

# Margaret of Anjou and the Lancastrian March on London, 1461

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The year 1461 witnessed the effective demise of the Lancastrian dynasty in England and the advent of the Yorkist, and it ended the first phase of the dynastic conflict known as the Wars of the Roses.<sup>1</sup> Because it is the phase in which Margaret of Anjou, wife to the Lancastrian King Henry VI, so nearly triumphed, it has been subject to distortion and obfuscation. The surviving chronicles were written under a Yorkist king, and their bias heavily influenced the Tudor chroniclers, such as Robert Fabian, Polydore Vergil and especially Edward Hall. It is on their interpretation and expansion of the earlier chronicles that later historians have based the stereotype of Margaret of Anjou as a vindictive French woman whose political machinations brought civil war to England. The fragmentary sources have been cobbled together without weighing their relative merits and with no attempt to reconcile and explain inherent contradictions. What part did Queen Margaret really play in the crucial period between November 1460 and February 1461?

In July 1460 Henry VI and the Lancastrian lords were defeated at the battle of Northampton by the Neville Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, and the Duke of York's son, Edward Earl of March who carried the king to London as their prisoner. In the following October York claimed the throne as the rightful Plantagenet heir, which was too much for even his closest followers to stomach so a compromise was reached whereby Henry VI remained king for his lifetime, but York and his sons were designated as the king's heirs. Henry VI thus disinherited his only child, Edward of Lancaster, Prince of Wales, but the mandate had been

wrung from a minority of the lords and endorsed by a fearful Commons. York's claim was not recognised by the nobles who were not present in parliament when the act was passed, their assent had not been sought, nor would it be given.<sup>2</sup>

The prelude to the Lancastrian march on London was the battle of Wakefield, fought on 30 December 1460, in which Richard Duke of York was killed and the Earl of Salisbury captured and beheaded. The defeat of the duke demanded a gloss, to exculpate him and create a martyr. Duke Richard contributed more to the Yorkist cause by his death than he had done in life. Official accounts of the political situation before the battle accentuate the lawlessness of the Lancastrian leadership as a reason for the duke's foray to the north,<sup>3</sup> and the *Annales Rerum Anglicarum* record the plundering of Yorkist tenants.<sup>4</sup> But although the lands in question belonged to York and Salisbury until November 1459, and again after March 1461, they did not belong to them in December 1460, because they had been forfeited by attainder in the Coventry parliament of 1459. These extensive holdings had become crown demesne lands, and, it was hoped, revenue from them would redress the bankruptcy into which Henry VI's unthinking generosity had led his government.<sup>5</sup> Some were allotted to Lancastrian supporters, including Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, who was granted Salisbury's lands in Yorkshire.<sup>6</sup> If Northumberland was harrying the former estates of York and Salisbury, then he was attacking lands leased to him and royal land.

Contemporary accounts of the battle of Wakefield are sketchy,<sup>7</sup> ranging from York's unpreparedness to hints of treachery.<sup>8</sup> When the news was conveyed to Milan the legend that Queen Margaret was present at the battle was already in the making, as was the myth of Lancastrian vindictiveness,<sup>9</sup> a reflection of the official Yorkist version, later to be enshrined in the parliamentary rolls for Edward IV's first parliament where it is stated that York was not killed in fair fight but 'murdered' by a foe who far outnumbered him.<sup>10</sup>

The *Registrum* of John Whethamstede, Abbot of St Albans, is considered an important source for Wakefield and the second battle of St Albans and is usually taken at face value.<sup>11</sup> Whethamstede completed it in 1458 and then added the years 1459-61. The extant copy is probably a revision, dictated by Whethamstede between 1461 and 1465, when he was going blind and his hands were crippled by arthritis. This would account for the odd muddles which obscure the text, as well as explaining why it is apparently an expanded version of an earlier register which is now lost.<sup>12</sup> The *Registrum* is specifically Yorkist in outlook, designed to bolster the regime of the young Edward IV. If it is read, not as a piece of objective, albeit verbose reporting, but as a masterpiece of propaganda, many of the contradictions which its editor found puzzling become clear. Abbot John had reason to be grateful to Edward IV, who, in December 1461, granted a charter to Whethamstede's beloved abbey, bestowing extensive privileges upon it.<sup>13</sup>

Henry Hallam got it wrong. It was not Queen Margaret's victory at St Albans in February 1461 but King Edward's victory at Towton in March that turned Whethamstede from a loyal Lancastrian into a laudatory Yorkist.<sup>14</sup> C.L. Kingsford remarked that the *Registrum* is 'free from that marked bias which Yorkist opinion has impressed on other chronicles.'<sup>15</sup> Whethamstede's bias is not marked, it is so subtle as to pass unnoticed despite its obvious falsifications. Nevertheless it is surprising how many historians have accepted Whethamstede without question. If he could deliberately falsify one account, namely the battle of Wakefield, how far may the rest of his work be trusted?

His evidence for Wakefield is hearsay, but, it is claimed, he was exceptionally well placed to gather information from important visitors.<sup>16</sup> Whose story did he use for his reconstruction and what did he learn from the Lancastrians when their leaders lodged in the abbey after the second battle of St Albans? The Duke of York was killed, but as this inconvenient fact did not fit Whethamstede's portrait he discarded it in favour of York being captured and beheaded in a shameful manner; the treatment meted out to the duke being compared to the treatment of Christ by the Jews.<sup>17</sup> Whethamstede is one of the principal myth makers of this period and his portrayal of Richard of York is masterly: the martyred duke was a worthy progenitor of a truly noble king. His feud with Edmund, Duke of Somerset (who was killed at the first battle of St Albans fighting for Henry VI against the duke) had led to civil war. This was regrettable, but York's cause was just. York was wrong to claim the throne (the opinion of Yorkists and Lancastrians alike in 1460) but the duke made up for it by his subsequent humility and respect for his king (in the two months he had left to live). In keeping with the balanced tone which Whethamstede worked so hard to achieve, there is no direct criticism of Henry VI, instead he is damned with faint praise. He is *simplex et rectus* (the term is used twice) a neatly ambiguous phrase.<sup>18</sup> Once, significantly, it is put into the mouth of the Duke of York before he and his Neville supporters attack King Henry at the first battle of St Albans, and the second reference establishes that although Henry was a good man, he was generous to a fault with crown patronage and therefore at the mercy of the wiles of wicked men. This picture of Henry VI is the standard portrait of Yorkist propaganda, and even Whethamstede's final appraisal,<sup>19</sup> must be read with scepticism as it occurs in the middle of a paean of praise to the new King Edward IV and, in the classical manner, is intended to contrast the one unfavourably with the other. Thus Whethamstede's version of the events of 1452-1461, whilst valuable in some respects, should be read with extreme caution. The good abbot does not lie directly, except in a few glaringly obvious instances, but his innuendo is superb.

Victory at Wakefield was incidental to the Lancastrians intention to march on London, although the death of the Duke of York appeared to give them an

additional advantage. The Lancastrian lords had made their position plain after the defeat at Northampton when the Yorkists set up a government in King Henry's name. This was a clear violation of an integral tenet in fifteenth century politics: no matter what faction held a temporary ascendancy, the king was inviolable; he had to be free to choose his own council and appoint such men as he saw fit to enforce the laws of the land under his mandate.<sup>20</sup> The attainder of the Yorkists in 1459 had been unwise politically, since they had not been captured, but it was legal.<sup>21</sup> To hold the king captive and govern in his name was not. A fundamental shift had occurred in the political balance, which although faction ridden, had, until then, abided by the accepted belief in the integrity of the king, no matter how weak, ineffectual or incompetent he might be.

Even before the Duke of York exacerbated the situation by laying claim to the throne, Lancastrian supporters had been gathering the large army which would be needed to put the situation right. King Henry's half brother Jasper Tudor and Queen Margaret were recruiting in Wales; Henry Duke of Somerset made what haste he could to return from Calais, and he and the Duke of Exeter joined the confederation of northern lords at Hull. The size of the Lancastrian army and the speed with which it was assembled continues to surprise historians, as it did contemporaries.<sup>22</sup> York had seriously underestimated it, and the miscalculation cost him and Salisbury their lives.<sup>23</sup> Cora Scofield claims that the northern lords threatened 'loss of life and limb to all men between the ages of sixteen and sixty' who did not come to the rescue of Henry VI,<sup>24</sup> and this apparently punitive phraseology sounds coercive, but the deliverance of the king was the central motif of Lancastrian mobilisation, and in December the Earl of Northumberland wrote to the Common Council of London, in all probability to affirm it.<sup>25</sup>

Queen Margaret had written to the Common Council in November when the news of the Duke of York's *coup* was proclaimed.<sup>26</sup> The letter from the queen was published in modernised English by M.A.E. Wood in 1846, and she dated it to February 1461 because of its opening sentence: 'And whereas the late Duke of N [York]....'<sup>27</sup> However the rest of the letter, and that of the prince, is in the present tense and clearly indicates that the Duke of York is still alive. The reference to the 'late duke' is not to his demise but to the attainder of 1459 when he was stripped of his titles as well as of his lands. If the queen's letter dates to November 1460, and not February 1461, it make perfect sense. Margaret declared the Duke of York had 'upon an untrue pretense, feigned a title to my lord's crown' and in so doing had broken his oath of fealty. She thanked the Londoners for their loyalty in rejecting his claim. She knew of the rumours,

that we and my lords sayd some and owrs shuld newly drawe toward yow  
with an vnsome [uncounted] powere of strangars, disposed to robbe and  
to dispoyle yow of yowr goods and havours, we will that ye knowe for

certeyne that . . . [y]e, nor none of yow, shalbe robbed, dispoyled nor wronged by any parson that at that tyme we or owr sayd sone shalbe accompanied with

