁽¹⁰⁾.

Another indication of Henry's wealth lies in the £2,000 settlement he hoped to impose on his second wife Joan in lieu of her claim on his estate⁽¹¹⁾. In 1413 Scrope requested a commission of oyer and terminer to investigate a raid on one of his main residences at Faxfleet, in the East Riding, and at his castle at Sandal, where he claimed that John de Boteler and John de Newerk seized goods to the value of £5,000. Even allowing for some exaggeration, this gives some impression of Scrope's own estimate of the value of his possessions. Obviously Scropes revenues came from several sources. Clearly his income from land was a good basis for his fortune, but neither Stephen, lord Scrope's father, nor his heirs seem to have been as rich as himself and there is no evidence to suggest that he augmented the landed inheritance he received from his father.

However, lord Henry Scrope's marriages must have been very profitable, even if the resources of his wives were not always immediately available to him. Philippa de Brienne (whom Henry married in 1398) came of age in 1400; but on her death in 1407 her sister was found to be her heir and presumably secured her property, for none was recorded in Scrope's possession when he died⁽¹³⁾. He may initially have tried to hold onto part of the inheritance for in 1407 Sir Robert

10. C.L. Kingsford, 'Two Forfeitures in the Year of Agincourt' Archaeologia, LXX (1918-20), pp. 71-100. P.O.P.C, II, p.182.

11. Rymer, Foedera, iv, p. 131.

12. C.P.R. 1413-16, p.65.

13. C.C.R. 1399-1402, p.77; P.R.O. C 137/59.

Lovell, husband of Philippa's sister, made a recognisance to Henry of 1000 marks to be levied on lands in Somerset⁽¹⁴⁾. Four years later however, in 1411, Scrope married as his second wife Joan, the widow of the duke of York, one of the wealthiest English dowagers then available, but who after two marriages was still childless. Henry himself had no heir of his own blood⁽¹⁵⁾. It may be that Henry's marriage with the duchess of York brought Scrope into contact with those members of the nobility who were still not reconciled to the Lancastrians. However it is not apparent that at this time Scrope was anything but loyal to the king; and no doubt the marriage was contracted largely for financial reasons. Unfortunately Scrope had difficulty in acquiring access to all of Joan's property to which he was entitled. In 1412 the Duke of York was permitted to alter the entail on the lordship of Tynedale in favour of Sir Thomas Grey of Heton and his son Thomas, who had married Isabel, daughter of the Earl of Cambridge. Isabel was now heiress to two thirds of the lordship, the other third being held by Scrope's wife Joan in dower. Grey however, seems to have refused to give Scrope's wife her share and since the lordship was worth £133 6s 8d per annum it was clearly valuable. Scrope obtained a writ of sub poena against Grey for the return of the land but it is not clear whether he was successful⁽¹⁶⁾.

Apart from these traditional sources of wealth it seems likely that Scrope expanded his resources through financial loans. The large payments made to him while Treasurer exceeded by far the Treasurer's usual fee of 100 marks per annum. Scrope was probably not just a royal creditor either. On his death large sums of money belonging to him were found in the hands of London merchants, to a total of as

14. C.C.R. 1405-9, p.245.

15. Complete Peerage, XI, p.568.

16. L.S. Woodger, 'Henry Bourghier' p.183. C.P.R. 1408-13, p.399. P.R.O. C 1 6/222.

much as £673 9s 4d⁽¹⁷⁾. Moreover Scrope and the earl of Arundel jointly lent the Earl of March 10,000 marks to pay for his marriage in 1414⁽¹⁸⁾. It would seem that it was these loans which were the source of Scrope's wealth and that it was during his tenure of office as Treasurer of England that his fortune was truly established.

In managing his own financial affairs Scrope also appears to have been quite business-like. His offer to settle £2,000 on his wife Joan in lieu of her dower share was both practical and presumably economical, given that she could expect to receive about £200 per annum as her share of his estates. He also arranged with his mother to buy out her dower share of his inheritance for an annuity of 300 marks per annum, thus leaving his estates intact and unencumbered. It was all the more unfortunate for the future of the Scrope family that Lord Henry could not provide an heir to benefit from these arrangements⁽¹⁹⁾.

The inventory of Henry Lord Scrope's goods exemplifies an aristocratic love of display. Amongst his most valuable possessions were his parliamentary robes and many robes in his favourite colours of red and black. Scrope's jewellery was so valuable that Henry V kept it all for himself after the lord of Masham's disgrace. Scrope's consciousness of his own high status was reflected in his desire that only his unfurred clothes should be distributed among his servants, in line with the sumptuary regulations. So great was lord Henry's wealth and status that he anticipated burial in York Minster in an alabaster tomb, which might

17. P.R.O. E 403/622.

18. T.B. Pugh, 'The Southampton Plot of 1415', in Kings and Nobles in the Later Middle Ages, ed. R.A. Griffiths and J. Sherborne (Gloucester, 1986) p.77.

19. C.C.R. 1413-19, p.229.

have rivalled those of the Nevilles and Percies surviving at Durham Cathedral and Beverley Minster⁽²⁰⁾. In fact it is surprising that Scrope was not promoted to the ranks of the higher nobility for his income was probably sufficient to maintain an earl's estate.

In religious matters Scrope seems to have been in the van of contemporary tastes. Amongst his possessions recorded at his death were found the writings of the Yorkshire mystic Richard Rolle, the Incendium Amoris and Iudica Me Deus, both of which he bequeathed to Lord Fitz Hugh. He also owned copies of the Revelations of St. Bridget, The Prick of Conscience and a primer with the matins of the Blessed Virgin Mary in English⁽²¹⁾. He was exceptionally generous in his gifts to religious houses, but more especially to hermits and anchorites in the north. He singled out for special attention Bridlington Priory, with which his family had been associated for two centuries. He left to the tomb of St. John of Bridlington a necklace which he had often worn himself, of gold with 'cignis albis' and small flowers; only to his wife did Scrope bequeath an item of similar personal value. In addition he left to the prior of Bridlington a pair of amber Paternosters with a silver crucifix and 100s to the priory to pray for his soul. Scrope's attachment to Bridlington Priory may have been part of a family tradition but was probably stimulated by the newly established cult of St. John of Bridlington, who had been canonised in 1401 largely through the efforts of Archbishop Scrope, originally at the instance of Richard II.

In the preamble to his will Scrope reflected on the transitory and ephemeral nature of human existence, in terminology which superficially resembles the sentiments expressed in the wills of the so-called Lollard knights. However, it is certain that Scrope did not write his will himself, for it was composed by John Bilton once clerk

20. Rymer, Foedera, iv, p.131.

21. Ibid., p.131.

of the kitchen ('coquine') to the duchess of York⁽²²⁾. Other aspects of the will, particularly its lack of overt display, with little emphasis put on torches and attendants at the funeral, again might suggest a certain resemblance to the views associated with the Lollards. It is extremely unlikely however that Scrope had any sympathy for the Lollards⁵. In January 1413 Scrope was appointed to an anti-Lollard commission⁽²³⁾. And according to the testimony of others involved in the Southampton plot, Scrope was firmly against an alliance with Lollards in general and Oldcastle in particular⁽²⁴⁾. In religious matters Scrope was apparently in sympathy with recent religious trends which placed greater emphasis on the individual's direct experience of God; but there is no suggestion at all that he took this to an heretical extreme.

The accession of Henry V made little difference to Scrope's career. From 1413 onwards Scrope held more appointments on the commissions of the peace than ever before, not just in the North and West Ridings, but also in Essex and Lincolnshire⁽²⁵⁾. Scrope also resumed diplomatic activities on behalf on the royal government. In November 1413 he was sent to Calais to negotiate with ambassadors from France and Flanders; and in February 1414 he went to Burgundy, while in the previous month he had been sent to Paris. In June 1414 he was sent on another embassy to the Duke of Burgundy; and in February 1415

22. Scrope's will begins, 'Ego Henricus, Dominus le Scrop, sciens quia Homo natus sum de muliere, brevi vivens tempore, repletus multis miseriis, qui quasi Flos egressus sum et contritus, et fugio velut Umbra, et nunquam in eodem statu permaneo ..' Rymer, Foedera, IV, p.131. P.O.P.C., ii, p.182.

23. C.P.R. 1413-1416, p.175.

24. The Forty-Third Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records Appendix I (London, 1882), no. 5, p.591.

25. C.P.R. 1413-16, pp.418, 420, 425, 426.

he made yet another expedition to Burgundy⁽²⁶⁾. Scrope was indeed partly responsible for the successful negotiation of the Burgundian alliance so crucial to Henry V's later victories in France. In May 1413 the king renewed to him a grant of Hampstead and Hendon, 'for the harbouring of his men, servants and horses', since Scrope was so frequently required to attend Parliament and the Council⁽²⁷⁾. Outwardly Scrope appeared to be perfectly loyal to Henry V, and had performed homage to the king only a few days after his accession⁽²⁸⁾. Henry V by no means neglected Scrope and he appears to have been a valued and trusted member of the Council.

