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Civil War and the Resurgence of Anglo-Scottish Border Mentalities in the British Middle Shires, 1639-1645

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For centuries the Anglo-Scottish borderlands were a region of weak government, endemic violence, border fortresses, and periodic full-scale wars. After the 1603 Union of the Crowns joined Scotland with England and Ireland, James VI & I attempted to pacify the "Middle Shires" of his new realm of "Great Britain." Despite an apparently successful pacification, using the resources of both the Scottish and English states, the outbreak of the British Civil Wars in 1638 resulted in the region once again becoming militarized. This militarization followed many of the characteristics of the pre-1603 border security system: the renovation of border fortresses, cross-border raids, powerful noble magnates with cross-border political alliances, and the theft or attempted theft of cattle as a means of waging war.

KEYWORDS:

Anglo-Scottish Border, British Civil Wars, Three Kingdoms, border reivers, seventeenth century, military history

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Introduction

The British Civil Wars (1639–1653) saw prolonged state collapse, endemic violence, and regional military governments across the majority of Great Britain and Ireland, causing high levels of death and destitution. In regions where the state was generally weak, such as the Scottish Highlands and much of Ireland, there was a re-emergence of antebellum social-military structures that had previously been suppressed or had declined through internal peace. This article argues that the Anglo-Scottish Borders were such a region where civil war conditions allowed the frontier security system and mentalities a brief resurgence during the Civil Wars. This was a response by locals to the conflict in which they resumed patterns of pre-union behaviour from within living memory, and it was also deliberately cultivated by more distant authorities in London or Edinburgh for their own military and political purposes.

The main historiographical purpose of this paper is to reaffirm the necessity of a "British" approach to the Civil Wars by demonstrating that the experience of the "Middle Shires" illustrated the common experience of the conflict throughout the Anglo-Scottish Borders. This article will use the term "British Civil Wars" rather than "Wars of the Three Kingdoms" for reasons of both brevity and agreement with Goodare's argument that:

If not used with care, "three kingdoms" analysis tends to divide the participants into "the Scots," "the English," and "the Irish." Yet some Scots had more in common with some English (for instance) than they did with other Scots. And the agendas that they pursued were rarely simply national.²

Over the past few decades there has been a general trend towards analyzing the conflict as "British" or "Archipelagic," albeit not without cautionary criticism from historians who have warned it could undermine separate Irish and Scottish histories in favour of an "enriched" English history. I appreciate these concerns, but I do not believe they have come to pass given the subsequent three decades of valuable historical research, including, for example, a major expansion of historians' understanding of Ireland in this period. Furthermore, the civil war experience of the southernmost and northernmost shires of Scotland and England respectively was inextricably linked with their then-recent attempted transformation from a contested borderland to the peaceful "Middle Shires" of the new Great

Julian Goodare, "The Rise of the Covenanters, 1637-1644," in The Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution, ed. Michael Braddick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 43-59, at 57

Conrad Russell, The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637-1642 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Keith Brown, "British History: A Sceptical Comment," in Three Nations - A Common History? England, Scotland, Ireland and British History c.1600-1929, ed. R. G. Asch (Bochum: Brockmeyer, 1993), 117-27.

See Trinity College Dublin, 1641 Depositions Online Project, accessed 01/2020, http://1641.tcd.ie/. According to the Bibliography of British and Irish History, 26 of 35 publications on the 1641 depositions were published in the past ten years, demonstrating the popularity of the subject at the time of writing, see Bibliography of British and Irish History, accessed 01/2020, http://cpps.brepolis.net/bbih/search.cfm?action=search_advanced.

The Anglo-Scottish Border before the Union

For context it is necessary to briefly cover the Anglo-Scottish Borders before 1603. The areas covered by Marcher Law, on both sides of the border, were both far from the two monarchies' centres of power, and repeatedly devastated by the regular wars between the two polities. The consequence of this was the emergence of the often mythologized "border reivers," loose clans of allied families. Violence was semi-formalized; there was an accepted grace period of a week in which retaliatory violence to any raid was permitted, even when this crossed the boundary between the two kingdoms. Throughout the Medieval period, English kings were forced to rely upon voluntary offers of service from local magnates or contracts of indenture to temporarily hire their men in return for a set wage. This resulted in the establishment of powerful noble dynasties in Northern England, such as the Cliffords of Cumberland and the Percys of Northumberland.

During the sixteenth century, violence between the reiver families reached a new peak, as both English and Scottish wardens failed to control them—even during periods of peace—with "murthers, taking of prisoners, burning of houses, and taking of goodes and cattell." But, in 1603 Elizabeth I died, and James VI also became James I of England and Ireland. He styled himself on his coinage as King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, combining his Scottish and English kingships, and made it clear that he intended to bring his two British realms together. Io In a speech to the English parliament on March 19, 1603, shortly after his arrival in London, he declared that:

What God hath conjoined let no man separate. I am the husband and the whole isle is my lawful wife; I am the head and it is my body...I hope therefore that no man will think that I, a Christian King under the Gospel, should be a polygamist and husband to two wives; that I being the head should have a divided or monstrous body.¹¹

See, Cynthia Neville, "Keeping the Peace on the Northern Marches in the Latter Middle Ages," The English Historical Review 109, no. 430 (February 1994): 1–25; Cynthia Neville, "Scottish Influences on the Medieval Laws of the Anglo-Scottish Marches," The Scottish Historical Review 81, no. 212 (October 2002): 161–85.