She entrusted the king's person to the care of the citizens 'so that thrwge malice of his sayde enemye he be no more trowbled vexed ne jeopardd.'<sup>28</sup> In other words the queen was well informed in November 1460 of the propaganda in London concerning the threat posed by a Lancastrian military challenge to the illegal Yorkist proceedings. Margaret assured the Common Council that no harm would come to the citizenry or to their property. Because the letter was initially misdated, it has been assumed that the queen wrote it after she realised the harm her marauding troops were doing to her cause, and to lull London into a false sense of security.<sup>29</sup> This is not the case, and it is a typical example of historians accepting without question Margaret's character as depicted in Yorkist propaganda. Margaret's letter was a true statement of her intentions but it made no impact at the time and has made none since.<sup>30</sup> How many people heard of it? The Yorkist council under the Earl of Warwick, in collusion with the Common Council of the city, was in an ideal position to suppress any wide dissemination of the letter, or of its content.

News of the victory at Wakefield reached Margaret of Anjou in early January. The queen had fled to Wales with her son after the battle of Northampton, and from there she went to Scotland where she was entertained at Lincluden, near Dumfries, by the Scottish queen regent, Mary of Guelders.<sup>31</sup> Margaret's reason for travelling to Scotland was not to seek military aid, but rather a truce, to ensure peace along the border whilst the Lancastrian army marched south. The northern lords, especially the Earl of Northumberland as warden of the East March, would have been extremely uneasy at the thought of leaving the border unsecured against Scottish raids. Margaret's bargaining position appears to have been the offer of a marriage alliance, as, according to the Auchinleck Chronicler, the queens discussed a marriage between the Prince of Wales and one of Mary's daughters.<sup>32</sup> Tradition has it that she also promised to cede the town and fortress of Berwick to the Scots who claimed it, although it had been in English hands since 1333.<sup>33</sup> A letter from the Lancastrian lords to King Charles VII of France gives an undertaking to endorse the (unspecified) agreement Margaret made at Lincluden on 5 January, but it makes no mention of Berwick or Scottish troops.<sup>34</sup> The French chronicler Jehan de Waurin records the ceding of Berwick, dating it to after the battle of Towton, but at the same time he refers to Lincluden.<sup>35</sup> Waurin's conflation of two events inspired English historians to conclude that Margaret had ceded Berwick, and to accept the letter to Charles VII as 'proof' of a treaty of Lincluden surrendering Berwick in return for Scottish aid.<sup>36</sup> It is a classic example of 'fact' superimposed on supposition. No record of a treaty exists in Scottish sources,<sup>37</sup> no Scottish lord

appears in English sources as present at the second battle of St Albans, and, more importantly, no mention of it is made in the list of accusations against the queen when she was attainted by Edward IV in November 1461. The rolls of parliament record the evil deeds attributed to those indicted and state that Berwick was ceded to the Scots on 25 April 1461<sup>38</sup> after the battle of Towton, when Henry VI and Queen Margaret were in exile, and dependent upon Scottish aid. It is inconceivable that if a treaty which ceded Berwick in January 1461 had existed, Edward IV would not have used it to further vilify Margaret.

When Margaret joined the Lancastrian lords it is unlikely that she had Scottish troops with her. It is possible that Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke, sent men from Wales but there was no compelling reason why he should, he needed all the forces at his disposal to face Edward Earl of March, now Duke of York following his father's death at Wakefield, who, in fact, defeated Pembroke at Mortimer's Cross on 2 February just as the Lancastrian army was marching south.<sup>39</sup> The oft repeated statement that the Lancastrian army was composed of a motley array of Scots, Welsh, other foreigners (French by implication, for it had not been forgotten that René of Anjou, Queen Margaret's father, had served with the French forces in Normandy when the English were expelled from the duchy, nor that King Charles VII was her uncle) as well as northern men is based on a single chronicle, the *Brief Notes* written mainly in Latin in the monastery of Ely, and ending in 1470. It is a compilation of gossip and rumour, some of it wildly inaccurate, but including information not found in any other contemporary source, which accounts for the credence accorded to it.<sup>40</sup> The Dukes of Somerset and Exeter and the Earl of Devon brought men from the south and west.<sup>41</sup> The Earl of Northumberland was not solely reliant on his northern estates; as Lord Poynings he had extensive holdings in the south.<sup>42</sup> The northerners were tenants and retainers of Northumberland, Clifford, Dacre, the Westmorland Nevilles, and Fitzhugh, and accustomed to the discipline of border defence. The continuator of *Gregory's Chronicle*, probably our best witness, is emphatic that the second battle of St Albans was won by the 'howseholde men and feyd men.'<sup>43</sup> Camp followers and auxiliaries of undesirables there undoubtedly were, as there are on the fringes of any army, but the motley rabble the queen is supposed to have loosed on peaceful England owes more to the imagination of Yorkist propagandists than to the actual composition of the Lancastrian army.

It is assumed that only the Lancastrian lords named in the chronicles supplied contingents of fighting men, but loyalty to Lancaster was far stronger before the battle of Towton than is usually allowed.<sup>44</sup> What of William Beaumont, now Viscount Beaumont, owing to the death of his father at Northampton? John, Viscount Beaumont, had been an adherent of the queen. What of the retainers of the Earl of Shrewsbury, who was also killed at Northampton? Beaumont was not

summoned to Parliament in October 1460, possibly because he had only just come of age,<sup>45</sup> probably because it was known that he would not support a Yorkist government. He was present at Towton although not at St Albans, but he could have sent men to serve under the Prince of Wales. And there can be no other explanation for the presence of the boy Earl of Shrewsbury who was barely thirteen, he must have been there as titular leader of Talbot troops.<sup>46</sup> Proof positive impossible, but is it inherently unlikely that these and other magnates made their presence, if not their persons, felt at St Albans? In assessing this critical period it must be borne in mind that no one knew what the outcome was going to be. With York dead, and Edward of March an unknown quantity it must have seemed to many that the fiasco at Ludlow was about to be repeated.

After the defeat at Wakefield, the leadership of the Yorkist party devolved on the Earl of Warwick and the Earl of March, and Warwick reacted swiftly. He was a master of propaganda, mainly in the creation of a self-image.<sup>47</sup> His first task was to retrieve the initiative and discredit the Lancastrians. He had a weapon ready to his hand, a weapon far more potent than truth. Fear of barbarians from the north was a race memory in southern minds, so he had only to play on that fear, to tell people what they already believed, that if the northern men came down upon them their lives and property would not be worth a moment's purchase.<sup>48</sup> (As early as October 1460 Friar Brackley had told John Paston of the rumour that the queen and her northerners intended to put to death all friars minor south of the Trent.)<sup>49</sup> London was put on full alert, and rumours of danger, already current, intensified.<sup>50</sup> Clement Paston, in London, wrote to John Paston in Norfolk that he had heard that the northern army would soon be upon them.<sup>51</sup> This letter is dated 23 January when the Lancastrian march had barely begun, but Warwick's propaganda was already effective. Atrocity stories lost nothing in the telling, and it was believed that all England south of the Trent was in danger.

A flurry of activity ensued. Orders were sent not only for men to rally to the Yorkist cause but to make sure than any potential Lancastrian support was suppressed.<sup>52</sup> Warwick was uncertain which way the Lancastrians would come. He anticipated a swing towards Shrewsbury, on the assumption that Queen Margaret would try to link up with Jasper Tudor in Wales, and the town was ordered to repair its defences 'so that Henry Duke of Somerset' and the other Lancastrian lords should not take it. The sheriff of Leicester was ordered to arrest 'the said duke' and any of his adherents who might prevent 'the king's lieges coming to the defence of his person.' William Calthrop in Norfolk was ordered to take measures to prevent 'evil doers' from fortifying castles and stock-piling food; he was 'to search that no victuals or arms be brought to the said evil doers' and further advised to investigate which ports were being used for such supplies and to 'arrest the same and the ships and vessels wherein they are shipped.'<sup>53</sup> A similar

investigation was ordered in Cambridgeshire, so it appears that the Lancastrian leaders had made provision to supply their army and contradict the picture of an unpaid and unprovisioned body of men intending to live off the land.<sup>54</sup> Yorkist preparations to resist the onslaught were made in King Henry's name and the sheriffs were ordered to raise the shires for the 'repressinge of malice of the saide riottous people.'<sup>55</sup> One wonders if anyone bothered to tell the king what was happening, but perhaps he preferred not to know.