It is accordingly all the more surprising and even startling that Scrope should have been implicated in the Southampton Plot of 1415. Previously there appear to have been no signs of disaffection on his part, except that he absented himself from a meeting of the Council on May 27 1415, for no apparent reason⁽²⁹⁾. However, in the spring of 1415 he had made an indenture with the king to serve in the forthcoming expedition to France. It seems likely that Scrope genuinely anticipated going to France since he made his will at about the same time. In his will he bequeathed the king an image of the Virgin and asked him to be a good lord to his mother, his wife and his heir⁽³⁰⁾. This may make Scrope's later behaviour seem full of duplicity. Yet he is unlikely to have provided advance warning of his intentions to the king, if indeed he was nurturing them at this point; and unfortunately, if perhaps predictably, no clues survive as to Scrope's reasons for collaborating with his fellow conspirators.

26. P.R.O. E 403/614, 619, 617.

27. C.P.R. 1413-16, p.17. P.R.O. E 403/614.

28. C.C.R. 1413-19, p. 167.

29. P.O.P.C., II, p.167.

30. Rymer, Foedera, IV, p.131.

In fact the Southampton Plot remained just that. Quite apart from the fact that its complexity made success unlikely, it was betrayed before it ever got off the ground. It seems to have consisted of a series of meetings initiated by the earl of Cambridge to rally support for a coup in which Henry V would be replaced by the Earl of March, the most plausible pretender to the throne. The plan, analysed in J.H. Wylie's The Reign of Henry V, and more recently by T.B. Pugh, was highly ambitious and envisaged calling on the traditional centres of opposition to Lancastrian monarchy in Wales and the north in England to overcome Henry as he was leaving for France. It may have been impractical; but the fact that the plot actually occurred at all suggests that Henry V still had some way to go towards conciliating his nobility. Henry's treatment of the rebels after the plot was betrayed to him was ruthless; such harshness was necessary in order to safeguard his departure for France.

But why did Henry lord Scrope, who seems to have had rather more to lose than gain, participate in the conspiracy at all? Scrope himself claimed that he joined the plotters to discover the details of their plans and to quash the proposed revolt⁽³¹⁾. This seems implausible: Scrope had probably learned of the plot by the end of May; but as it was not betrayed by the earl of March until the very end of August, he had had more than enough time to uncover the plot. The initiative to join the plot probably came from Cambridge who allegedly approached Scrope; no doubt he may have thought that Scrope was a potential rebel because of the execution of Scrope's uncle the archbishop. It is however doubtful whether Scrope still felt any sensitivity about his uncle's death. Admittedly he remembered to have masses said for his uncle's soul in his will, but since he made similar arrangements for Richard II and Henry IV it seems unlikely that any special significance should be attached to this bequest. As has already been noted, Scrope showed no discernible sympathy for his uncle's cause in 1405, in fact rather the reverse. On this basis it is difficult to agree with the recent statement by Dr. T.B. Pugh that,

31. D.K.R., 43, p.591

'The past misfortunes of his family since the Lancastrian usurpation in 1399 made it impossible for Henry, lord Scrope to avoid becoming entangled in the Southampton Plot of 1415'(32). In fact Scrope's behaviour may best be explained by emphasising the close ties between the plotters who were linked together by marriage and financial arrangements. The earl of Cambridge was the earl of March's brother-in-law; Scrope had married Cambridge's brother's widow; Grey had married Cambridge's daughter; Scrope and Grey had a joint interest in the lordship of Tynedale, (admittedly one over which they were in dispute); and Scrope and Arundel had made March a loan of 10,000 marks to pay Henry V for March's marriage. It is interesting to note that none of these individuals are referred to in Scrope's will but it seems that he could hardly avoid being drawn in to the conspiracy because of his family ties with this group. Contemporaries however, noted the apparent closeness of this group to Henry V, according to the Gesta

'Richardum comitem Cantebrigie, consanguineum suum germanum, Henricum dominum Lescrop, de sibi magis domesticis et qui secretis regiis vix fuit alicui tercius in regno, necon in Thomam Grey, militem famosum et nobilem si non eum hec prodicionis macula violasset Quorum crudelis demencia et demens crudeliter corrupta libidine dominandi set pocius odore promissorum use nunerum Gallicorum'(33).

Although it is relatively clear why Scrope became implicated in the Plot it is more difficult to explain his role. Cambridge's confession later exonerated lord Scrope of blame, while Thomas lord Grey fully implicated him. T.B. Pugh accepts the view that Scrope tried to discourage the plotters after learning of the plot. However, after his attempt to dissuade them had failed it is not clear

32. T.B. Pugh, 'The Southampton Plot', p.82.

33. Gesta Henrici Quinti, ed. F. Taylor and J.S. Roskell (Oxford, 1975), p.18.

why Scrope did not then betray the plot to the king. His reasons were probably complex. A major motive may have been the loan which he had made to the earl of March. Henry V had exacted a marriage fine from the young earl in an attempt to secure political obedience from him. March clearly feared, though the precise grounds are unclear, that in 1415 the king wanted to 'undo' him. Scrope on the other hand had apparently always been sympathetic and friendly towards the young earl. According to the confession made by Thomas lord Grey the earl of March had declared 'yat ye Erle of Arundell and ye lorde ye Scrope had done wil to him and gefen him gode dais'⁽³⁴⁾. If there were fears for the safety of March - and he was undoubtedly placed under considerable pressure by Henry V - it is possible that Scrope joined the conspiracy because this seemed the best way to protect his 'special relationship' with the earl. Despite the impression of Scrope's closeness to Henry V conveyed by the author of the Gesta Henrici Quinti it is probable that lord Masham had little reason to feel particularly loyal to Henry V. He had received no outstanding grants or favours from the king who was actually disinclined to distribute gifts. Indeed the annuity of which lord Henry had received since 1399 was no longer paid under Henry V⁽³⁵⁾. For Henry, prospects may well have seemed brighter under the younger, more easily influenced Earl of March, described by one contemporary as nothing but a 'hogge', that is a young child⁽³⁶⁾. Finally, perhaps it would have been difficult for Scrope to betray plotters to whom he was so closely related.

34. D.K.R., 43, p.582.

35. G. Harriss, 'The King and his Magnates' in Henry V: The Practice of Kingship, ed., G. Harris, (Oxford, 1985), p.49. Henry's annuity of £40 was paid for the last time on 1 May 1411 - P.R.O. E 404/26/315.

36. D.K.R., 43, p.582.

Scrope's involvement was of course disastrous for him. The plotters were executed on 6 August 1415 and subsequently Scrope's head was sent to York for display on Micklegate Bar. This was a calculated revenge on a famous Yorkshire family who owned several tenements in Micklegate. Scrope's jewellery and goods were quickly seized for the king's use and his lands were dispersed⁽³⁷⁾. On his death-bed seven years later Henry V is said to have regretted the retention of several of lord Scrope's entailed lands and ordered that they should be restored to his heirs⁽³⁸⁾. However, in 1415 the economic and territorial power base of the family seemed completely destroyed.

The forfeiture for treason of the third lord Scrope of Masham had no discernible effect on the position of his kinsmen, the lords of Castle Bolton. They, however, had problems of a different kind which were nonetheless profound. Before examining the restoration of the fortunes of the Scropes of Masham the contrasting position of the Scropes of Bolton will be examined.

B. Dynastic Difficulties and the Problem of Marriage : The Scropes of Bolton and the Scropes of Castle Combe in the Fifteenth Century

Forfeiture for treason, like that which the Scropes suffered in 1415, was the most serious hazard to befall any noble family. Almost equally destructive, however, and much more common was the debilitating effect on the family's political and economic power caused by long minorities and long lived dowagers. The dynastic problems which affected the fortunes of the Scropes of Bolton, began as the fourteenth century came to an end.

Richard Scrope, the first lord Bolton survived the execution of his eldest son William by only four years and was succeeded by his second son Roger. The second lord Bolton's extremely brief career is very hard to evaluate. He spent most of his career in the service of

37. C.P.R. 1413-16, p.65.

38. Henry V and the Practice of Kingship, ed. Harris, p.50.

other members of his family, for example when he acted as his elder brother's lieutenant as keeper of the Isle of Man⁽³⁹⁾. In 1401 he was jointly appointed keeper of Roxburgh castle with his brother Stephen⁽⁴⁰⁾ and in 1403 he was invited to attend the king's Council, but before 16 December 1403 he was already dead⁽⁴¹⁾. He was survived by his wife Margaret Tiptoft and their young son Richard. His death, so swiftly after that of his father, plunged his family into its first minority for more than half a century. The only surviving male adult member of the Scropes of Bolton was Roger's brother Sir Stephen Scrope, who had been a household knight of Richard II, and was, because of this, never able to play a full part in political life again. In 1400 Sir Stephen was accused by John Kyghley of trying to restore Richard II⁽⁴²⁾. There is no doubt that this was an attempt by Kyghley to exploit Scrope's political vulnerability at a time when the two men were in dispute over the manor of Bingbury in Kent. Nevertheless Scrope's possessions were briefly seized by the Crown at this time⁽⁴³⁾. Scrope was able to serve the new king, but only at a distance, for on 7 July 1401 he went to Ireland in the company of Thomas of Lancaster and died there of the plague in 1409⁽⁴⁴⁾. The wardship of Stephen's nephew, Richard, Roger's heir, then passed to Queen Joan and the earl of Westmorland⁽⁴⁵⁾.