⁶ Keith Durham and Angus McBride, *Border Reivers: The story of the Anglo-Scottish borderlands* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1995), 20.

Neville, "Keeping the Peace on the Northern Marches in the Latter Middle Ages," 5-6.

David Dunlop, "The politics of peace-keeping: Anglo-Scottish relations from 1503 to 1511," Renaissance Studies 8, no. 2 (June 1994): 138-61, at 141-42.

⁹ Elizabeth I, By the Queene, a proclamation commanding all persons vpon the borders of England, to keepe peace towards Scotland, vpon the like proclamation by the King of Scots towards England (London: Christopher Barker, 1596).

Herbert Grueber, Handbook of the Coins of Great Britain and Ireland in the British Museum (London: The British Museum, 1899), XXXIX.

James I, "Speech to the Westminster parliament, 19 March 1603, in King James VI and I: Political Writings," in *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought*, ed. Johann Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 132-46, at 136.

The border reivers had gone from being a cheap, albeit violent and near-uncontrollable, means of enforcing border security to a monstrous distortion of James's new British body politic—a distortion he was determined to eliminate.¹²

James I and the Pacification of the "Middle Shires"

King James wished to end the endemic violence and disorder throughout the Anglo-Scottish Borders. He had a vision of the region as the peaceable "Middle Shires" between "North and South Britain," the names he championed as alternatives to "Scotland" and "England." To accomplish this, James created the Commissions of the Middle Shires made up of both Scottish and English officials. In 1609 his commissioners to the Scottish Parliament made clear his will that:

the Kings Majestie is resolved to purge the middleshires of this Ile heretofore called the borders of Scotland & England of that barbarous cruelty, wickednes & incivilitie which by inveterate custom was almost become naturall to many of the inhabitants thereof, and to reduce them to the knowledge, love and feare of God, reverence of his Majesties authority, obedience of his lawes and dutie to their nighbors.¹⁵

When the reivers did not simply lay down their arms upon James's decree, the royal commissioners' response was to order strict records be taken of all "rebels, fugitiues, outlawes & broken men," and that none be taken into any household service without a reference to demonstrate they were not wanted for a felony. False testimonies were to be "punisht to the death." Indeed, severity was the order of the day for the Border Commission, with death for thieves and their accessories and whole families deported to Ulster to act as settlers. In a letter from the Border Commissioners to Arthur Chichester, Lord-Deputy of Ireland, they stated, "It pleased his Majesty last year to transplant into Ireland certain families of the Grames and others out of the late Borders of England, sent over in the conduct of Sir Raph Sidley to inhabit Rose Common [Roscommon]." Punishment for

Anna Groundwater, "The chasm between James VI and I's vision of the orderly 'Middle Shires' and the 'wickit' Scottish Borderers between 1587 and 1625," Renaissance and Reformation 30, no. 4 (Autumn 2007): 105–32.

James VI & I, Whereas some difference hath arisen betweene our subjects of south and north Britaine trauayling by seas, about the bearing of their flagges (London: Robert Barker, 1606), 1.

James VI & I, By the King the foule and insolent outrages lately committed vpon the the borders of our realmes of England and Scotland by persons accustomed in former times to live by rapine and spoyle..(London: Robert Barket, 1603).

Anon, Some particulare actes made by our Soveraine Lord his commissioner and estates in the Parliament holden at Edinburgh the 24 of lune 1609 by his most Excellent Majesties speciall direction, recommended to the estates in Parliament, and by them grauelie and maturelie advised: for the which they render all thankes of God with their humble and heartie prayer for his Maiestie to raigne long over his dominions (Edinbrugh: Robert Charteris, 1609), 9.

Anon, Some particulare actes, 9–10.

Anon, Some particulare actes, 9–10.

Anon, Some particulare actes, 9-10; Robert Bell, "Sheep Stealers from the North of England': The Riding Clans in Ulster," History Ireland 2, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 25-29.