Queen Margaret was well aware of her enemy's tactics, as her letter to the Common Council of London demonstrates. The busy papal legate, Francesco Coppini, had been meddling in English politics in the Yorkist interest ever since the battle of Northampton. He was no friend to Queen Margaret, and, alarmed at the outcome of Wakefield, he sent a long, blustering, self-exculpatory letter exhorting her to come to terms.<sup>56</sup> Among the platitudes he included information that was Warwick's propaganda in nutshell: the men of the south would resist the northerners because '[of] the countless acts of cruelty related of them.'<sup>57</sup>

Two differing accounts of the Lancastrian march on London are generally accepted. One is that a large army, moving down the Great North Road, was made up of such disparate and unruly elements that the queen and her commanders were powerless to control it.<sup>58</sup> Alternatively, Queen Margaret did not wish to curb her army, but encouraged it to ravage all lands south of the Trent, either from sheer spite or because it was the only way she could pay her troops.<sup>59</sup> Many epithets have been applied to the queen, few of them complimentary, but no one has as yet called her stupid. It would have been an act of crass stupidity wilfully to encourage her forces to loot the very land she was trying to restore to an acceptance of Lancastrian rule, with her son as heir to the throne. On reaching St Albans, so the story goes, the Lancastrian army suddenly became a disciplined force which, by a series of complicated manoeuvres, including a night march and a flank attack, won the second battle of St Albans, even though the Yorkists were commanded by the redoubtable Earl of Warwick.<sup>60</sup> The explanation offered is that the rabble element, loaded down with plunder, had deserted before the battle and only the household men remained. Then the rabble reappeared, and London was threatened. To avert a sack of the city the queen decided to withdraw the army, either on her own initiative or urged by the peace-loving King Henry; as it departed it pillaged the Abbey of St Albans, with the king and queen in residence, and retired north, plundering as it went. Nevertheless, it was sufficiently intact a month later to meet and nearly defeat the Yorkist forces at Towton, the bloodiest and hardest fought battle of the civil war thus far. The 'facts' as stated make little sense, because they are seen through the distorting glass of Yorkist propaganda.

The ravages allegedly committed by the Lancastrian army are extensively documented in the chronicles, written after the event and under a Yorkist king.<sup>61</sup>

They are strong on rhetoric but short on detail. The two accounts most often quoted are by the Crowland Continuator and Abbot Whethamstede. There is no doubting the note of genuine hysterical fear in both. The inhabitants of the abbey of Crowland were thoroughly frightened by what they believed would happen as the Lancastrians swept south. 'What do you suppose must have been our fears . . . [w]hen every day rumours of this sad nature were reaching our ears.' Especially alarming was the threat to church property. The northern men 'irreverently rushed, in their unbridled and frantic rage into churches . . . [a]nd most nefariously plundered them.' If anyone resisted 'they cruelly slaughtered them in the very churches or churchyards.' People sought shelter for themselves and their goods in the abbey,<sup>62</sup> but there is not a single report of refugees seeking succour in the wake of the passage of the army after their homes had been burned and their possessions stolen. The Lancastrians were looting, according to the Crowland Continuator, on a front thirty miles wide 'like so many locusts.'<sup>63</sup> Why, then, did they come within six miles but bypass Crowland? The account as a whole makes it obvious that it was written considerably later than the events it so graphically describes. Edward IV is depicted as the saviour of the nation and his title to the throne outlined in a repetition of classic Yorkist arguments.<sup>64</sup> According to the Continuator, the news that Edward was returning from Wales (by sea) frightened the northerners so badly that they abandoned their plunder and fled north with the new king in hot pursuit.<sup>65</sup> In fact, the Lancastrian army retreated during the last days of February but Edward stayed in London and did not set out for the north until 13 March. For all its heart-rending detail, the Crowland Chronicle is a watered-down version of the official account of the behaviour of the Lancastrians as recorded in the rolls of Edward IV's first parliament which outdoes even the Crowland Continuator in its description of Lancastrian atrocities. It is rarely quoted because it is so outrageous as to be quite unbelievable:

Margarete late called Quene of Englonde, and hir son Edward, late called Prynce of Wales, entending to the extreme destruction of the seid Reame namely of the south parties . . . [t]o the spoile by theym of Godds church, of Chalesses, Crosses of Sylver, Boxes for the Sacrament . . . [d]efoulyng and ravishing Religious Wymmen, Wedowes and Maydens, of unmanly and abhomyable entretying of Wymmen beyng in the naturall Labour and bataille of travailyng of Child . . . [H]even sorowyng the lost therby of the Soules that shuld have been of the Felauship of Cristendom . . . [n]ot abhorryng of unmanly unnaturall and beestly crueltie to drawe Wymmen beyng in Childebedde from their bedds naked, and to spoile hem of all her goods, a piteous desolacion.<sup>66</sup>

Abbot Whethamstede imparted a classical flavour to his version. He devoted some fine alliterative prose to the queen, the prince and the northern men (*boantes balatrantisque Boreales*) despoiling everything in their path: *depraedantes*,

*despoliantes devastantesque*, especially south of the Trent. The northern men were worse than pagans, for whereas three great commanders, Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great and Pompey the Great, pagans all, spared religious foundations, the northerners did not. They were no better than the biblical tyrants Antiochus Epiphanes who defiled the Jewish Temple and Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon who destroyed it.<sup>67</sup> The account carries conviction because the fear behind the rhetoric is genuine. The Abbot was a thoroughly frightened man who held all northerners in abhorrence and the very thought of them engendered such terror that he was unable to distinguish between the first and second battles of St Albans. In the first the northern men were led by Richard Duke of York; in the second they were led by Queen Margaret, but Whethamstede uses the same phrases to describe both.<sup>68</sup> However York is given credit for attempting to stop their pillaging whilst Queen Margaret is reported to have encouraged it, an interpretation readily accepted by Whethamstede's editor.<sup>69</sup> The veracity of these accounts has gone largely unquestioned, and, although a few sceptical voices as to extent of the damage have been raised as footnotes;<sup>70</sup> only in the most recent study of the Wars of the Roses has a qualified caveat appeared in the text.<sup>71</sup>

*Brief Notes*, written at Ely, lists the towns through which the Lancastrian army is supposed to have marched: Grantham, Stamford, Peterborough, Huntingdon, Royston and Melbourn.<sup>72</sup> The only other account to repeat these names is John Stow, the Tudor chronicler, who quotes the description of the Lancastrians from *An English Chronicle*, 'as they had be paynems or Sarracenes, and no Crysten menne.'<sup>73</sup> This image took root in the popular imagination and legend hardened into fact. The suggestion that Stamford and Grantham were made to pay for their Yorkist loyalties appears in the *Victoria History of the County of Lincolnshire*<sup>74</sup> and is repeated by recent historians.<sup>75</sup> R.A. Griffiths also adduces that the threat to Stamford was foreseen in London,<sup>76</sup> but the order in the patent rolls for its defence is one among many and not as clear in its specifications as those for Shrewsbury and Leicester, indeed it reads as though Stamford was somewhat suspect.<sup>77</sup> The loyalty of Grantham and Stamford is assumed because men from those towns formed part of the retinue accompanying the Duke of York to parliament in 1450, and from a local rising in his favour at the time of Dartford in 1452,<sup>78</sup> but on both occasions the towns formed part of the duke's estates.<sup>79</sup> However these were, as with the northern territories, forfeited in 1459 and were not in Yorkist hands in January/ February 1461.<sup>80</sup> There may have been a residual loyalty to York, but there is no record of men from either town joining him on his march north in 1460.<sup>81</sup> The point is that to Queen Margaret these were now Lancastrian lands and she had everything to lose and nothing to gain by 'an organised harrying of the duke's property.'<sup>82</sup>

The claim that Stamford was subject to a sack from which it did not recover is based on the Tudor antiquary John Leland.<sup>83</sup> His attribution of the damage is

speculation; by the time he wrote stories of Lancastrian ravages were well established, but outside living memory. His statement was embellished by the romantic historian Francis Peck in the early eighteenth century. Peck gives a spirited account of Wakefield and the Lancastrian march, influenced by Tudor as well as Yorkist historiography. He continues:

These northern people, after they were once passed the river of Trent, spoiled & wasted the countrie afore them . . . [Stamford] lay directly in their road, was rich, & what was worse, greatly affected to its then lords & proprietors the house of York. It severely felt therefore the fury of their mortal enemies the Lancastrians in this mad journey of theirs towards London. For this is the time, tho' he himself knew it not, which Leland speaks of<sup>84</sup>

Edward IV spent a week in Stamford in March 1462, so it had recovered sufficiently to entertain the king and his sizeable retinue.<sup>85</sup> He granted a 'great charter' of incorporation to the town, not something he would have done had it been in a devastated state, and he settled it on his mother, Cecily Duchess of York, who drew revenues from it until her death, when Henry VII bestowed it upon his mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort.<sup>86</sup> In March 1463 the aldermen of Grantham petitioned Edward IV for a confirmation of their franchises because, they claimed, the charters had been taken by the Lancastrians.<sup>87</sup> Perhaps they had. But what better way to emulate Stamford and look for an increase in their liberties than to flatter Edward IV by referring to his 'great rebels' and appealing for the new king's grace to right a wrong. The belief that all the churches in Stamford are late fifteenth century, the earlier ones having been destroyed by the Lancastrians, cannot be substantiated: 'St John's Church was built in 1451 [and] there is proof that several of the churches still had their original stained glass windows in the eighteenth century; if the town were so comprehensively destroyed it seems unlikely to say the least that the windows could have survived.'<sup>88</sup> The first Garter King at Arms, Sir William Bruges, who died in 1450, had stained glass windows erected in the Church of St George in Stamford to commemorate the Garter knights of Edward III. Sir William Dugdale, Garter King of Arms, made drawings of these figures in 1641.<sup>89</sup> Somehow they too escaped destruction in the 'sack' of Stamford.