39. C.P.R. 1396-99, p.498.

40. P.O.P.C., I, p.178.

41. P.O.P.C., II, p.85. P.R.O. C 137/58 no. 49.

42. C.P.R. 1399-1401, p.401.

43. C.C.R. 1399-1402, pp.47, 36, 519, 555.

44. C.P.R. 1399-1401, p.507. C.C.R. 1409-13, p.208.

45. C.P.R. 1401-5, p.329. P.R.O. E 326 no. B 8633.

By 1418 Richard Scrope had married Margaret Neville, lord Ralph's sixth daughter by his first marriage⁽⁴⁶⁾. The third lord Bolton like many of his fourteenth century ancestors embarked on a military career. On 9 May 1418 he was retained by the king 'supra mare' towards the north and was paid over £1,000 for the wages of his retinue of one baron, one knight, 118 men at arms and 240 archers⁽⁴⁷⁾. By 10 October 1420 however Richard Scrope was dead having participated in the siege of Rouen. His will, written in English, asked for the good lordship of the Duke of Clarence and he appointed Marmaduke Lumley as his executor. Lumley was his cousin and a future bishop of Lincoln, and Treasurer of England⁽⁴⁸⁾. Custody of the Bolton estates was subsequently granted to Richard Neville, earl of Salisbury⁽⁴⁹⁾. Richard Scrope was survived by two infant sons (and two illegitimate sons). His heir Henry, the fourth lord Bolton, did not attain his majority until 1440. It is not surprising therefore that the Scropes of Bolton played little part in national political life in this period.

Margaret Neville survived her husband the third lord Scrope by forty-three years and re-married an obscure esquire from Suffolk. This raises the question of the role which a medieval dowager played in the fortunes of her family. It has recently been argued by Dr. G. Harriss that noble impoverishment, such as it was, was not due to, 'Falling rents, higher wages, and deserted holdings', but that, 'much more devastating was the existence of dowagers - mothers and even grandmothers - in whose hands one third of the young lord's patrimony ... remained until her death'⁽⁵⁰⁾. The most famous example is that

46. Complete Peerage, XI, p.540.

47. P.R.O. E 403/636.

48. Test. Ebor., IV, ed. J. Raine, pp.1-3. C.F.R. 1413-22, p.361.

49. C. Ross, 'Yorkshire Baronage', p.237.

50. Harriss, Henry V, p.70.

of the Mowbray widows who deprived their heirs of lands for several generations. It was a problem recognised many years ago by the late K.B. McFarlane who cited in particular the example of the Neville widows, ungallantly described by Horace Walpole as 'antediluvian dowagers whose carcasses miraculously resisted the wet'⁽⁵¹⁾. It is surprising therefore that little provision was made to protect estates against this eventuality. In a period when landowners were employing uses and entails to secure the integrity and descent of their estates, often at the expense of female heirs, it is striking that the dowager should apparently persist in causing problems. Part of the explanation may be that, even in marriages contracted for unemotional reasons, there may have developed an affection towards the partner and a sense of responsibility towards them. Heiresses of course also brought property with them and were entitled to retain some of their estate after their husband's death.

In practice there were ways of evading the widow's right to a third of her husband's property or at least minimising the dangers. Henry Scrope, third lord Masham, had tried to protect his property against the claims of widowhood in two ways. He bought his mother's dower share of property out in return for an annuity, thus actually ruining her by his rebellion in 1415⁽⁵²⁾. As has already been noted, in his will he also bought off his wife Joan, by persuading her to agree to accept a lump sum of £2,000. For the most part however no such arrangements were made to protect family estates against the diversion of landed wealth to surviving widows.

It was not simply the existence of dowagers which was damaging to the heir's interests, even if full access to the patrimony was obstructed. In some instances, for example during a minority it may

51. McFarlane, The English Nobility, p.65. R. Archer, 'Rich Old Ladies : the Problem of Late Medieval Dowagers' in Property and Politics: Essays in Later Medieval History, ed., A.J. Pollard (Gloucester, 1984), pp.15-36.

52. P.R.O. C 145/294; C.C.R. 1413-19, p.229.

have been better for the widow to manage the property than for it to be in the hands of the heir's guardian. At least the widow would wish to maintain the property for her eventual heir, and as long as the estates were efficiently managed, there was little cause for complaint. The Clare estates in the fourteenth century, for example, were extremely well managed by Elizabeth de Burgh⁽⁵³⁾.

One of the graver problems created by noble widows was that they did not often remain widows for long. It had been established by Magna Carta that a widow did not have to re-marry unless she consented to it. At the same time it was also laid down as a general principle that women should marry without being disparaged. Unfortunately where a noble woman exercised some sort of free choice in the matter she often married someone who was considered to be her inferior, very frequently a member of her husband's household, since presumably these were the men she most came into contact with. Controlling the marriage of these women was extremely difficult. From the family point of view marriage to someone of lower rank obviously meant loss of status in a status-oriented society, together with a further drain on income with the establishment of another household, particularly if the new spouse had nothing to offer himself.

The mismanagement of the remarriage of widows accordingly caused many aristocratic families severe problems in the fifteenth century. One striking example affected the Scrope family itself, in the person of Lady Margaret Scrope, widow of Sir Roger Scrope, second lord Scrope of Bolton. In 1405, very soon after the death of her husband, Margaret, one of the Tiptoft co-heiresses, was indicted in the

53. R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the March of Wales, 1282-1400 (Oxford, 1978) p.42.

ecclesiastical courts at York for breach of promise⁽⁵⁴⁾. At first sight she was being indicted by two men, both of whom were trying to enforce a marriage contract with her; namely John fitz John, alias Currant and domicellus, and John Harwood. But were these individuals perhaps the same man? It seems likely, since the indictment proceeded in Harwood's name. Whether she had been married to Harwood depended on her replies to certain questions put to her, by means of a procedure familiar in such matrimonial cases. Margaret was asked whether she had promised to marry Harwood, had consented to marry him, had gone through a ceremony with him, had consummated the marriage and whether it had been widely known that this was the case. Since Margaret answered in the affirmative to all these questions, it looked as if she had no basis for withdrawing from the marriage, if indeed she wished to do so. John Tibbay, her husband's executor and a long standing servant of the family, had trouble trying to find anyone to represent Margaret since he admitted himself that she was guilty. Witnesses called to give evidence on the cause also indicated that Margaret had been very attached to Harwood. A certain Alfred Manston, domicellus, a witness for John Harwood, said that he saw Margaret at the manor of Sawston, Cambridgeshire, sighing and embracing Harwood. When asked why she was sighing she replied,

'Non est mirum me lamentaconis quia Johannes Harwod quem ultra omnes mundi creaturas maxime deligo et eius primam pro ceteris affecto iam se proponit resedere a mea comitiva et in fide qua domino nostro J^hesu Christo teneor ipse Johannes est maritus meus coram deo et hominibus et ipsum pro omnibus aliis volo habere in meum maritum'.

54. Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York, C.P. F. 15. Harwood may have been a member of Margaret's father-in-law's household. In 1400 Richard first lord Bolton bequeathed in his will a sum of money to a certain John Harewood who is listed with lord Bolton's other servants. Testamenta Eboracensia I, ed. J. Raine, p.227.

This affecting incident was said to have taken place in 1404. Exactly what happened between John and Margaret is hard to determine; perhaps there had been an affair between them followed by a clandestine marriage. Family opposition may well have provoked a collusive action between the pair to have the marriage recognised, for Margaret certainly seems to have had no grounds for denying an association with Harwood. The result of the case is lost and Harwood seems to disappear completely; but this was not the end of Margaret's tangled matrimonial adventures.

In 1420 Margaret petitioned parliament for the return of her dower lands⁽⁵⁵⁾. The petition provides a fairly detailed account of the course of events after 1405. It appeared that Margaret had been in peaceful possession of her dower lands until 1407, at about which date she married another John, this time a certain John Nixander. However, at this point John Tibbay, who had left the Scropes' service for that of Queen Joan indicted Nixander of rape in the King's bench. Unfortunately no record of the indictment has been found, but it seems most unlikely that Margaret was the victim of sexual crime. Rape usually meant abduction and was sometimes a way of forcing a reluctant family to recognise a marriage. From the family's point of view an indictment of rape was very useful. If the supposed victim could be seen to collude with her assailant, for example by marrying him, she would lose her dowry or in this case her dower lands⁽⁵⁶⁾. In fact the indictment was said to have been unsuccessful, but effectively Margaret was deprived of her lands, since her son had entered them and denied her access. It was not until his death in 1420 that she was able to petition for their return.