¹⁹ Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the reign of James I, vol. 19 (1607), 101: "Commissioners of the Middle Shires to Sir Arthur Chichester, Lord Deputy of Ireland".

resisting resettlement was typically execution.²⁰ Furthermore, a subsequent act of 1617 introduced new regulations for the sale of beef in border market towns, with the purpose of "the prevention of stealths [theft] of Cattel"—the most common form of violence in the Borders—upon pain of imprisonment for reselling stolen goods.²¹

It should be noted that not all of the reiver families of the region were equally impacted by the pacification, since Borderers who cooperated with the commission could extend their own power and influence at the expense of neighbours.²² But within the space of a decade, Border society had apparently changed beyond recognition and much of the organization of the smaller reiver families had collapsed.²³ But the Borders' history of democratized (in the sense of experienced directly or indirectly by a majority of the population) and omnipresent violence and the patterns of conflict it encouraged, such as unofficial levies, ubiquitous cattle raiding, and a state and civil security's dependence on a combination of fortified spaces and small units of cavalry, was well within living memory during the late 1630s and 1640s.

The Bishops' Wars, English Border Fortresses, and the Attempted Marriage of the "Perfect Militia" with Pre-union Systems of Border Security

Between 1638 and 1642 the British dynastic union collapsed into civil war. The causes of this conflict are too complicated to properly outline in this paper. Essentially, it was a complicated mix of disputes over taxation, the reform of religion in the three kingdoms, efforts at ruling without parliamentary consent, and the alienation of key elites in England, Scotland, and Ireland.²⁴ Scotland was the first of Charles's kingdoms to fall into rebellion, as his religious policy failed disastrously. In 1638 the Prayer Book Rebellion brought the Covenanter regime to power in Edinburgh after a short civil war.²⁵ The Covenanters were strongest in the Scottish Lowlands, specifically the Central Belt and Fife, while counterrevolutionary forces were strongest in North East Scotland, where Caroline church reform had generally been better received; the Highlands, which the Scottish state had always struggled to govern; and in the Borders, where both factors mitigated

²⁰ Cal. S.P. Dom., James I, vol. 19 (1607), 101.

James VI & I, By the King. A proclamation for the better and more peaceable gouernment of the middle shires of Northumberland, Cumberland, and VVestmerland (London: Robert Barker, 1617).

Anna Groundwater, "From Whitehall to Jedburgh: Patronage Networks and the Government of the Scottish Borders, 1603-1625," The Historical Journal 53, no. 4 (December 2010): 871-93, at 882-91.

²³ Groundwater, "The chasm between James VI and I's vision of the orderly 'Middle Shires' and the 'wickit' Scottish Borderers between 1587 and 1625," 124–27.

For the alienation of the Scottish nobility, see Keith Brown, "Aristocratic Finances and the Origins of the Scottish Revolution," The English Historical Review 104, no. 410 (January 1989): 46–87; Peter Donald, An Uncounselled King: Charles I and the Scottish Troubles, 1637–1641 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 18–21. For the alienation of the Irish nobility, see Jane Ohlmeyer, "The Aristocracy in Seventeenth-Century Ireland: Wider Contexts and Comparisons," History Compass 12, no. 1 (January 2014): 33–41.

²⁵ Goodare, "The Rise of the Covenanters, 1637–1644," 51.

against a strong Covenanter presence.²⁶ The Bishops Wars of 1639 and 1640 saw Charles I try, and fail, to subdue the new Covenanter government of Scotland by using both the military resources of his other two kingdoms and Scottish opponents of the new regime, which was militantly Protestant, almost uniformly Presbyterian, and ultimately extremely ambitious about spreading its model across the British Isles.²⁷

Charles's military response necessitated the remilitarization of the northern counties of England—the Middle Shires of perpetual peace that were so dear to his father. Jacobean efforts to normalize the region, which included eliminating its distinct border characteristics through pacification and a degree of joint Anglo-Scottish governance, were reversed as a pragmatic wartime measure to secure the maximum mobilization of local military resources in the threatened counties. In 1640 Charles I ordered the regular militia of Cumberland, called the trained bands, to mobilize against the Covenanters. The trained bands, a county-based militia force, was the contemporary mechanism of local defence in England that dated back to the sixteenth century; Charles I had built upon his predecessors' military reforms to place the "perfect militia" at the heart of the monarchy's armed power. The King ordered that "every of yew: imiediately upon the receipte hereof: not onely to drawe togeither into a body all the trained bands both horse and foote within that Countye."

This mobilization was apparently in line with standing English local defence and was without any distinctly "Borderer" aspects.³² However, the mobilization orders also specified that the county was also "to raise and make what other forces yew: possiblely can for secureinge and defence of all the passes within the...Countye."³³ The traditional reliance of border defence on not just official forces but also the levies of local magnates and reiver families was revived for the purpose of providing garrisons for the castles controlling the passes through the county. The militia were ordered to assemble:

for the Barrony of Burgh att Rocliffe: those of the Barrony of Graystoke att Graystuck Castle, those of the Barrony of Gilsland att Noward Castle and for respectively & all Tenants to the place of their landslords houses.³⁴

James Wylie, The Story of the Covenant and the Services of the Covenanters to the reformation in Christendom and the liberties of Great Britain, 2nd ed., in Covenanter History Series (Edinburgh, Blue Banner, 1998), 12–15; Goodare, "The Rise of the Covenanters, 1637– 1644," 51.