The paucity of surviving records makes it impossible to establish how much damage was inflicted on the remaining towns. Mr Richard Hillier tells me that the oldest history of Peterborough Cathedral (the abbey in 1461) makes no mention of pillage by the northern men.<sup>90</sup> The borough records for Huntingdon have not survived, but the frankpledge rolls for Godmanchester during this period are still extant, and,

if the army went on to Melbourn and Royston it must have passed over Huntingdon bridge and thence immediately into Godmanchester [but] there is no mention of the passing army or any indication of general

damage to the town; however it may be that they escaped as it was part of the duchy of Lancaster. If Melbourn (a village to the north of Royston) was to be mentioned, then one might similarly expect Godmanchester, if indeed it did suffer.<sup>91</sup>

The case of Melbourn is especially interesting. Even if one accepts revenge as motivation for pillaging lands formerly held by the Duke of York, it does not apply to Melbourn which formed part of Queen Margaret's dower, in the honour of Leicester, granted to her by Parliament in 1446.<sup>92</sup> Anyone reading Margaret's letters cannot doubt that whatever else she may have been prepared to tolerate, damage to her dower lands would not be one of them.<sup>93</sup> The inference must be that Melbourn appears in the list of ravaged towns because of its geographical position, which in turn casts doubt on what was allegedly done elsewhere.

In considering the destruction the northern army is supposed to have inflicted on the countryside, the silence of William Worcester, travelling indefatigably in the service of his master Sir John Fastolf, should be noted. It is true that he put off a journey from Norwich in February 1461 because there were so many soldiers on the road to St Albans but he does not single out either army for condemnation. And he took good care to protect his cherished title deeds, housed in Southwark, against marauding soldiery before the battles of Northampton and Towton, a clear indication that pillage was not confined to, or even expected of, one side only in the conflict.<sup>94</sup> Worcester was also able to describe Grantham as 'a fine town' in 1478 without any reference to a sack.<sup>95</sup>

As late as 12 February when Warwick moved his troops to St Albans it is claimed that he did not know the whereabouts of the Lancastrians, an odd lack of military intelligence about an army that was supposed to be leaving havoc in its wake.<sup>96</sup> The Lancastrians apparently swerved to the west after passing Royston which has puzzled military historians because they accept that it came down the Great North Road,<sup>97</sup> but on the evidence we have it is impossible to affirm this. If it came from York via Grantham, Leicester, Market Harborough, Northampton and Stony Stratford to Dunstable, where the first engagement took place, there was no necessity to make an inexplicable swerve westwards because its line of march brought it to Dunstable and then to St Albans.<sup>98</sup> The Lancastrians defeated Warwick's army on 17 February 1461 and Warwick fled the field.<sup>99</sup> In an echo of Wakefield there is a suggestion of treachery. *An English Chronicle* tells the story of one Thomas Lovelace, a captain of Kent in the Yorkist ranks, who also appears in Waurin.<sup>100</sup> Lovelace, it is claimed, was captured at Wakefield and promised Queen Margaret that he would join Warwick and then betray and desert him, in return for his freedom.

Lt. Colonel Burne, in a rare spirit of chivalry, credits Margaret with the tactical plan that won the victory, although only because it was so unorthodox that it must

have been devised by a woman.<sup>101</sup> But there is no evidence that Margaret had any military flair, let alone experience. A more likely candidate is the veteran captain Andrew Trollope who served with Warwick when the latter was Captain of Calais, but he refused to fight under the Yorkist banner against his king at Ludford in 1459 when Warwick brought over a contingent of Calais men to defy King Henry in the field.<sup>102</sup> It was Trollope's 'desertion' at Ludford, it is claimed, that forced the Yorkists to flee.<sup>103</sup> The most objective and detailed account of the battle of St Albans is by the unknown continuator of *Gregory's Chronicle*. The chronicle ends in 1469 and by that time it was safe to criticise Warwick, who was then out of favour. The continuator was a London citizen who may have fought in the Yorkist ranks.<sup>104</sup> He had an interest in military matters and recorded the gathering of the Lancastrian army at Hull, before Wakefield, and the detail that the troops wore the Prince of Wales' colours and ostrich feathers on their livery together with the insignia of their lords. He had heard the rumours of a large ill-disciplined army, but because he saw only the household men he concluded that the northerners ran away before the battle.<sup>105</sup> Abbot Whethamstede wrote a longer though far less circumstantial account, in which he carefully made no mention of the Earl of Warwick.<sup>106</sup>

King Henry was present at St Albans, although, naturally, he took no part, and afterwards he was reunited with his wife and son. He celebrated by knighting Prince Edward who then knighted other victorious participants, including Andrew Trollope and the young Earl of Shrewsbury.<sup>107</sup> Among those captured were Lords Montagu, Berners, Bonville and Sir Thomas Kyriell. The last two were executed as traitors, undoubtedly on the orders of Queen Margaret. There are considerable discrepancies between different reports of this incident, some of which involve King Henry and the Prince of Wales.<sup>108</sup> Four chronicles report that Bonville and Kyriell remained with Henry VI because he promised them protection.<sup>109</sup> Perhaps King Henry made a promise at the behest of Warwick that anyone who took the field would be pardoned if the day went against them. It would be like him, and cannot be discounted, but that he made a specific promise to Bonville and Kyriell, who therefore stayed to protect him, is less likely. This is the official version in the rolls of parliament, from which the chronicle accounts may well be drawn.<sup>110</sup> It was important for the Yorkists to stress that King Henry was 'faithless,' as the basis of Edward IV's claim to the throne was that Henry VI broke his oath when he abandoned the Yorkists at St Albans. This, together with hereditary descent, justified Edward IV in proclaiming himself king.<sup>111</sup> The part played by the Prince of Wales is possibly a later addition, or it may contain an element of truth. Either the prince passed judgement on the 'traitors' or he and the queen watched their execution.<sup>112</sup> In *Gregory's Chronicle* the prince condemns Bonville, but Kyriell 'that manly knyght' was slain (in the battle?)<sup>113</sup> *An English Chronicle*, which is

particularly hostile to Margaret of Anjou, contains the most detailed English account: the men were executed on the queen's orders but the prince sat in judgement upon them and they had been betrayed by King Henry.<sup>114</sup> In Waurin's dramatic version, Kyriell plays the central role and Bonville is not mentioned. Kyriell has the temerity to bandy words with an angry Queen Margaret who demands of her son what death this arrogant man shall die, to which the prince makes the predictable response.<sup>115</sup> Bonville was ennobled in 1449 for services to the crown as Seneschal of Gascony.<sup>116</sup> Kyriell had been a Lancastrian war captain in France and a king's knight since Henry's minority.<sup>117</sup> They were wooed by the Yorkists in 1460, being nominated for the order of the Garter, and, in the midst of preparations to repel the Lancastrians, Warwick, in King Henry's name, convened a special meeting of the chapter of the order in London to confer it on them, together with another turncoat, Sir John Wenlock, and, incidentally, on himself.<sup>118</sup>

K.B. McFarlane's brilliantly intuitive approach to the fifteenth century did not extend to Margaret of Anjou. With moral superiority he derides her for involving her son in the execution of Bonville and Kyriell and thus signally fails to understand the queen, for Margaret was not trying to teach Prince Edward 'the ways of his world.'<sup>119</sup> Margaret's imperative need to re-establish contact with her husband had been accomplished, but her only hope of ensuring her son's future was a regime with Henry VI as figurehead and Prince Edward as his father's regent. The Duke of York's first protectorate, when Henry VI was incapacitated in 1454, had been instituted to last only until the infant prince was old enough to assume it, should the king fail to recover his reason.<sup>120</sup> Prince Edward was still a child, but circumstances dictated that he be recognised as his father's natural and legal proxy. It may have been with this in mind that Margaret had encouraged the formation of the prince's council in 1457 whilst she was trying to buttress the throne against whatever bid York might make for a third protectorate.<sup>121</sup> Now the need was urgent as her son had been disinherited by her husband, in whose name she had no option but to rule. She was trying to try to protect the powers of the crown and Prince Edward's inheritance.<sup>122</sup> The prince symbolised royal authority, which was why Margaret had him accompany the army, with the troops wearing his colours. In this context Prince Edward would be expected to endorse the execution of traitors, and to sit in judgement on Bonville and Kyriell. It is spurious to argue that they were serving King Henry. As household men, it was to the Lancastrians that they owed allegiance, and that meant answering the call to arms of the queen, not skulking behind a putative promise of protection from a thoroughly bemused monarch.<sup>123</sup> Queen Margaret could have executed two far more important prisoners had she been motivated by revenge. Warwick's brother, John Neville, Lord Montagu, and Lord Berners, brother to Thomas Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury, were captured and taken north, which probably saved

their lives, since they were not able to fight at Towton.<sup>124</sup> In the queen's eyes Neville and Bourchier were not household men, in the sense that Bonville and Kyriell were, she did not execute as traitors men whose loyalty kept them true to their respective families.