It is not wholly clear why there were objections to Nixander. Not much is known about him, but he can probably be identified with John Niandersergh from Niandersergh in co. Westmorland. Nixander had

55. Rot. Parl., IV, p.164.

56. J. Post, 'Sir Thomas West and the Statute of Rapes, 1382, B.I.H.R., 53 (1980), pp.24-30.

property in Westmorland and possibly in London, where he made an enfeoffment to John Harrington, his father Matthew, Guy Fairfax and Henry de Barton, citizen and skinner of London, in 1413. He obviously then had some property, which may have been worth about 300 marks per annum⁽⁵⁷⁾. Described as 'sqyer', Nixander's Westmorland property (and the fact that Margaret's own son was a ward of the Earl of Westmorland) may suggest a Neville connection. It is intriguing that Tibbay should have felt the need to protect the interests of his former patrons after he had left their service. Perhaps Nixander was an unpleasant character for in 1407 he was bound over to keep the peace, presumably after he had been indicted of rape⁽⁵⁸⁾, and he was already convicted of the murder of Gerard Burton, 'yeoman' of Westmorland⁽⁵⁹⁾. In the end the dispute between Tibbay and Nixander was a lengthy one with a violent outcome. 'On Seynt Marie Maudelyn day John Neanser, sqyer, and his men sclowen Maister John Tibbay, clerk, as he passed through Lad Lane, for the which deth the same John Neanser and iij of his men fledden into Saint Anne's chirche within Aldrick Gate; and within the same chirche they were mured up, and men of diverse wardes watched them night and day. And the forsaid John Nyanser and his men forsworen the Kynges lond, and passed through the cities of London toward Caleys in their schertes and breches, and ech of them a crosse in there hand'⁽⁶⁰⁾. It may even be that Tibbay had been aware of a threat to his life, since he made his will just a few days before his death⁽⁶¹⁾. Such was the abrupt end to the life and career of Tibbay, who had risen through service to the Scropes to become Queen Joan's chancellor and archdeacon of Huntingdon. As for Margaret, she continued to live in London where she died in 1427. Her

57. C.C.R. 1413-19, p.356.

58. C.C.R. 1405-9, p.272.

59. C.C.R. 1413-19, p.356.

60. G. Poulett Scrope, A History of Castle Combe (London, 1852) p.119.

61. P.R.O. PCC Prob. ii, B 29 Marche.

will made there provides no clues to her matrimonial adventures, for she describes herself simply as Tiptoft's daughter and Sir Roger Scrope's widow⁽⁶²⁾.

However, a much more unsatisfactory match from the Scrope's point of view, must have been that made between Margaret Scrope's sister Millicent, widow of Sir Stephen Scrope, and Sir John Fastolf. Millicent was widowed in Ireland in 1409 and very soon after married Fastolf. Sir John was at this point an insignificant figure, perhaps a member of Scrope's retinue, and this marriage was undoubtedly a prize for him. Soon after her marriage, in return for an annuity of £100, Millicent granted Fastolf a life interest on all her property⁽⁶³⁾. This not only denied her son access to her dower lands during her lifetime, but also for as long as Fastolf survived her. This arrangement was undoubtedly unjust towards Stephen Scrope, particularly since Fastolf was so long lived. He eventually died in 1460, having enjoyed Scrope's inheritance for 51 years.

The marriage of Stephen Scrope, Fastolf's stepson, emphasised what a difficult and complex business matrimonial arrangements could be with so many interests at stake. In 1410 Fastolf arranged for the wardship and marriage of his young stepson to be sold to Sir William Gascoigne, chief justice, a prominent North Riding landowner. Given that Scrope was heir to at least two Yorkshire manors, Bentley and Wighton in the Wold, and that there were North Riding connections on the part of Scrope's cousins, this might appear to have been quite a suitable match. Fastolf was paid 500 marks for the marriage and wardship. It is debateable in fact whether Scrope was a worthy partner for one of Gascoigne's daughters, for whom he was originally intended. Scrope was probably a difficult ward, for he later complained that he had been 'solde as a beste' and that consequently

62. P.R.O. PCC Prob. ii, 3 13 Luffenham.

63. G. Poulett Scrope, Castle Combe, p. 171. BL Add. MS 28, 212, fo.22. C.P.R. 1429-36, p.368.

he took 'sicknesses and was disfigured in his person'⁽⁶⁴⁾. In addition Fastolf's interest in Scrope's estates may have made Stephen a less attractive matrimonial partner than he might at first appear. At any rate Gascoigne was probably considering re-selling Scrope's marriage and Fastolf feared it might be to his ward's disparagement. In 1413 Fastolf accordingly bought back the marriage and wardship of his stepson.

Marriage was an option which Fastolf's ward could not afford to ignore. Nevertheless Fastolf had probably made too little provision for his stepson for it to be easily accomplished. In the first place, it is not clear what Scrope had to live on while he waited for his inheritance. He must have been in possession of the manor of Hever Cobham in Kent, which he sold for 500 marks - and periodically he was in possession of the valuable manor of Wighton in the Wold, which seems to have represented Scrope's marriage portion. Scrope was also temporarily in the service of the duke of Gloucester in France which presumably provided him with some income. But for the most part Scrope complained of poverty and blamed Fastolf for it. It is hard to know how impoverished Scrope really was. In 1442 he was pardoned a debt of 40 marks to Fastolf, but this in itself does not seem a very large sum⁽⁶⁵⁾. It would also appear that Fastolf permitted Scrope to live in his household, therefore helping to maintain him, even if he did try to make Scrope contribute towards his maintenance⁽⁶⁶⁾.

Sir John Fastolf himself naturally saw the main solution to Scrope's lack of income as being that *he should marry an heiress*⁽⁶⁷⁾. Predictably perhaps, Scrope's first marriage was not a happy one, and unfortunately the ancestry of his first wife Margaret is not known.

64. BL Add. MS 28, 209, fo. 21.

65. C.P.R. 1441-46, p.116.

66. BL Add. MS 28, 209, fo. 21.

67. BL Add. MS 28, 212, fo. 23.

Fastolf settled Wighton on the Wold on the couple for the life of Margaret, an action about which Scrope was later to complain. Scrope complained about the marriage itself: 'the seid mariage of necessite caused me to be bounde in siche bondes that even sithyn I have levyd in grete peyne and thought⁽⁶⁸⁾. By this marriage Scrope had a daughter, whose marriage and wardship (despite his own melancholy experience) he was later forced to sell.

Stephen Scrope's first unfortunate experience did not, however, deter him from marrying again. In 1449 he was to be found negotiating a marriage with Elizabeth Paston. The marriage had some support within the Paston family, who were widely consulted on the matter, and Elizabeth herself was quite eager, 'zyf it be so pat his londe stande cleere⁽⁶⁹⁾. One problem was whether Scrope's daughter was the heir to his estates and whether any future heirs would receive a share. Other members of the family were opposed to the match, Scrope was especially discouraged by the fact that Margery, Elizabeth's mother, would not let him see his intended. Elizabeth Clere, Elizabeth Paston's cousin was also opposed to the match: she was anxious that Elizabeth should not marry simply to leave home and thought Scrope was acceptable only if no-one better could be found. Moreover she indicated that many found it an unlikely match. It seems that it was not just the substance of Scrope's property that was at issue here, for there may have been personal objections to Stephen Scrope himself since Elizabeth Paston was said not to have minded that Scrope was

68. C.P.R. 1429-36, p.368. BL Add. MS 28, 209, fo. 21. Scrope complained that Fastolf disseised him of Wighon by a suit but the manor was clearly settled on Scrope only for the life of his wife.

69. Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, ed. N. Davis, 1, p.30.

supposedly rather 'simple'⁽⁷⁰⁾. This match did not find favour with Fastolf either, and in 1450 he announced his intention of putting an end to it⁽⁷¹⁾. Scrope's second choice was a daughter of a certain Fauconer of London, the widow of Sir Reginald Cobham, presumably a widow of some means. This match likewise came to nothing. Despite the fact that Stephen Scrope was by then almost fifty years old, Fastolf appears to have insisted on getting 500 marks for the marriage of his stepson, or the wardship of Cobham's heir. These terms were apparently unacceptable, for the marriage did not take place⁽⁷²⁾. Scrope was not, however, entirely ineligible. One of Fastolf's feoffees Sir Henry Inglose was reportedly busy about Scrope for one of his daughters⁽⁷³⁾.