Mark Fissel, The Bishops' Wars, Charles I's campaigns against Scotland, 1638-1640 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 78. See also, Barry Robertson, Royalists at War in Scotland and Ireland 1638-50 (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2014).

²⁸ Fissel, The Bishops' Wars, 175–214.

²⁹ King's Letter: Mobilising [the trained bands] against the Scots Covenanters, 1640, C[Umbrian]A[rchive]S[ervice], C[arlisle]A[rchive]C[entre], PR 122/324.

Fissel, The Bishops' Wars, 175–214.

³¹ CAS, CAC, PR 122/324.

Michael Braddick, State Formation in Early Modern England c.1550-1700 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 181-96.

³³ CAS, CAC, PR 122/324.

³⁴ CAS, CAC, PR 122/324.

It is at this point where the idea of "space" becomes important. The baronies were the medieval divisions of Cumberland, and the mobilization remained essentially baronial. These three named baronies were the largest in northern Cumberland and surrounded the city of Carlisle itself.35 Their geographic distribution is worthy of comment, as it reveals a great deal about the strategic thinking behind the orders. Burgh-on-Sands is located immediately to the west of Carlisle. However, the men of the barony were not ordered to assemble at their caput—the titular burgh by the Solway sands but at the castle of Rockcliffe to Carlisle's north, covering the road into Dumfriesshire.36 The barony of Gilsland's men were to assemble at Naworth Castle to the east of Carlisle in a valley lying between the North Pennines and the Cheviot Hills, covering the only practicable route from Cumberland into Northumberland. Finally, the barony and castle of Graystoke was located to the south of Carlisle, just west of Penrith.³⁷ Located in the Eden river valley with mountains on either side, this was the only practical route south for a large body of soldiers.

Both the positions of these castles and the choice of them as a point for assembling the county militia were a function of the historical strategic geography of Cumbria as a mountainous border region, the main function of which was preventing the easy movement of armies from one side to another. The castles of Cumberland were a legacy of the medieval and Tudor English system of border defence that James VI & I had attempted to abolish in the creation of the "Middle Shires." The transformation of space that their remilitarization entailed was accompanied not merely by the raising of the trained bands but also by a general mobilization of the male population. The levies were ordered:

in tyme of Allarmed wich shalbe given noitce of by burneinge of beacons or publique notice taken of Invasion of the enemye is appointed to be att the sevrall houses of the severall lords of the manor: and landlords. Each man to bring with him vii: dayes provision: and every Man his Knapsack with him and in the meane tyme to provide themselves with Armes.³⁹

There are two points worthy of comment here. First, the levies were ordered to assemble at the houses of their local magnates in a baronial mobilization that more resembled the traditional methods of assembling reivers to resist border incursions rather than the formalized assembly of the official militia at Carlisle, the centre of royal government in the county. Second, the emphasis on the levies properly arming themselves came in 1640 following the confrontation the previous year between the Covenanter army

^{35 &}quot;A Guide to Superior Lordship in Cumbria," University of Lancaster, Manorial Records, accessed 02/2018, http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/projects/manorialrecords/cumbria/map.htm.

CAS, CAC, PR 122/324.; "A Guide to Superior Lordship in Cumbria".

^{37 &}quot;Graystoke," Cumbrian County History Trust, accessed 02/2018, https://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk/township/greystoke.

M. R. McCarthy, H. R. T. Summerson, R. G. Annis, D. R. Perriam and B. Young, "Carlisle Castle, A survey and documentary history," in *English Heritage Archaeological Report*, no 18 (1990), 171–75.

³⁹ CAS, CAC, PR 122/324.

(who were well armed and largely officered by professionals who had gained their military experience fighting in Swedish service in the Thirty Years War) and the Northern Levies (which contemporary reports described as being very poorly equipped, and for which their standard-bearer Sir Edmund Verney stated, "our armes of all sorts [were] nawght").40 The mobilization of 1640 would only use these forces as a supplement to the "perfect militia" of the trained bands rather than as the first response of 1639; but the Caroline government was aware that, following decades of demilitarization in the English Borders, a positive effort needed to be made to rearm the population for general military service.

In addition, the old royal border fortresses—along with the reivers and local militias who were the main component of traditional border security arrangements—were put back into use. Following the Union of the Crowns, the royal fortresses of Northern England had become dilapidated.⁴¹ In the case of Carlisle, the castle had last seen a garrison in 1621, while its walls had not seen any significant renovations since the reign of Henry VIII.⁴² The Carlisle corporation was well aware of their city's weakened defences and petitioned the King repeatedly throughout the beginning of 1639.⁴³ A letter from the mayor John Aglionby to Charles I on January 29, 1639 would "beseech the King to take into his consideration the weakness and poverty of that poor city, wanting ammunition, and the ports and walls thereof much ruinated."⁴⁴ Given the brittle state of royal finances at the end of Charles I's personal rule, these renovations would be difficult to support. The solution was to embrace a key element of the abolished border defence system and effectively subcontract out the responsibility to a local magnate.⁴⁵