An instructive comparison is the behaviour of Edward, Earl of March after the battle of Mortimer's Cross. Edward of Lancaster, Prince of Wales, was the dynastic heir to the throne; so, legally, was Edward of March, now Duke of York, and both could claim the authority to execute traitors. The younger Edward 'authorised' the execution of two household men. The older Edward beheaded no less than ten men, among them Owen Tudor, the father of King Henry's half brother Jasper Tudor, the Lancastrian commander defeated at Mortimer's Cross.<sup>125</sup> Owen Tudor was not a traitor but a loyal subject of the king whose mother he had married. It was Edward of York, not Margaret of Anjou, who was motivated by revenge. Richard of York was killed at Wakefield so Edward of York executed Jasper Tudor's father, who posed no political threat. Yet Edward is portrayed as exacting justice, whilst Queen Margaret is a ruthless vengeful woman who put to death unnecessarily two 'faithful' servants of the king.<sup>126</sup>

Margaret of Anjou had won the battle but she proceeded to lose the war. London lay open to her and she made a fatal political blunder in retreating from St Albans instead of taking possession of the capital.<sup>127</sup> Although mistaken, her reasons for doing so were cogent. The focus of contemporary accounts is the threat to London from the Lancastrian army.<sup>128</sup> This is repeated in all the standard histories, and even those who credit Margaret with deliberately turning away from London do so for the wrong reasons.<sup>129</sup> Margaret never intended an assault on London, and at no time during the tense negotiations following the battle did the army approach the city, but remained in the environs of St Albans. This, however, was not the perception in London. Warwick's propaganda had ensured that everyone believed an attack was the inevitable corollary of a Lancastrian victory, and fear of the Lancastrian army was as genuinely felt in London as it had been at Crowland. The primary concern of the mayor and aldermen was to keep their city safe and they were prepared to welcome Queen Margaret provided they were assured that the northern army would be withdrawn, but this was a promise Margaret could not give, for without the army at her back she would be powerless to resist capture if Warwick returned, as he surely must. It was a stand-off from the start, and both sides knew that the victory at St Albans had not been decisive. The queen's first concern was to obtain supplies for her troops — to be sent out to them from the city. The mayor accepted this not unreasonable request and arranged for a train of food carts to leave the city through Cripplegate. He reckoned without the unruly element among the poorer classes and their natural propensity for mayhem whenever political instability offered them a chance to riot. The carts were too

good an opportunity to miss, and they were overturned and looted.<sup>130</sup> It was not a good beginning for either side.

The mayor also sent a deputation of aldermen to the queen and, astutely, he had them accompanied by ladies known to her, to ask her intentions and to intercede, if need be, on behalf of the city.<sup>131</sup> The Duchess of Buckingham (who was godmother to the Prince of Wales) the dowager Duchess of Bedford (who was aunt by marriage to the king) and Lady Scales.<sup>132</sup> On 21 February the queen's representatives met a delegation of aldermen at Barnet, and returned with them to London, and a proclamation declaring peace throughout the city was published by the mayor.<sup>133</sup> But rumours were rife, and so was scare-mongering.<sup>134</sup> Warwick's supporters spread fantastic stories, including one that York was not dead but had marched west to join his son in Wales. The faint-hearted had a different version, Warwick and the Duke of Norfolk had been captured and were being held by the Lancastrians for their own nefarious purposes.<sup>135</sup>

A second delegation from the queen was unable to enter the city, being opposed by armed Yorkist supporters whom the mayor refused to allow inside the gates, which effectively prevented the Lancastrian negotiators from completing their mission.<sup>136</sup> Chronicle accounts of the common citizens being prepared to withstand the Lancastrians because they wanted to hold the city for the Yorkists are inconsistent and exaggerate the numbers involved. There was at least one encounter, and possibly several, between Londoners and the Lancastrians who had made their way to Westminster to see if it was safe. The resulting skirmish left a number on both sides killed or injured.<sup>137</sup> The mayor announced a curfew 'in order that the king and his forces might enter and behave peacefully.'<sup>138</sup> This evoked a riotous response, and an armed mob demanded the keys to the city gates, to defend them, but their action was of short duration as the military resources of the mayor and aldermen were more than sufficient to restore order, and an uneasy calm descended on the city.

The uncertainties and delays, as well as the hostility of some citizens, served to reinforce Margaret's belief that entry to London could be dangerous. It was not what London had to fear from her but what she had to fear from London that made her hesitate. Had she made a show of riding in state into the city with her husband and son in a colourful procession she might have accomplished a Lancastrian restoration, but Margaret had never courted popularity with the Londoners, as Warwick had, and she had kept the court away from the capital for several years in the late 1450s, a move that was naturally resented. Warwick's propaganda had tarnished her image, associating her irrevocably with the dreaded northern men. There was also the danger that if Warwick and Edward of March reached London with a substantial force she could be trapped inside a hostile city, and she cannot have doubted that once she and Prince Edward were taken prisoner the Lancastrian

dynasty would come to an end. Understandably, at the critical moment, Margaret lost her nerve.

The mayor and common council stalled for time since they and many affluent Londoners, merchant guilds and individuals alike, had invested heavily in the Yorkist regime and must have hoped that the situation could be retrieved.<sup>139</sup> Then came the news that Edward of March was moving towards London with a powerful army. A warrant from Henry VI dated 22 February to the mayor, aldermen and sheriffs of the city declared March a traitor and ordered a public proclamation to that effect.<sup>140</sup> It is dated 'at Westminster' and this seemingly puzzling venue explains the encounters of Lancastrians and Londoners as reported in the chronicles. The Lancastrians were not part of Margaret's army but messengers from the court, being escorted between the king at St Albans and the administrative offices at Westminster. They clashed with pro-Warwick supporters who made efforts to prevent them from getting through. The statement in *An English Chronicle* that a skirmish occurred with the Duke of Somerset's men, and *The Great Chronicle* version that they were outriders of the queen, then makes sense.<sup>141</sup> Henry VI's *breve* was drafted either with his consent or in his name, and carried to Westminster to be put in proper form and issued by a clerk of the signet. It was not necessarily deliberate falsification, as, from a Lancastrian standpoint, this is where the king would be in a very short time. This warrant would have been just one copy of what was sent out to mayors and sheriffs in the localities who did not know that the king was not in full control and would expect such an order to come from Westminster. The masterly delaying tactics of the mayor ensured that the king's *breve* was not brought to the attention of the Common Council, much less published as a proclamation, until 26 February, the same day on which the Earls of March and Warwick sent emissaries to the city with letters demanding admittance. The edict from the king and the 'request' from the earls were considered simultaneously and a copy of the king's *breve* was sent to Edward. The first consideration of the city fathers, as always, was to make sure that no troops entered London, but, with that proviso, the mayor was prepared to admit Edward, and it was probably this decision that tipped the balance and resulted in the Lancastrian withdrawal. Margaret's caution got the better of her courage and, with the agreement of the Lancastrian lords, whose power base was in the north, she decided to retreat rather than face a combined Yorkist force in battle outside a hostile city.<sup>142</sup> A political as well as a tactical consideration influenced her decision. The denunciation of Edward of March as a traitor was only the first step towards undoing the dynastic damage done by Henry VI when he accepted the Duke of York and York's sons as his heirs. The act of parliament which legalised it would have to be revoked, and Margaret must have wished to summon parliament to a city more favourable to her and to her son than London had proved to be.

Queen Margaret did not march south in 1461 in order to take possession of London, but to recover the person of the king. She underestimated the importance of the capital to her cause.<sup>143</sup> Although she had attempted to establish the court away from London, the Yorkist lords did not oppose her for taking the government out of the capital, but for excluding them from participation in it. Nevertheless London became the natural and lucrative base for the Yorkists, of which they took full advantage. The author of the *Annales* was in no doubt that it was Margaret's failure to enter London that ensured the doom of the Lancastrian dynasty. A view shared, of course, by the continuator of *Gregory's Chronicle*, a devoted Londoner:

He that had Londyn for sake  
Wolde no more to hem take.<sup>144</sup>

The king, queen and prince had been in residence at the Abbey of St Albans since the Lancastrian victory. Abbot Whethamstede, at his most obscure, conveys a strong impression that St Albans was devastated because the Lancastrian leaders, including Queen Margaret, encouraged plundering south of the Trent in lieu of wages.<sup>145</sup> There must have been some pillaging by an army which had been kept in a state of uncertainty for a week, but whether it was as widespread or as devastating as the good abbot, and later chroniclers, assert is by no means certain.<sup>146</sup> Whethamstede is so admirably obtuse that his rhetoric confuses both the chronology and the facts. So convoluted and uncircumstantial is his account that the eighteenth century historian of the abbey, the Reverend Peter Newcome, was trapped into saying: 'These followers of the Earl of March were looked on as monsters in barbarity.' He is echoed by Antonia Gransden who has 'the conflict between the southerners of Henry's army and the northerners of Edward's.'<sup>147</sup> The abbey was not pillaged, but Whethamstede blackened Queen Margaret's reputation by a vague accusation that she appropriated one of the abbey's valuable possessions before leaving for the north.<sup>148</sup> This is quite likely, not in a spirit of plunder or avarice, but as a contribution to the Lancastrian war effort, just as she had extorted, or so he later claimed, a loan from the prior of Durham earlier in the year.<sup>149</sup> The majority of the chroniclers content themselves with the laconic statement that the queen and her army withdrew to the north, they are more concerned to record in rapturous detail the reception of Edward IV by 'his' people. *An English Chronicle*, hostile to the last, reports that the Lancastrian army plundered its way north as remorselessly as it had on its journey south.<sup>150</sup> One can only assume that it took a different route.