By 1455 Scrope had himself successfully re-married. His second wife was a daughter of Richard Bingham, chief justice of the king's bench, a useful ally for Scrope in his attempt to wrest part of his inheritance from Fastolf. Bingham in fact petitioned Fastolf on behalf of his stepson, saying that Scrope had only 10 marks per annum to live on and asking Fastolf to let Scrope have his inheritance at farm for 300 marks per annum⁽⁷⁴⁾. In the meantime Bingham made sure that Scrope's heirs by his second wife would inherit Scrope's lands⁽⁷⁵⁾. Fastolf was not unkindly disposed towards Scrope but he did not agree to Bingham's proposition and Scrope and Bingham were still petitioning on the issue in 1459⁽⁷⁶⁾. Within a year, however,

70. Ibid., p.31.

71. Ibid., p.154.

72. BL Add. MS 28, 212, fo. 21.

73. Paston Letters, ed. Davis, 1, p.30.

74. BL Add. MS 28, 212, fo. 26.

75. Ibid., fo. 26.

76. Paston Letters, ed. Davis, II, p.181.

Fastolf had died and Scrope came into his inheritance, complaining that it had been wasted to the extent of 1,000 marks.

Although it was hard on Stephen Scrope to be deprived of his inheritance it is doubtful that this was an unmitigated disaster. First of all, despite all Scrope's complaints, he and Fastolf appear to have got on reasonably well. Scrope lived at Caistor with Fastolf, in his own apartments. Perhaps in an attempt to win favour with his stepfather, Scrope translated Les Dites des Philosophes for him. Nor is there much evidence that Scrope and Fastolf were ever on hostile terms, though Scrope may have written an occasional offensive letter to Fastolf⁽⁷⁷⁾. There is more than a suggestion that Stephen Scrope was probably a rather incompetent and wayward personality. His sudden departure from the service of the duke of Gloucester, clearly an influential patron, was inexplicable to Fastolf himself⁽⁷⁸⁾. His childhood illnesses may also have left him sickly and unhealthy, an opinion clearly held by those who had doubts about his suitability as a husband for Elizabeth Paston. Such reservations may help to explain Fastolf's continued tight grip on Scrope's estates. Not that there is any doubt that Castle Combe, which belonged to Scrope, was one of the wealthiest manors in fifteenth century England. The loss of the income from the manor to the cadet branch of the family had serious implications for the status of the family. Yet, would the manor have been so profitable, had Fastolf not geared cloth production to uniforms for the French war? It is doubtful and certainly it was

77. BL Add. MS 28, 212, fo. 23. In reply to a letter from Scrope Fastolf remarked, 'I wold not ye wrote so to none othir man for the wordys be unfyttyng but if they be betwene countre and parties as betwene an englishman and an armanake'.

78. Ibid., fo. 24. Where Fastolf noted, 'I can not se by my feble wytte in white wise it myght be more profitable for you there than it was here all things considerd'.

never again as prosperous after Fastolf's death⁽⁷⁹⁾.

In conclusion, it seems to follow there may not be a simple correlation between the survival of widows within an aristocratic family and that family's success. Much depended on the capacity of the family to deal with the position of its dowagers and in particular on the ability of the heir to the inheritance. Attempts to limit the re-marriage of widows by royal authority, also usually appear to have been misdirected. There was no certain way of preventing re-marriage. Thus although Margaret Scrope, widow of Richard Scrope, third lord Bolton agreed not to re-marry without royal licence, she certainly did re-marry, - to her esquire, William Cressener from Suffolk - and was fined £100⁽⁸⁰⁾. Perhaps the only sure guarantee against re-marriage was a decision to enter a convent, as in the case of Elizabeth, widow of Sir John, fourth lord Masham in 1455⁽⁸¹⁾.

C. Recovery and Stability : The Fortunes of the Scropes of Masham 1424-55

On Lord Henry Scrope's execution in 1415 the position of the Scropes of Masham as one of the leading Yorkshire families disintegrated immediately. The Scrope lands were dispersed. His southern and eastern estates were broken up and granted to various recipients. The Leicestershire manors of Market Harborough and Great Bowden were granted to William Porter; his Suffolk manors of Nedging and Kettlebaston were granted to the king's knight John Philippes⁽⁸²⁾.

79. E.M. Carus Wilson, 'Evidences of Industrial Growth on Some Fifteenth Century Manors', Econ. H.R., second series, XII (1959-60), pp.190-205.

80. P.O.P.C., III, p.164.

81. Test. Ebor., II, ed. J. Raine (Surtees Society, XXX, 1855), p.185, note ♣.

82. C.P.R. 1413-16, pp.359, 361.

However, Lord Scrope's Richmondshire estates were granted en bloc to Henry, lord fitz Hugh of Ravensworth for life on 6 August 1415⁽⁸³⁾. On 8 August he also received Scrope's London hostel at Paul's Wharf. Two years later in June 1417 Lord fitz Hugh's grant was made hereditary and the lands were said to be worth £260 per annum⁽⁸⁴⁾. This permanent alienation of the Scrope of Masham estates threatened to destroy the position of the family without hope of recovery. On his death in 1415 Lord Scrope had left no heirs of his body. He was survived by his three brothers Geoffrey, Stephen and John. Geoffrey and Stephen were both members of the clergy: the former had been his uncle Archbishop Richard Scrope's household clerk; and the latter was of course the archdeacon of Richmond. Both Geoffrey and Stephen, however, survived their brother Henry by only three years, and as far as is known neither of them had sought to recover the family's property. By 1418 it was left to the only surviving member of the family, John, fourth lord Masham to recover the family's estates and position.

It was far from clear to Henry V himself whether or not he had acted legitimately in permanently alienating the Scrope lands, for there was considerable doubt also whether they were entailed. Before his death, Lord Henry Scrope was probably aware that there might be some problems, for in his much - damaged confession, he seems to be referring to his manor of Carlton, Lincolnshire, saying 'for sicerly it is tailed'⁽⁸⁵⁾. This was not, however, a great deal of help to his heirs. The uncertainty which hung over the status of Lord Henry's property prompted Henry V to arrest three former members of his household John Foxholes, chaplain, Thomas Blase and Robert Newton and

83. C.P.R. 1413-16, p.360.

84. Ross 'Yorkshire Baronage', p.201.

85. D.K.R., 43, p.584.

to demand from them whether or not an entail existed⁽⁸⁶⁾. They replied in the affirmative and perhaps with some effect, for initially the lands were granted by Henry V for periods of years only⁽⁸⁷⁾. These doubts were soon erased however, for Lord Fitz Hugh was given a life grant on his lands and permitted to entail them on his heirs, thus in effect doubling Fitz Hugh's landed estate in the North Riding⁽⁸⁸⁾. It is scarcely credible that the Masham estates of the Scropes were not entailed. The family had always demonstrated such a careful concern for property, and it is almost impossible that such a simple precaution could have been omitted. For Scrope, who still had no heir at the age of forty-two, it would have been the obvious step to take. Yet the evidence as to the existence of an entail is admittedly inconclusive. The inquisitions post mortem of Scrope's father and grandfather do not indicate whether the land was held in fee simple or in tail⁽⁸⁹⁾. No other evidence of an entail has been found. T.B. Pugh, however, has recently accepted the view that there was no entail⁽⁹⁰⁾. John, lord Scrope of Masham began petitioning for the recovery of his lands in 1424. He based his claim on a charter supposedly made by his great grandfather Geoffrey, by which he had conveyed his lands to John Gunwardby thereby creating an entail⁽⁹¹⁾.

Lord John Scrope's petition to Chancery in 1424 inaugurated several commissions of inquiry into the case from 1424-26. His

86. P.O.P.C., II, p.182.

87. C.P.R. 1413-16, p.399.

88. Ross, 'Yorkshire Baronage', p.201.

89. P.R.O. C 136/78, m2-24; C 147/56 no. 307.

90. Pugh, 'The Southampton Plot of 1415', p.85.

91. P.R.O. SC 8/122 nos. 6093, 6097; C47/7/1/1.

petitions and the resulting inquisitions filling to less than 68 membranes. In the end all the inquisitions found in Scrope's favour. Before the end of 1424 he had already received an interim settlement and was granted his lands for four years pending proof of the entail. But Lord Scrope appeared to have lost possession of the lands by 1439, when lord fitz Hugh began petitioning the Crown for their return⁽⁹²⁾. Contemporaries and recent historians have believed Scrope's claim to his estates to have been fraudulent⁽⁹³⁾. The evidence of fraud is in fact inconclusive and it must be acknowledged that it was William, lord fitz Hugh who brought the charges and he clearly had a vested interest. Nevertheless a great deal of suspicion was directed towards Sir John. There certainly was a fear that Scrope would tamper with the evidence: in 1434 the prior and chapter of Durham Cathedral were the custodians of the Scrope evidences and refused to let John have the original documents, giving him only copies⁽⁹⁴⁾. To complicate matters further, in 1441 Richard Worleby, former prior of Haltemprice Abbey, accused the then Prior Sir Robert Twyng and John Hesyll, court apprentice, of forging some Scrope evidences; but the case was apparently never proved⁽⁹⁵⁾. Ultimately the sentence of forfeiture imposed on Henry lord Scrope of Masham in 1415 was never reversed but John Scrope was eventually to re-gain his family land permanently, for in 10 May 1442 he paid William fitz Hugh £1000 in return for the lands called 'Scropes landes'⁽⁹⁶⁾.