Henry Clifford, after 1641 the 5th Earl of Cumberland, served as the main royal official responsible for reactivating the border forts. As Earl of Cumberland, he was heavily invested in the fortress of Carlisle, and his family held an effectively hereditary governorship over the city. Clifford, using his own money and with lead from his mines in the Yorkshire Dales, had the castle re-roofed and made fit for habitation, the drawbridges and portcullis were repaired, and the stables renovated to house a troop of cavalry. The timber for these enterprises was provided by Clifford from his estates as a gift to the royal war effort and, according to the Cliffords' private accounts,

Frances Verney, Letters and papers of the Verney Family, ed. John Bruce (London, Camden Society, 1853), "Sir Edmund Verney to Ralph Verney, 1 May 1639": 228, "Sir Edmund Verney to Ralph Verney, 9 May 1639": 233.

⁴¹ McCarthy, Summerson, Annis, Perriam and Young, "Carlisle Castle, A survey and documentary history," 194–95.

⁴² McCarthy, Summerson, Annis, Perriam and Young, "Carlisle Castle, A survey and documentary history," 171–75.

⁴³ Cal. S. P. Dom., Charles I, vol. 13 (Sept. 1638-Mar. 1639), 376: SP 16/410 f.137, 458: SP 16/412 f.236, 459: SP 16/412 f.237.

⁴⁴ Cal. S. P. Dom., Charles I, vol. 13 (1638–1639), 376: SP 16/410 f.137.

For the medieval origins of this practice, Dunlop, "The politics of peace-keeping: Anglo-Scottish relations from 1503 to 1511," 141–42.

⁴⁶ Richard Spence, "Henry, Lord Clifford and the First Bishops' War, 1639," Northern History 31, no. 1(1995): 138–56.

amounted to £200 in value.⁴⁷ The Cliffords were willing to meet this expense because possession of the Carlisle governorship was an important part of the network of offices that cemented their control over Cumberland and was essential in maintaining their dominance over the county's lesser gentlemen.⁴⁸ The attempted cultivation of noble magnates such as Clifford in the reconstruction of border defences in 1640 demonstrates the persistence of pre-union security mentalities in Northern England, despite King James's attempted pacification of the region.

However, the neglect of these mentalities by the Caroline regime seriously undermined its war effort against the Covenanters and contributed towards its failure. As previously stated, Carlisle was leased by Clifford and his father from the Crown.⁴⁹ This lease had come with the title of governor of the castle, but in July 1639 Thomas Howard, 21st Earl of Arundel and Lord Marshall, attempted to place his son Sir William Howard into command at Carlisle, threatening Clifford power in the region.⁵⁰ The attempt by the Earl Marshal to place one of his own family into the position was regarded by Clifford as an unacceptable attempt to replace Clifford influence over Carlisle. Indeed, his concern was well-founded, as his failure to secure the election of his nominee for MP of Carlisle in the English Short Parliament of 1640 demonstrated.⁵¹ The level of seriousness with which Lord Clifford took this attack on his family's influence was borne out by his decision to take the matter straight to the King. The meeting, as recounted by Sir Henry de Vic to Francis Windebank, Secretary of State, went as follows:

It is also said that Lord Clifford, who has yet 39 years [interest] in the castle of Carlisle, having acquainted his Majesty with the right he has in that place, his Majesty answered that he knew not of it, [whereupon] Lord Clifford said openly, that the Earl Marshal, if he pleased, might command in the town, but shall not in the castle.⁵²

Up until this point, Clifford had been passionately devoted to the King and his cause. In a letter to Charles I, dated July 28, 1638, Clifford had declared that the same blood ran in his veins as in his devotedly loyal ancestors. 53 But the affront of the Earl Marshall's action, and the King's unthinking support for

⁴⁷ Spence, "Henry, Lord Clifford and the First Bishops' War, 1639," 148; Chatsworth House, Bolton MSS, Book 270, title "Reparations".

Many of these gentlemen would later become royalist officers during the civil wars thanks to their links with the Cliffords, see Spence, "Henry, Lord Clifford and the First Bishops' War, 1639," 147; Fissel's The Bishops' Wars, 88–89.

⁴⁹ Cal. S. P. Dom., James I, vol. 1(1605–1610), 204: SP 14/13 f.56: "Warrant for a grant to Sir Hen. Leigh, of the keepership of Carlisle Castle, for life," 260: SP 14/60 f.22: "Grant, in reversion to Francis Earl of Cumberland, and Henry Lord Clifford, of the office of Keeper of Carlisle Castle, for life".

⁵⁰ Spence, "Henry, Lord Clifford and the First Bishops' War, 1639," 154; Cal. S. P. Dom., Charles I, vol. 14 (April–Sept. 1639), 409: SP 16/426 f.59.