The Lancastrian march ended where it began, in the city of York. Edward of March had himself proclaimed King Edward IV in the capital the queen had abandoned, and advanced north to win the battle of Towton on 29 March. The bid to unseat the government of the Yorkist lords had failed, and that failure brought a new dynasty into being. The Duke of York was dead, but his son was King of

England whilst King Henry, Queen Margaret and Prince Edward sought shelter at the Scottish court. The Lancastrian march on London had vindicated its stated purpose, to recover the person of the king so that the crown would not continue to be a pawn in the hands of rebels and traitors, but ultimately it had failed because the Lancastrian leaders, including Queen Margaret, simply did not envisage that Edward of March would have the courage or the capacity to declare himself king. Edward IV had all the attributes that King Henry (and Queen Margaret) lacked: he was young, ruthless, charming, and the best general of his day; and in the end he out-thought as well as out-maneuvred them.

It cannot be argued that no damage was done by the Lancastrian army. It was mid-winter, when supplies of any kind would have been short, so pillaging, petty theft, and unpaid foraging were inevitable. It kept the field for over a month and, and, as it stayed longest at Dunstable and in the environs of St Albans, both towns suffered from its presence. But the army did not indulge in systematic devastation of the countryside, either on its own account or at the behest of the queen. Nor did it contain contingents of England's enemies, the Scots and the French, as claimed by Yorkist propaganda. Other armies were on the march that winter: a large Yorkist force moved from London to Towton and back again. There are no records of damage done by it, but equally, it cannot be claimed that there was none.

The propaganda devised by Warwick to bolster the government of the Yorkist lords in the name of the captive King Henry, and win popular support against the Lancastrians, was elaborated and embroidered once Edward IV was crowned. It became the official mythology that the Rose of Rouen was the saviour of the nation, that without him all England would have perished,<sup>151</sup> and any other version was carefully edited or destroyed. Popular poems celebrating the victories at Northampton, Towton and, later, Barnet still exist,<sup>152</sup> but no poems survive to commemorate Wakefield and the second battle of St Albans. Like the Yorkists, later historians looked for an acceptable explanation of why civil war came to England, and the French Queen Margaret was a natural scapegoat. It may be argued that the triumph of Edward IV was in the best interests of the nation, but in accepting this essentially Yorkist point of view the position of Margaret and the Lancastrian lords has been distorted out of all recognition. Edward IV did not ultimately save England from further civil war, and who can say that had the Lancastrians been victorious in 1461 they would have failed to restore and maintain stable government in the name of the anointed king? The Yorkist version of events, the version of the victor, has passed into English historiography and been accepted as fact. The basic legality of the Lancastrian position has been glossed over or ignored.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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3. *Calendar of Patent Rolls, Henry VI, 1452-61*, pp. 649, 652, 653; A.J. Pollard, *North-Eastern England during the Wars of the Roses*, Oxford 1990, p. 281.
4. *Annales Rerum Anglicarum*, in J. Stevenson, ed., *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France*, 3 vols in 2, London 1861-64, p. 774.
5. Ralph A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI*, London 1981, pp. 825-26.
6. Griffiths, p. 851 n. 330.
7. The Tudor chronicler Edward Hall's vivid and exciting reconstruction owes as much to imagination as it does to fact *Hall's Chronicle*, Henry Ellis, ed., London 1809, pp. 250-251.
8. *Annales*, p. 775; J.S. Davies, ed., *An English Chronicle of the reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V and Henry VI*, London 1856, pp. 106-107.
9. A.B. Hinds, ed. *Calendar of state papers and manuscripts existing in the archives and collections of Milan, 1305-1618*, London 1912, p. 48. 'the queen has recently fought with the Duke of York . . . [who] seems rather to have been slain out of hatred for having claimed the kingdom than anything else.' (Subsequent references will be to *Milanese Papers*.)
10. *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, vol. 5, p. 477: 'the seid orrible and cruell murdre of the seid Duc of York, and of the Eries of Rutlond and Salesbury'
11. H.T. Riley, ed., *Registrum Abbatiae Johannis Whethamstede*, 2 vols, London 1872-73.
12. Whethamstede, vol. 1, Introduction, pp. xvi.
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14. H. Hallam, *View of the state of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 11th ed., 3 vols, London 1856, vol. 3, p. 197.
15. C.L. Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century*, Oxford 1913, p. 153.
16. Keith Dockray and Richard Knowles, 'The Battle of Wakefield,' *The Ricardian*, vol. 9, no. 117, June, 1992, p. 3. This is the best modern analysis. cf. Clements R. Markham, 'The Battle of Wakefield', *Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Journal*, 9, (1886), pp. 105-123 for a Yorkist oriented account.
17. Whethamstede, vol. 1, pp. 384-86.
18. Whethamstede, vol 1, pp. 164 and 248.
19. Whethamstede, vol 1, p.415. *Hic fuit in verbis Rex mitis, rex pietatis, attamen in factis nimiae vir simplicatatis.*
20. John Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship*, Cambridge 1996, p. 78: 'To deny another person access to the king was, in fact, to assert control over the king: the familiar act of 'acclamation of the royal power'; a terrible crime not only because of the offence to royal dignity, but also because of the instability it created.'
21. J.G. Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in the Later Middle Ages*, Cambridge 1970, p. 204.
22. Anthony Goodman, *The Wars of the Roses*, London 1981; reprint, New York 1996, p. 42; J.R. Lander, *Conflict and Stability in Fifteenth Century England*, 3rd ed., London 1977, p. 84; Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 281.
23. James Gairdner, ed., *William Gregory's Chronicle of London in The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century*, London 1876, p. 210. (Subsequent references will be to *Gregory's Chronicle*.)

24. Cora L. Scofield, *The Life and Reign of Edward IV*, 2 vols, London 1923, vol 1, p. 117. B. Wilkinson, *A Constitutional History of England in the Fifteenth Century*, London 1964, p. 107, misquoting Scofield, attributes the threat directly to Queen Margaret.
25. The letter is not extant. Its receipt is recorded in the Corporation of London Records Office, Journal of the Common Council, 6, f. 284 under December 1460.
26. The receipt of three letters, from the queen, the Prince of Wales and Jasper Tudor is recorded in the Journals for 2 December 1460. CLRO, Journal 6, f. 279. The originals are no longer extant. Copies exist in London, British Library, Harleian MS 543, ff. 147-48.
27. Mary Anne Everett Wood, *Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies of Great Britain*, vol. 1, London 1846, pp. 95-97. The letters from the queen and the prince were also copied by John Vale, and are printed in Margaret Lucille Kekewich and others, eds., *The Politics of Fifteenth Century England: John Vales' Book*, Stroud 1995, pp. 142-44, where the queen's letter is still incorrectly dated to 1461, and it is erroneously claimed that it has not been previously published. A slightly different version is to be found in Agnes Strickland, 'Margaret of Anjou' in *Lives of the Queens of England from the Norman Conquest*, 8 vols, London 1851, vol. 2, p. 241.
28. British Library, Harleian MS. 543, f. 147.
29. Scofield, vol 1, p. 136, who also gives a paraphrased extract of the letter from the Prince of Wales. cf. Caroline M. Barron, 'London and the Crown 1451-1461', in J.R.L. Highfield & R. Jeffs, eds, *The Crown and Local Communities in England and France in the Fifteenth Century*, Gloucester 1981, p. 98 and n. 79; J.R. Lander, *The Wars of the Roses*, London 1965; rev. ed., Gloucester 1990, p. 84.
30. J.J. Bagley, *Margaret of Anjou, Queen of England*, London, 1948, does not mention it, nor do most of the major studies of the period.
31. *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, 1460-1469*, Edinburgh 1844-1886, p. 8.
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33. Scottish troops were besieging Berwick when James II was accidentally killed at Roxburgh, to which he had laid siege in person, in August 1460.
34. Thomas Basin, *Histoire des regnes de Charles VII et de Louis XI*, J.E.J. Quicherat, ed. 4 vols, Paris, 1855-1859, vol. 4, pp. 357-58.
35. Jehan de Waurin, *Recueil des croniques et anciennes istories de la Grant Bretagne, a present nomme Engleterre*, William Hardy and Edward C.P. Hardy, eds 5 vols, London 1864-1891, vol. 5, pp. 354-55.
36. T.F. Tout, 'Margaret of Anjou' in *Dictionary of National Biography*; Bagley, p 111; B. Wolffe, *Henry VI*, London 1981, p. 362 and n. 60. Scofield, vol. 1, p. 134 misdates the meeting at Lincluden to January 1461 after the news of Wakefield had reached Scotland, claiming that it was this victory, plus the promise of Berwick, that persuaded Queen Mary to receive Margaret and that the queens came to 'some kind of agreement on January 5th', only six days after the battle.
37. Annie I. Dunlop, *The Life and Times of James Kennedy, Bishop of St Andrews*, Edinburgh 1950, p. 216.
38. *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, vol 5, p. 478.
39. Howell T. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses*, Cambridge 1915, pp. 124-25; and p. 128 for a partial list of Welsh engaged on the Lancastrian side; James Gairdner, ed., *Three Fifteenth Century Chronicles* London 1880, for the erroneous statement in *A Short English Chronicle*, p. 76, that the Earl of Wiltshire was at Wakefield. It may account for the assumption that there were Welsh troops in the northern army, as Wiltshire was with Jasper Tudor in Wales. (Subsequent references will be to *Three Chronicles*.)
40. *Three Chronicles*, pp. 154-55, and Introduction pp. xv - xx; Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, p. 161.
41. *Annales*, p. 774.