92. C.P.R. 1436-41, p.271.

93. C. Ross, 'Yorkshire Baronage', p.214. A. Reeves, Lancastrian Englishmen, pp.90-92. P.R.O. Inq. Misc., C 145/307 no. 59.

94. In fact the king ordered that Lord Scrope should not have the originals. R.B. Dobson, Durham Priory, 1400-1450 (Cambridge, 1973) p.175. Durham Cathedral Archives, Prior's kitchen, Locellus XXV, no. 99.

95. C.P.R. 1436-41, p.541.

96. P.R.O. CP 25 (1) 280/158 no. 42.

It would seem likely that Sir John Scrope's initial success in securing a temporary grant of his elder brother's forfeited lands was due to his appointment in 1424 to the royal council of Henry VI. He must at that time already have been a figure of some influence and he probably owed his promotion to Humphrey duke of Gloucester. Although there is no certain evidence that at this stage Scrope was connected with Gloucester, five years later he was a staunch partisan of the Duke⁽⁹⁷⁾. Nor was he the only member of the family to be associated with Humphrey, duke of Gloucester. Stephen Scrope, Sir John Fastolf's stepson, had served in Gloucester's company in France⁽⁹⁸⁾. Throughout the 1420's Scrope was an active member of the Council⁽⁹⁹⁾. He was very much identified with the interests of the duke of Gloucester, opposing for example Marmaduke Lumley's elevation to the bishopric of Carlisle in 1429. Lumley was of course a Beaufort partisan, but Scrope's motives may also have been personal since Lumley was at that time in dispute with Neville over the custody of the Scrope of Bolton estates during the minority of the heir Henry⁽¹⁰⁰⁾. On 28 November 1431 Scrope proposed that Gloucester should be granted an annuity of 6,000 marks as king's lieutenant in his absence and 5,000 on the king's return⁽¹⁰¹⁾. To a large extent Lord John Scrope's prominence reflects the influence exerted by the Duke of Gloucester in the absence abroad of his brother Bedford.

97. R.A. Griffiths, The Reign of Henry VI (London, 1981), p.41.

98. B.L. Additional MS, 28, 209, fos. 21, 23, 28, 212.

99. P.O.P.C., IV, p.73, 8, 104.

100. Ross, 'Yorkshire Baronage', p.237.

101. P.O.P.C., IV, p.104.

TABLE TWO

Fees and annuities payable by letters patent of John Lescrop, lord of Masham, in 1436 (P.R.O. E 163/7/31 part 2).

<u>Annuitant</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Source of Payment</u>
Stephen Haytfield	£9 6s 8d	Manor of South Muskham
Alexander Lund, esquire, from the city of York.	£5 6s 8d	Manor of Faxfleet
Richard Walagrave, from the city of York.	40s	Manor of Faxfleet
William Bothom	40s	Manor of Faxfleet
John Archer	13s 4d	Manor of Faxfleet
John Portyngton	40s	Faxfleet and Drifffield
John Ellerker, sergeant at law	40s	Drifffield
Thomas Fulthorp, sergeant at law	40s	Naylond, Suffolk
Robert Cavendish, sergeant at law	40s	Naylond, Suffolk
Robert Mauleverer, from Yorkshire	100s	Not stated
J. Tresham, from Yorkshire	40s	Not stated
W. Methlay, from Yorkshire	40s	Not stated
Peter Bukton, from Yorkshire	40s	Not stated
William Vyncent from Yorkshire	40s	Not stated
William Hythe from Yorkshire	20s	Not stated
Thomas Wharf from Yorkshire	20s	Not stated
Thomas Grome from Yorkshire	20s	Not stated
Richard Wyrleby from Yorkshire chaplain	£4	Not stated
William Hardy from Yorkshire	66s 8d	Not known
John Ase from the city of York	66s 8d	Not known
John Bolrom from the city of York	40s	Not known

Nicholas Rawe, chaplain, from the city of York	41s	Not known
Master John Osbaldwick, chaplain from the city of York	26s 8d	Not known
John Meriott from the city of York	40s	Not known
John Therhyme, from Yorkshire	£6 20d	Not known
John Pryme, from Yorkshire	66s 8d	Not known
Thomas Multon, from Yorkshire	53s 4d	Not known
Robert Ramyng, from Yorkshire	53s 4d	Not known
John Wodburn, from Yorkshire	24s	Not known
William Mendpallate	26s 8d	Not known
John Coke from Essex	40s	Not known
Geoffrey..	[illegible]	

Soon afterwards, on 26 February 1432 Lord John Scrope was appointed Treasurer (102). He was, however, unable to manage the Lancastrian finances effectively; on 15 April 1433 he declared he could not collect all the money necessary for paying the troops. Finally in June 1433 Gloucester's dominance came to an end with the return to England of the duke of Bedford and in August 1433 Scrope was replaced as Treasurer by Ralph, lord Cromwell. In July 1433 Scrope had been sent on an embassy to Scotland and there are no further references to his participation in national affairs until 1437(103). But there can be no doubt that during this period John remained a powerful figure as is reflected in the fees and annuities he paid in June 1436. A list of annuitants of the fourth Lord of Masham, drawn up for taxation purposes has survived and records that in 1436 he paid annuities to 31 men amounting to £82 14s 4d(104). The function of the annuitants, however, is not at all easy to determine. Sir John paid £6 to three top class, professional lawyers, John Ellerbek, Thomas Fulthorp and Robert Cavendysh, all sergeants at law. Three of the annuitants were chaplains, namely Richard Wyrlyby, Nicholas Bawe and Master John Osbaldwyk. Other annuitants were probably members of Scrope's household and estate officials and to judge by their surnames, William Hythe, Thomas Wharfe, Thomas Grome, John Wodburn and John Coke may fall into this category. None of the other annuitants are given occupational descriptions, although Alexander Lund was described as an 'esquire'.

The majority of the men were probably from Yorkshire, and they were paid from the issues of Scrope's Yorkshire manors, mainly that of his main residence in the East Riding, Faxfleet. Four of those listed came from the city of York, they were the two chaplains Bawe and Osbaldwick as well as John Ase and John Bolrom. This suggests close ties between the Scropes and some of the townsmen in the second city of England. Indeed Scrope was later to seek support in York in the

102. C.P.R. 1429-36, p.187.

103. C.P.R. 1436-41, p.89.

104. P.R.O. E 163 7/31 part 2.

troubled year of 1454-5 when John Marshal, draper and later mayor was fined for receiving Lord Scrope's livery⁽¹⁰⁵⁾. The city itself had courted favour with influential aristocrats and in 1442-3 and 1445-6, Scrope was presented with gifts of wine by the city⁽¹⁰⁶⁾. Unfortunately a large number of the annuitants remain unidentified and none of those listed appear amongst the members of Scrope's household mentioned in his will admittedly made twenty years later.

Several general conclusions seem to emerge from this list of Lord John Scrope's annuitants. The first is to note the importance attached to retaining legal counsel, perhaps exaggerated by the Lord Masham because of his legal battle for the recovery of his estates. Secondly the expense of maintaining an affinity is apparent, for Scrope was spending perhaps as much as a ninth of his income on fees. Up to a point the list of annuitants conforms with the observations once made by Professor Charles Ross, who argued that after 1400 the retainers and annuitants of the Yorkshire nobles were generally obscure men⁽¹⁰⁷⁾. Nevertheless, this is not entirely borne out by the evidence of those who served other members of the Scrope family. As has been established, John Tibbey servant of the Scropes of Bolton graduated from their service to that of Queen Joan of Navarre. Furthermore John Foxholes, former receiver general of Henry, third lord Masham, also entered Queen Joan's service becoming her Treasurer and receiver general. Robert Newton, as has been noted become a canon of Westminster from service to Henry lord Scrope⁽¹⁰⁸⁾. The career success of some of these household servants is an indication of the influence of this noble family.