Spence, "Henry, Lord Clifford and the First Bishops' War, 1639," 156; Papers of Sir John Bankes, Oxford University, Bodelian Library, MS Bankes. 65/53; Richard Spence, "The Backward North Modernized? The Cliffords, Earls of Cumberland and the Socage Manor of Carlisle, 1611~1643," Northern History 20, no.1 (January 1984): 64–87, at 84–87.

⁵² Cal. S. P. Dom., Charles I, vol. 14 (April-Sept. 1639), 409: SP 16/426 f.59.

⁵³ Spence, "Henry, Lord Clifford and the First Bishops' War, 1639," 138.

it, was so severe that it moved Clifford to confront the King himself. 54 While overlapping legal and customary rights could be used to mobilize a greater proportion of a border locality's resources, it also raised the possibility of a clash between those two rights and a consequent lack of unity at a critical juncture. Ultimately, the hastily revived border system was never fully tested, as Charles I's mostly Southern English field army—which was undermanned, underpaid, and with poor morale—promptly collapsed after the relatively small battle of Newburn Ford. 55

The Covenanters occupied the North East of England, including the renovated fortress of Newcastle, and entered into negotiations with the King. The first Covenanter occupation of Newcastle, which straddled the traditional invasion route from Scotland to England and *vice-versa*, demonstrated their continued awareness of the strategic realities of the northernmost counties of England as part of a wider border zone. In 1640, and again in 1644, the Covenanters would occupy strategic strongpoints in the region such as Newcastle and Carlisle, providing leverage in their negotiations with the changing authorities in London and temporarily pushing Scotland's de facto border south to the Tees estuary. Like the Caroline government, the Covenanters retained a keen sense of the "Middle Shires" history as a border zone and were prepared to advance the traditional strategic objectives of the Scottish state in the region, now as a means of enforcing their own political objectives across the framework of the British dynastic union.

The Caroline effort to marry the rationalized "perfect militia" with a return of the Tudor system of border defence failed to provide an adequate military response to the Covenanters' revolution. An army of regular militia was raised and marched north but, lacking the commitment to defend the region from a movement with which many of them sympathized, it fell apart. Significant power was placed in local magnates to raise defences, but they were then alienated when their unofficial rights of command and local political hegemony were neglected. However, royal security policy—even if it failed—established a precedent for Royalist practice in the forthcoming and far more violent phase of the British Civil Wars.

⁵⁴ Spence, "Henry, Lord Clifford and the First Bishops' War, 1639," 154.

Boyd Zacharie, The Battel of Nevvbvrne: Where the Scots Armie obtained a notable victorie against the English Papists, Prelasts and Arminians, the 28 day of August 1640, the Second Edition (Glasgow: George Anderson, 1643).

Scottish Army, Our Demands of the English Lords manifested being at Rippon Octob. 8. 1640. With Answers to the Complaints and Greivances Given in by the Bishop of Durham, Northumberland, and some of Nevvcastle: said to be committed by our Army (London: Margery Mar-Prelat, 1640).

Fissel, The Bishops' Wars, 59-61; Petition to the Leaders of the Scottish Army, Tyne and Wear Archives, DX1148/1; Cal. S. P. Dom., Charles I, vol. 21, (July 1645–Dec 1647), 114: SP 16/510 f.159: "Copies of the Five Papers intended to have been given in to the Scots' Committee, which should have treated with the Commissioners from the Parliament of England, only on reference ..."

⁵⁸ Spence, "Henry, Lord Clifford and the First Bishops' War, 1639," 154; Cal. S. P. Dom., Charles I, vol. 14 (April–Sept. 1639), 409: SP 16/426 f.59.

The resurrection of reiver mentalities in the First English Civil War and the Covenanter intervention, 1642–1645

Following rebellion in Ireland in 1641, the collapse of Charles I's government in England and Wales in 1642 resulted in the outbreak of general civil war across both countries. In Northern England the patterns of magnate power cultivated by the border legacy, combined with strong post-occupation hostility to the Covenanters in the North East, contributed towards the emergence of a strong Royalist force in the region.⁵⁹ Along the border, William Cavendish, then 1st Marquess of Newcastle, and Henry Clifford, now Earl of Cumberland, used their alliances with local families and dominance of local offices to transform the counties on the English side of the border into Royalist strongholds. 60 The Royalist mobilization of Northern England in 1642 was very different from the royal mobilization of 1640, having been carried out almost completely by local aristocratic grandees with minimal oversight from Charles I.61 The "Commissions of Array" provided legal cover for this recruitment by circumnavigating the formal militia system, which the Royalists failed to co-opt; but in practice Lords Cumberland and Newcastle depended largely upon lordly mechanisms of power such as their networks of subordinate gentry, and unofficial domination of the civic corporations of cities such as Carlisle and Newcastle.62