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43. *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 212.
44. Colin Richmond, 'The Nobility and Wars of the Roses 1459-1461', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 21 (1977), p. 78.
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46. *Annales*, p. 777.
47. Michael Hicks, *Warwick the Kingmaker*, Oxford 1998, *passim*.
48. Pollard, *North Eastern England*, p. 26 and n. 66 where he identifies the quotation on evil coming from the north as biblical, *Jeremiah*, 1:14, 'Then the Lord said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.'
49. Norman Davis, ed., *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, 2 parts, Oxford 1971 and 1976, part 2, p. 213, 'for the pepill in the northe robbe and styll and ben apoyntyd to pill all thys cwntré and gyffe a-way meny goodys and lyfflodys in all the sowthe cwntré'.
50. C.L. Kingsford, ed., *The Chronicles of London*, Oxford 1905, p. 172, 'it was Reported that the Quene wt the Northern men world come downer to the Cities and Robbe and despoiled the Cities and destroy it vterly, and all the Sowth Cuntre'.
51. *Paston Letters*, part 1, p. 198.
52. *CPR, 1452-1461*, p. 655. The first order against 'unlawful gathering' went out on 11 January.
53. *CPR, 1452-1461*, pp. 656-659.
54. Goodman, p. 45, for details of his suggestion that 'there may have been a Norfolk conspiracy to aid the northermers.'
55. Harris Nicolas, ed., *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England*, 7 vols, London 1834-1837, vol. 6, pp. 309-10.
56. Constance Head, 'Pius II and the Wars of the Roses,' *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 8 (1970), pp. 163-64.
57. *Milanese Papers*, p. 39. The letter is dated 9 January, a week after news of Wakefield reached London.
58. Bagley, pp. 113-14.
59. Christine Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses*, Cambridge 1997, p. 148; Goodman, pp. 47-48; Lander, *Wars of the Roses*, p. 82; A.J. Pollard, *The Wars of the Roses*, London 1988, pp. 87-88; Charles Ross, *The Wars of the Roses*, London 1976, p. 51.
60. Alfred H. Burne, *The Battlefields of England*, London 1950, p. 83.
61. *Three Chronicles*, p. 76, p. 155 and p. 172; *English Chronicle* p. 107; Ralph Flenley, ed., *Six Town Chronicles of England*, Oxford 1911, p. 152; G.L. and M.A. Harriss, eds, *John Benet's Chronicle for the years 1400-1462*, London 1972, p. 229.
62. H.T. Riley (trans.) *Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Crowland with the Continuations of Peter of Blois*, London 1854, p. 422. (Subsequent references will be to *Crowland*.)
63. *Crowland*, p. 423.
64. Alison Allan, 'Yorkist Propaganda: Pedigree, Prophecy and the "British History" in the Reign of Edward IV', in Charles Ross, ed., *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England*, Gloucester 1979, pp. 171-72.
65. *Crowland*, p. 423-425.
66. *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, vol 5, p. 476. An almost identical passage, somewhat shorter, can be found on p. 462.
67. *Whethamstede*, vol. 1, pp. 388-90.

68. Whethamstede. vol. 1, pp. 171 and 392.
69. Whethamstede, vol. 2, Introduction, p. xviii: 'the Lancastrian troops went so far as to assert, and probably not untruthfully, that the Queen and their Northern leaders had given them leave to plunder everywhere on the south of the River Trent, St. Albans included.'
70. Charles Ross, *Edward IV*, London 1974, p. 30 n 1; Lander, *Conflict*, p. 85, n 1.
71. R.H. Britnell, 'The Economic Context' in A.J. Pollard, ed., *The Wars of the Roses*, London 1995, p. 46.
72. *Three Chronicles*, p. 155.
73. John Stow, *Annales, or a Generall Chronicle of England*, London 1631, p. 413; *English Chronicle*, p. 107.
74. *Victoria History of the Counties of England: Lincolnshire*, vol. 2, London 1906, p. 268.
75. Ross, *Wars of the Roses* p. 51; Griffiths, p. 872.
76. Griffiths, p. 881 n. 90, where he inadvertently dates the commission to 12 January instead of 17 January.
77. *CPR, 1452-61*, p. 657. Men were to be armed and watch kept for eight miles around the town to apprehend all 'evil doers guilty of treason. ' possibly a reference to the Lancastrian army, but they were also to ensure than 'none assist the guilty under pain of forfeit.'
78. Wolffe, p. 244. R.L. Storey, 'Lincolnshire and the Wars of the Roses', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 14 (1970), p. 66.
79. Griffiths, p. 708 n. 116 also notes meetings of men sympathetic to York in Royston (as well as Grantham and Stamford) in late 1450 following the duke's return from Ireland.
80. *CPR, 1452-1461*, p. 532.
81. Johnson, *York*, p. 222.
82. Griffiths, p. 872. This conclusion is surprising after his cogent analysis of the intentions of the Lancastrian government vis-à-vis the forfeited estates.
83. John Leland, *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543*, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith, 5 vols, London, 1906-1908. vol. 5, p. 5. 'The northern men brent miche of Staunford townne. It was not synce fully reedified.'
84. Francis Peck, *Academia tertia Anglicana; or, the Antiquarian Annals of the Town of Stamford*, London 1727, pp. 61-63.
85. Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 304; *Paston Letters*, part 1, pp. 392-3. The letter is from John Paston to his father, dated 13 March (1462). He was with the king in Stamford but there is no mention of ravages to the town.
86. Alan Rogers, 'Late Medieval Stamford: a study of the town council 1465-1492' in Alan Everitt, ed., *Perspectives in English urban history*, London 1973, pp. 21 and 30.
87. Scofield, vol. 1, p. 136 n. 2.
88. Letter from Robert McInroy, Area Librarian, Kesteven, Lincolnshire County Council. I am most grateful to Mr McInroy for his interesting and informative letter in which he disputes his predecessor's claim that the early Stamford charters are still extant. This claim was made by the late Mr L. Tebbutt to J.R. Lander, (*Conflict*, p. 85, n. 1.) Mr McInroy considers Mr Tebbutt to be not entirely reliable in this matter and says, if it was indeed so, then 'he took the secret of the location to the grave.'
89. Anthony Richard Wagner, *Heralds and heraldry in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1956, p. 116.
90. Letter from Richard W.E. Hillier, Local Studies Librarian, Peterborough Central Library, Peterborough.
91. Letter from Philip Saunders, Deputy County Archivist, County Record Office, Huntingdon. My thanks to Mr Saunders who went to considerable trouble to locate this reference for me.
92. Robert Somerville, *The History of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1265-1603*, London 1953, p. 208.
93. Cecil Monro, ed., *Letters of Margaret of Anjou*, London 1863.