105. York City Chamberlain's Account Rolls, 1396-500, ed. Dobson, p.145.

106. Ibid., pp.24, 33.

107. C. Ross, 'Yorkshire Baronage', pp.423-24.

108. Griffiths, Henry VI, p.63.

After Henry VI had attained his majority in 1437 John, lord Scrope of Masham, continued in political life but his patron, Humphrey duke of Gloucester, was, however, after his disgrace in 1441, in no position to advance him further. From this date until his death in 1455 John's influence appears to fade. He attended Parliament in November 1441 and in October 1442 but his appearances in national affairs were rare⁽¹⁰⁹⁾. In subsequent years the Lord of Masham's northern connections were to prove of most use to him. For example on 4 March 1443 the king's Council agreed to send Lord John Scrope to settle the dispute between the abbot of St. Mary's and the mayor and commonalty of York⁽¹¹⁰⁾. Not until 15 March 1454 did he again attend a meeting of the king's council, a meeting which was held just twelve days before the duke of York was created Protector of the realm. Just two months later lord John Scrope was fined for non-attendance at Parliament on 24 May 1454⁽¹¹¹⁾. However, he may have preferred to remain in the north on this occasion for in May the duke of York had travelled to the north to settle the disorder between Lord Egremont and Sir John Neville⁽¹¹²⁾. John lord Scrope of Masham finally died in 1455, describing himself in his will as 'senex aetate, debilis corpore, sanus tamen mente'⁽¹¹³⁾. He was worn out, no doubt, by his efforts to restore his family's position, a position which albeit briefly was to become very important once more.

109. P.O.P.C., V, pp.153, 219.

110. Ibid., p.232.

111. P.O.P.C., V, p.181.

112. Griffiths, Henry VI, p.281.

113. Test. Ebor., II, ed. Raine, p.184.

D. The Scropes of Masham and Bolton under Richard III and Henry VII

It is beyond the scope of this study to analyse the activities of the Scrope family in detail into the late fifteenth century. But it would be unwise to conclude a study of this famous family without examining their fortunes under Richard III, when once more they featured prominently on the political stage.

The fourth lord Masham's eldest son and namesake had predeceased him in 1452. He had, however, already embarked on a career of service to Henry VI becoming a king's esquire in 1446⁽¹¹⁴⁾. In 1455 the Masham estates passed to Thomas the fifth lord Masham, who like his eldest brother remained loyal to the Lancastrian king in the 1450's and in 1459 received a £40 annuity for 'good service' against the Yorkshire rebels. Thomas nevertheless easily made the transition to the Yorkists, serving in Edward IV's parliaments and on a commission of array in the north in 1470⁽¹¹⁵⁾. On his death in 1475 he was survived by his widow and sixteen year old son also called Thomas. Elizabeth Scrope, the dowager Lady Masham anxious to do well for her son, and recognising the duke of Gloucester's pre-eminent position in the north entered into an indenture with Gloucester by which in return for protection for herself, her son and his estates, she, her son and her household would enter into Gloucester's service⁽¹¹⁶⁾. Thomas could be described as a member of Gloucester's affinity, although he was never a feed retainer. Nor did Thomas benefit greatly when Gloucester became king. And Dr. Attreed has remarked that, 'Thomas worked closely with the king only during the final months of Richard's reign'⁽¹¹⁷⁾. Thomas was with Richard at the battle of Bosworth and

114. Complete Peerage, XI, p.568.

115. L. Attreed, 'An Indenture between Richard Duke of Gloucester and the Scrope family of Masham and Upsall', Speculum, 58 (1983), p.1020.

116. Ibid., pp.1018-1019.

117. Ibid., p.1022.

although little is known of his actions immediately after Henry Tudor's accession he appears to have acquiesced in Tudor rule. Nevertheless in June 1487, Thomas, lord Scrope of Masham, and John, lord Scrope of Bolton, led an attack on Bootham Bar, York, in an attempt to raise the city in support of Lambert Simnel. Dr. Attreed has argued that Thomas Scrope's participation in the rebellion is difficult to understand, given Thomas's modest role in Richard III's government and household and that perhaps his loyalty to Richard's lost cause was rooted in Thomas's childhood service to the duke.

It is perhaps easier to understand John, lord Scrope of Bolton's behaviour in 1487. John was the son of the rather colourless Henry, fourth lord Scrope of Bolton. Henry's son John was born in 1437, three years before lord Bolton attained his majority. Henry like his grandfather Roger appears to have played little part in national affairs. Perhaps he was not physically robust for he died in 1459 aged only 40⁽¹¹⁸⁾. John, however, was much more active. He served with the earl of Warwick at Northampton on 10 July 1460 and was seriously wounded at the battle of Towton. He was made a Garter knight before 22 April 1463. During the 1470's Lord John entered the service of the duke's council and later joined the royal council. In 1484 Lord Bolton received extensive lands in the south-west, £206 worth of lands in Devon and the constablership of Exeter Castle worth 200 marks per annum. Like his kinsman Thomas, lord Scrope of Masham, John fought with Richard III at Bosworth and he too participated in the abortive attack on Bootham Bar in 1487⁽¹¹⁹⁾.

After brief periods of imprisonment and payments of fines, both lords were pardoned and returned to favour⁽¹²⁰⁾. The contrast with the harsh treatment meted out to their ancestors in 1405 and 1415 is striking. It can be said that by the end of the fifteenth century

118. Complete Peerage, XI, p.545.

119. Attreed, 'Scrope family of Upsall', p.1023.

120. Ibid., p.1024.

northern baronial families like the Scrope family were no longer to be feared and certainly they had commanded little support in 1487. Henry VII could indeed afford to be conciliatory towards them because they did not pose a serious threat to him. The new Tudor monarch's assessment of them was undoubtedly correct for the Scrope family like the majority of their contemporaries were nothing if not pragmatic. With notable exceptions most members of the family had adjusted to the frequent changes of dynasty in the fifteenth century without great difficulty⁽¹²¹⁾. Nor were the rebels of 1487 any exception. Thomas lord Scrope of Masham served Henry VII in France in 1492 while John lord Bolton served in the royal army against the Scots in 1489 and both remained loyal servants to the crown until their deaths, in the tradition of their fourteenth century ancestors.

121. K. Dockray, 'The Political Legacy of Richard III in Northern England', Kings and Nobles in the Later Middle Ages, ed. R.A. Griffiths and J. Sherborne, pp.205-223.