It is unlikely that this represented a deliberate change in policy given the significant devolution of power to the King's regional commanders. Instead, it was a pragmatic reaction to the collapse of the English state's normal systems of administration. The Royalists' improvised system of military administration, which was dependent on local magnates and governors, was able to control much of Northern England and put an effective field army onto the battlefields of Yorkshire within a year.63 The example of Carlisle demonstrates that many of the forms of social-military organization that typified the pre-union Borders, and which remained embryonic during the Bishops' Wars, fully re-emerged during the new period of inter and intrastate conflict. One important continuity was the phenomenon of cross-border political alliances being turned to military ends. Many of the officers of the Royalist garrison of Carlisle were Scots from across the border who had had their homes and estates seized by the Covenanters and had consequently fled to relatives and allies in England. Amongst the Royalist garrison of Carlisle were "The Lord Aboyne, Lord Maxwell, Lord Harris, S. James Lesley, Sir William Hayes, Mr Barklay,

⁵⁹ See Tristan Griffin, "Culture, Conflict, and Northern English Fortification in the British Civil Wars, Circa 1638–1652" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2021), 66–67, 114.

Richard Spence, "Clifford, Henry, fifth earl of Cumberland (1592–1643)," Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, accessed 10/2017, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5649#odnb-9780198614128-e-5649.

Malcolm Joyce, "A King in Search of Soldiers: Charles I in 1642," The Historical Journal 21, no. 2 (1978): 251–73.

⁶² Roger Howell, Newcastle upon Tyne and the Puritan Revolution: a study of the Civil War in North England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 144–46.

Jack Binns, Yorkshire in the 17th century (Pickering: Blackford Press, 2007), 75, 77.

Captain Gordon, Nesbut, with a few more Scots Lievtenants, Ensigns, quartermaisters, etc. sans nombre."64

Not all of these figures were Borderers—James Gordon, 2nd Viscount Abovne, for example, was a Gordon from North East Scotland-but several were, including Lord Maxwell, who was from Dumfriesshire, just across the border from Carlisle.65 Robert, Lord Maxwell, was the son of Robert Maxwell, 1st Earl of Nithsdale and Lord of Caerlaverock in Dumfriesshire. Nithsdale garrisoned his castles against the Covenanters at Charles I's urging until Caerlayerock fell on September 26, 1640 after a two-month siege. In 1643 he was accused of treason, his estates were promptly confiscated, and he was then excommunicated by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland after leading an attack on Dumfries from Carlisle on April 26, 1644.66 Lord Maxwell had first been sent to Carlisle by his father in summer 1640 to remove him from Caerlaverock-which Nithsdale correctly believed was about to be besieged—and to act as a possible line of communication with the royal government.⁶⁷ Given this history, Maxwell's presence within the Royalist garrison of Carlisle was unsurprising; he was familiar with the city's military role, and its forces offered the best position for trying to regain control his lost inheritance.

The Maxwells' Royalism was both practical and ideological, and Nithsdale's own crypto-Catholicism led him to protect Catholics in his sphere of influence and organize local opposition to the Covenanters. Aside from these motivations—which, given his location and religious convictions, were a pragmatic reaction to the Covenanter revolution—Nithsdale's own attachment to the authority of the King was ferocious. He wrote to Charles I that:

I regret less what can befall mee then to sie soe much basenesse and disloyaltie in my countrie men as to have shakin of all maner of respect to thare soverainge with a blot of perpetuall infamie upon themselfies.⁶⁹

But this devotion did not mean that Nithsdale's support was blind, for he repeatedly expressed frustration with Caroline policy, claiming that the Covenanters were exaggerating their strength and urging a quick military

⁶⁴ Isaac Tullie, Siege of Carlisle (Whitehaven: Michael Moon's Bookshop, 1988), 9.

David Stevenson, "Gordon, James, second Viscount Aboyne (d. 1649)," Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, accessed 03/2021, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-11050; J. R. M. Sizer, "Maxwell, Robert, first earl of Nithsdale (b. after 1586, d. 1646)," Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, accessed 03/2021, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-67520.

⁶⁶ Sizer, "Maxwell, Robert, first earl of Nithsdale (b. after 1586, d. 1646)."

National Records of Scotland, GD406/1/1241, "The earl of Nithisdaill [Nithsdale], Caerlaverlock, to the marquis of Hammiltoune [Hamilton], pointing out the dangers likely to arise from the delay in sending supplies to Edinburgh Castle", 16 Jun 1640.

⁶⁸ Sizer, "Maxwell, Robert, first earl of Nithsdale (b. after 1586, d. 1646)."

National Records of Scotland, GD406/1/1242, "The earl of Nithisdaill [Nithsdale], Caerlaverlock, to King Charles I, informing him that the covenanters have sent a force of 900 foot to Dumfries. A further 2000 are expected, and he asks for help from the king since they will besiege Carlavrock Castle", 18 Jun 1640.