94. K.B. McFarlane, 'The Wars of the Roses' in *England in the Fifteenth Century*, London 1981 p. 242. First published *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 50 (1964), pp. 87-119.
95. John H. Harvey, ed., *William Worcestre Itineraries*, Oxford 1969, p. 97.
96. Lander, *Wars of the Roses*, pp. 9-10: 'At the Second Battle of St Albans Warwick was unaware of Queen Margaret's approach.'
97. Burne, pp. 83-84; Goodman, pp. 45-46; Philip A. Haigh, *The Military Campaigns of the Wars of the Roses* Gloucester 1995, p. 48.
98. *Milanese Papers*, p. 48. A Milanese correspondent in London reported in a letter dated 14 February that on 12 February, the day Warwick's army marched, a rumour reached the capital that the Queen's forces were thirty miles away, 'However they do not seem to have passed Northampton.'
99. *Annales*, pp. 776-777; *Benet's Chronicle*, p. 229; *English Chronicle*, p. 107; *London Chronicle*, p. 173; *Three Chronicles*, pp. 76 and 172. Friedrich W.D. Brie, ed., *The Brut, or the Chronicles of England*, part 2, London, 1908, [Continuation G] p. 531 and [Continuation K] p. 602. A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley, eds., *The Great Chronicle of London*, London 1938, p. 193-94.
100. *English Chronicle*, p. 108; Waurin, vol. 5, pp. 327, 329. *Six Town Chronicles*, p. 152, has a reference to York and Salisbury going north before Wakefield, and 'oon called Iovelac a Gentilman of Kent folowed them wt greet ordenaunce of Gounes and other stuffs of werre.' Lovelace's treachery is accepted by Scofield, vol. 1, p. 142; Goodman p. 47, n. 51; and Lander, *Conflict*, p. 85. Wolffe, p. 328 recounts it; Griffiths, p. 872 ignores it. Hicks, *Warwick*, p. 261, recognises it for the propaganda it was.
101. Burne, p. 85.
102. For Trolloppe's career see Anne Marshall, 'The Role of English War Captains in England and Normandy', MA Thesis in History, University of Wales, University College, Swansea, 1974, pp. 301-304. Unaccountably, she has Edward of March present at St Albans.
103. Griffiths, p. 822; *London Chronicle*, p. 169; *Great Chronicle*, p. 191; [Brut Continuation G], p. 527.
104. Ross, *Wars of the Roses*, p. 121; Griffiths, p. 881 n. 93 calls him an eyewitness. For the dating of *Gregory's Chronicle* see Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, p. 97.
105. *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. 211-214.
106. Whethamstede, vol. 1, pp. 390-393.
107. *Annales*, p. 777; *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 214; *Great Chronicle*, p. 194; Whethamstede, vol. 1, p. 394.
108. *Brut* [Continuation G], p. 532; *Three Chronicles*, p. 155; *Great Chronicle*, p. 195; *London Chronicle*, p. 174, record only the executions. (The last two are almost identical, being based on a common lost source.)
109. *Brut*, [Continuation K] p. 602, a miscellaneous collection 'whose unique text shows a hand of the end of the 15th century and closes in 1475.' *Brut*, Preface p. viii; *Three Chronicles*, p. 76 and p. 172; *English Chronicle*, p. 108 and n. p. 205 where the editor accepts this version because it is 'confirmed' by the Act of Attainder passed against Henry VI in Edward IV's first parliament.
110. *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, vol. 5, p. 477, 'contrary to his seid feith and promysse, abhomyneable in the herying of all Christen prynces.'
111. Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 33; *Great Chronicle*, pp. 195-96.
112. *Annales*, p. 776; *Three Chronicles* p. 76. have them watching the executions.
113. *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 212.
114. *English Chronicle*, p. 108. Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, p. 129, describes it as 'particularly bitter against Margaret of Anjou.'
115. Waurin, vol. 5, p. 329-330.
116. G.E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom*, 12 vols in 13, London 1910-1959, pp. 218-219.

117. Josiah Wedgwood, *A History of Parliament: Biographies of the Members of the House of Commons 1439-1509*, London 1936, pp. 521-522; Marshall Thesis, pp. 290-94.
118. Scofield, vol. 1, p. 139.
119. McFarlane, 'The Wars of the Roses,' p. 244. He considers the story to be 'too well attested to be discounted' on the evidence of the *Annales, A Short English Chronicle and Gregory's Chronicle*.
120. Johnson, *York*, p. 135.
121. Griffiths, p. 781. Professor Griffiths believes the queen intended to use the prince's council to bolster her own power.
122. In support of this argument see the letter from Prince Edward to the town of Coventry after the Lancastrian withdrawal to the north but before the battle of Towton. Mary Dormer Harris, ed., *Coventry Leet Book or Mayor's Register*, 2 parts, London 1907-1908, part 2, p. 313-14.
123. McFarlane acknowledges that their sentences had been legally incurred.
124. Richmond, 'Nobility,' p. 78, n.30.
125. *Worcestre Itineraries*, p. 203; *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 211 for a romantic version of Owen Tudor's death.
126. Compare Scofield, vol. 1, p. 139: 'The death of the Duke of York had been avenged promptly and thoroughly by his son,' with p.144, where she accepts without question the 'betrayal' by King Henry and the judgement passed by Prince Edward. Also p. 122, where it is 'Margaret of Anjou's lieutenants' who, after Wakefield, 'forgot that there is wisdom in mercy, especially in civil war, and also that honour is due to a noble foe killed on the field of battle;' and John Watts' comment in *The Politics of Fifteenth Century England: John Vale's Book*, p. 37, 'the queen's treatment of those she had captured at St Albans did not inspire confidence in the possibility of a negotiated peace.'
127. Ross, *Wars of the Roses*, p. 52: 'Had Margaret of Anjou been able to re-establish herself in the capital ... the course of the civil war might have been radically different.'
128. *Annales*, p. 776; *Brut [Continuation G]* p. 531; *English Chronicle*, p. 109; *Great Chronicle*, p. 194; *Milanese Papers*, p. 49
129. Lander, *Wars of the Roses*, p. 89: 'Margaret, to her eternal credit, threw away her chances of success and retreated northwards rather than risk the sack of London'
130. *Annales*, p. 777 (which gives the location as Newgate); *Brut [Continuation G]*, p. 531; *Great Chronicle*, p. 194; *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 214 (which has the most amusing account of the incident.)
131. Anne F. Sutton, 'Sir Thomas Cook and his "troubles": an Investigation,' *Guildhall Studies in London History* 3, No. 2 (1978), pp. 85-108, p. 103.
132. Lady Scales may not have formed part of the delegation. She is mentioned only in *The Great Chronicle*, p. 194, which omits the Duchess of Buckingham. The latter goes alone in *An English Chronicle*, p. 109, but is accompanied by the Duchess of Bedford in *Annales*, p. 776 and *Milanese Papers*, p. 50. The Duchess of Bedford is listed with Lady Scales in *The Great Chronicle*, p. 194.
133. Barron, 'London and Kingdom' p. 108, n. 81. The Lancastrians were Sir Edmund Hampden, Sir John Heron and Sir Robert Whittingham. They apparently remained in London as on 25 February the mayor issued a proclamation that no harm was to be done to them. R.R. Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, 3 vols, London 1894-1895, vol. 1, p. 305 n. 1.
134. The future Richard III and his brother George were sent by their mother Cecily, Duchess of York, to the court of Burgundy for safekeeping.
135. *Milanese Papers*, pp. 50-51. These rumours were reported in letters from London dated 22 and 23 February.
136. *Milanese Papers*, p. 51. C. Gigli's account is unclear and rumour ridden, but in the main it is to be preferred to the chronicle accounts in that he was an eyewitness, writing as events unfolded and not with hindsight.

137. *Annales*, 776; *English Chronicle*, p. 109 (which says they were the Duke of Somerset's men); *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 214, and *Great Chronicle*, p. 194 (which says they were outriders of the queen.)
138. *Milanese Papers*, p. 50.
139. Barron, 'London and Kingdom', p. 97 and p. 107 n. 66 and 67; also table 2, p. 103 for loans made to the Yorkist lords, 1460-1461. cf. Sharpe, *London*, vol. 1, p. 305 n. 1.
140. Corporation of London Records Office, *Journal* 6, f. 13.
141. *English Chronicle*, p. 109; *Great Chronicle*, p. 194; *Annales*, p. 776; *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 214.
142. Watts, p. 361 n. 423, argues convincingly that Margaret could no longer rely on the Midlands because of the deaths of Buckingham, Shrewsbury and Beaumont, 'the leading figures of her affinity in the area,' and that the majority of the major duchy offices there went to the Nevilles after the battle of Northampton. This being so, the only base left to Margaret, for men and money, was in the north.
143. Anthony Gross, *The Dissolution of Lancastrian Kingship: Sir John Fortescue and the crisis of monarchy in fifteenth century England*, Stamford 1996, pp. 66-67.
144. *Annales*, p. 776; *Et hoc fuit destructio regis Henrici et reginae suae*. *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 215.
145. Whethamstede, vol. 1, pp. 394-96.
146. *Benet's Chronicle*, p. 229; *Three Chronicles*, p. 172.
147. Peter Newcombe, *History of the Ancient and Royal Foundation called the Abbey of St Albans*, London 1795, p. 366; Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England II: c. 1307 to the Early Sixteenth century*, London 1982, p. 382.
148. Whethamstede, vol 1, p. 396: 'The queen also departed, but not before she had been recompensed (*remunerata*) with an ornament (*jocali*) which was almost the finest the church possessed.' I am indebted to Dr N.J.A. Austin for a discussion of this passage, especially the exact meaning of the word *remunerata* in this context. Whethamstede made it easy for his editor to gloss it as 'the queen herself carried off the most valuable jewel the abbey possessed.' Whethamstede, vol. 2, Introduction p. xviii.
149. Pollard, *North East England*, p. 171; Goodman, p. 220.
150. *English Chronicle*, p. 109. Accepted by Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 882, n. 98: 'true to form, the Lancastrians plundered as they retreated.'
151. Pollard, *Wars of the Roses*, p. 88; *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 215, for a charming summation: 'Lette us walke in a newe wyne yerde, and lette us make a gay gardon in the monythe of Marche with thys fayre whyte ros and herbe, the Erle of Marche.'
152. *Historical Poems of the 14th and 15th Centuries*. Rossell Hope Robbins, ed., New York 1959, pp. 210, 215 and 226.