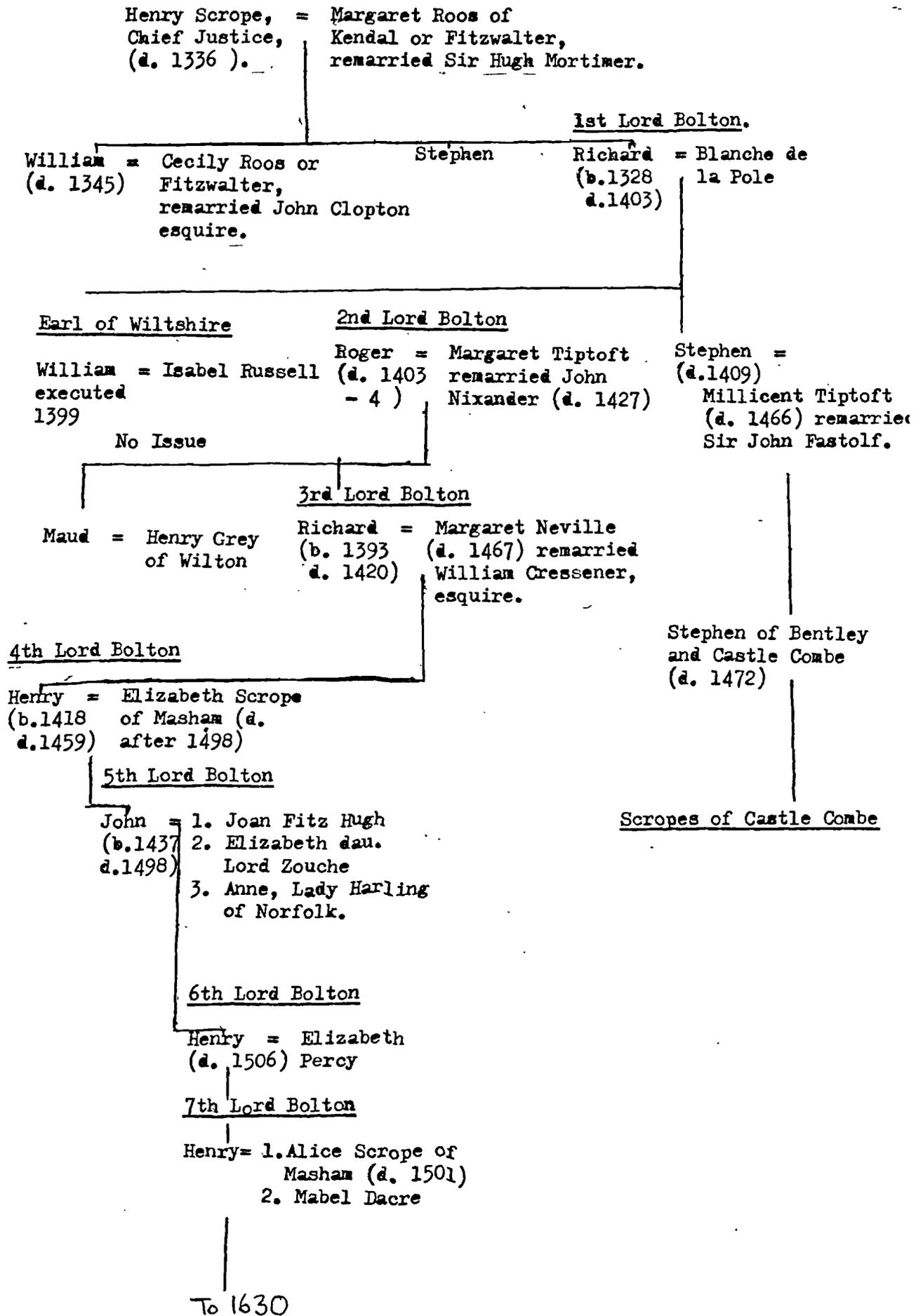
APPENDIX ONE

List of grants, annuities and fees to William Scrope

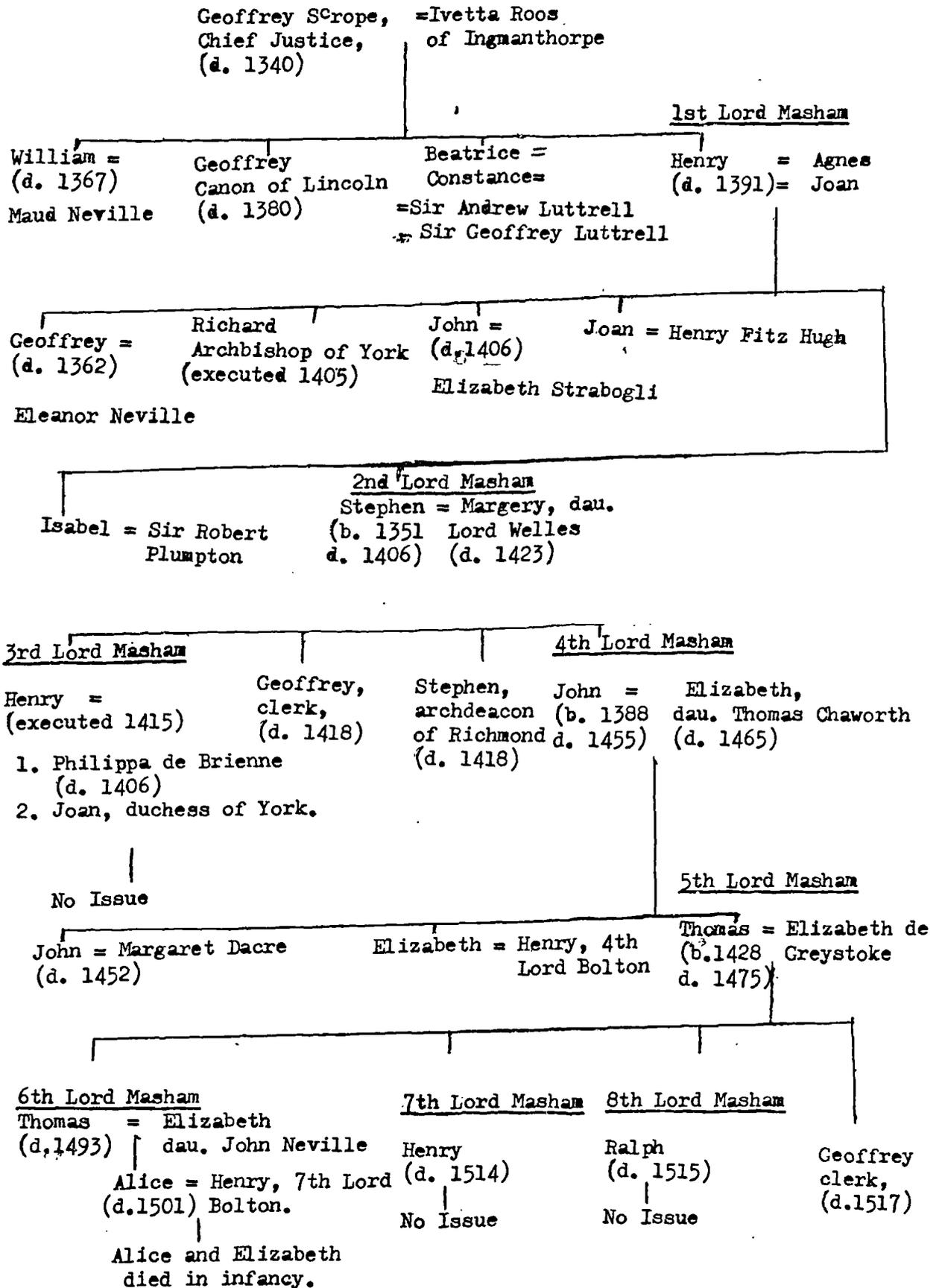
8 March 1384	Paid £800 as steward of Aquitaine	<u>C.C.R.1381-85</u> , p.375
7 March 1385	Paid £500 for Calais	<u>C.P.R.1385-89</u> , P.132
6 April 1386	Keeper of Cherbourg first appointed 10 Feb. 1386 Received £700.	<u>C.P.R.1385-89</u> , p.173
14 Feb 1389	Bamburgh castle, without rent Later granted to Stephen Scrope	<u>C.P.R.1388-92</u> , p.13
12-13 Nov.1389	Keeper of Brest, £1000 <u>per annum</u>	<u>P.O.P.C. I</u> , p.13
25 April 1392	Purchase of the Isle of Man	<u>C.C.R.1389-92</u> , p.559
2 July 1393	Marlborough castle for life in lieu of 200 marks annuity.	<u>C.P.R.1391-96</u> , p.309
24 Feb. 1394	Keepership of Beaumaris	<u>C.P.R.1391-96</u> , p.371
28 Feb. 1394	Power to appoint keeper of armour and artillery at Beaumaris.	<u>C.P.R.1391-5</u> , p.378
12 March 1394	As under chamberlain to examine castles in N.Wales and Chester.	<u>C.P.R.1391-6</u> , p.433
20 Feb. 1395	Keeper of lordship of Uriell for life; Keeper of Drogheda	<u>C.P.R.1396-99</u> , p.174
25 Feb. 1395	Keepership of Conway castle, £40 <u>per annum</u> .	<u>C.P.R.1391-96</u> , p.501
26 April 1396	Justice of Ireland	<u>C.P.R.1391-96</u> , p.710
5 June 1396	Constable of Queensburgh castle	<u>C.P.R.1391-96</u> , p.715
6 July 1396	Joint keeper of Caernarvon castle	<u>C.P.R.1396-99</u> , p.10
28 Nov. 1396	Keeper of Pembroke castle	<u>C.C.R.1396-99</u> , p.27
7 April 1397	Delivered Brest	<u>P.O.P.C.</u> , I, p.67
4 Aug. 1397	Keeper of castle and town of Barnard Castle	<u>C.P.R.1396-99</u> , p.176
28 Sept. 1397	Keeper of Dyvleyn castle	<u>C.P.R.1396-99</u> , p.201
29 Sept. 1397	Castle, town and lordship of Barnard Castle in tail male; Middleton and Gainsford.	<u>C.P.R.1396-99</u> , p.200

29 Sept. 1397	Created earl of Wiltshire	
30 Sept. 1397	Paynes castle in Wales; Walthamstow, Essex.	<u>C.P.R.1396-99</u> , p.196
23 Jan. 1398	Keeper of the New Forest, North Riding, Constable of Richmond.	<u>C.P.R.1391-96</u> , p.612
11 Feb. 1398	Surveyor of forests in Cheshire, 100 marks <u>per annum</u> .	<u>C.P.R.1396-99</u> , p.356
21 March 1398	Daliley castle and Wellington Haye, Salop. (Forfeit by Arundel)	<u>C.F.R.1391-99</u> , p.253
29 May 1398	Constable of Castle Lyons castle	<u>C.P.R.1396-99</u> , p.347
6 Aug. 1398	Life justice of N.Wales, £100 <u>per annum</u> .	<u>C.P.R.1396-99</u> , p.407
11 Aug. 1398	Wardship of Mortimer lands in N.Wales.	<u>C.P.R.1396-99</u> , p.408
20 March 1399	Pickering castle (from Bolingbroke)	<u>C.F.R.1391-99</u> , p.295
20 March 1399	Replaces Thomas Chaucer in Lanc- astrian administration	<u>C.C.R.1396-99</u> , p.468
2 April 1399	Constable of Knaresborough castle (from Bolingbroke)	<u>C.P.R.1396-99</u> , p.502
26 April 1399	Grant of manor of Swaledale & Healaugh.	<u>C.P.R.1396-99</u> , p.535

Main Descent of The Scropes of Bolton.



Main Descent of the Scropes of Masham



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C 260 Chancery Miscellanea
CP 25 Feet of Fines
E 101 King's Remembrancer, Accounts Various
E 136 Escheators' Accounts
E 142 Ancient Extents
E 149 Inquisitions Post Mortem
E 152 Enrolments of Inquisitions
E 153 Escheators' Files
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E 404 Warrants for Issue
JUST 1)
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