However, the Maxwells' efforts at revenge were delayed for two years, as between 1642 and 1644 a fragile peace was maintained between the Covenanters and the Northern English Royalists. Fighting in Northern England was focused on Yorkshire and Lancashire, with troops and resources from the Borders being sent to the major Royalist field army in York by the English Borders' most significant noble magnates, Cumberland and Newcastle. However, despite the lack of open conflict between them, the Northern English Royalists, much like their exilic Scottish comrades, remained suspicious of the Covenanters' rapidly expanding military and political objectives. In his commission to the governor of Carlisle Sir Henry Stradling, Newcastle ordered that Stradling use:

the said Forces to Governe, Order and dispose for his Mai[es]tes Seruive [illegible] in yor good discretion yow shall thinke best, and to oppose all forreigne and Domestique invasion.73

Newcastle's warning against "invasion" was proved prescient by the alliance between the Covenanters and the Parliamentarians—the famous Solemn League and Covenant—and the Covenanters' invasion of Northern

National Records of Scotland, GD406/1/1240, "The earl of Nithisdaill [Nithsdale], Caerlaverock Castle to the Marquis Hammiltoun [Hamilton], alleging that the covenanters greatly exaggerate the forces at their command", 12 Jun 1640.

⁷¹ Cal. S. P. Dom., Charles I, vol. 16 (April-Aug 1640), 316: SP 16/457 f.144.

Lynn Hulse, "Cavendish, William, first duke of Newcastle upon Tyne (bap. 1593, d. 1676)," Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, accessed 10/2017, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-4946?rskey=ZiDjQm&result=22.

Commission, William, Marquess of Newcastle, General of His Majesty's forces raised in Northern parts of the kingdom for the defence thereof, to Sir John Mallory. Colonel, Governor of Skipton Castle and Commander-in-Chief of the forces there, and in the divisions of Staincliffe and Ewecross, to be Governor of Skipton Castle with authority to call together forces for the suppression of insurrection, 15 December 1643, The West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds Branch, Vyner MSS, T/32/41.

England in 1644.74 This resulted in the destruction of the Royalist army in the North outside York at the Battle of Marston Moor on July 2, 1644 and the collapse of the Royalist cause in Northern England leaving multiple fortress garrisons isolated.75 Most significant of these garrisons in the North West of England was Carlisle. The renovated fortress was besieged between October 1644 and June 1645 by the main Covenanter army under Alexander Leslie, 1st Earl of Leven, along with some local Parliamentarian auxiliaries that were under his somewhat loose authority.76

During the siege, cattle raiding re-emerged as the most common form of violence in the Borders.77 Before the Rovalists withdrew within the walls, they scoured the surrounding countryside. According to the narrative of Isaac Tullie, a boy resident in Carlisle, who after the siege wrote an account of the fighting: "Corn from all the adjacent fields, besides meat, salt, coles and cowes" was taken. 78 There was a punitive as well as pragmatic motive behind this process. Tullie stated that the confiscations were "cheifly from about Wigton, ye nest of the Roundheads."79 Confiscation of food and wealth from political enemies—or from anyone who happened to live near to an enemy garrison—was not unique to the Borders; indeed, it was common across the British Isles during the Civil Wars.80 What is worthy of note is the attention which Tullie lavished specifically on fighting over cattle. As previously stated, cattle raids were perhaps the most common form of violence in the Borders during the sixteenth century. In Carlisle in late 1644, so many cattle were seized that "an Oxe might have been bought in their towne for 18d at this time," a bargain considering that a pound of beef normally cost around two and a half pence in this period.81

But the defenders' cattle had to be grazed outside of the city and were therefore at risk of attack from the besiegers' cavalry troops.⁸² Royalist

Parliaments of Scotland and England, A solemn league and covenant, for reformation; and defence of religion, the honour and happiness of the King, and the peace & safetie of the three kingdoms. Of Scotland, England, & Ireland (Aberdeen: Edward Raban, 1643); Anon, The Scots army advanced into England Certified in a Letter, Dated from Addarston, the 24 of lanuary: From his Excellncies the Lord Generall Lesley's Qaurters. With the Summoning of the Country of Northumberland: Expressed in a Letter by the Commissioners and Committees of both Kingdoms, to Sir Thomas Glemham Governor of Newcastle, And to the Colonells, Officers and Gentlemen of the forenamed County: With Sir Tho: Glemhams Answer thereunto. Together, With a Declaration of the Committees, for Billeting of Souldiers in those Parts. As also, the Articles and Ordinances for the governing their Army (London: Robert Bostock, 1644), 3–5.

⁷⁵ Tristan Griffin, "Culture, Conflict, and Northern English Fortification in the British Civil Wars." 161–67.

Copy of the appointment William, Earl of Newcastle, General of the King's Forces in the North of Col. Henry Stradling as Colonel and [deputy] commander in chief under Col. Gray of the brigade to be raised in Northumberland and Durham, 7 July 1643, Cumbrian Archive Service, Carlisle Archive Centre, DPH/1/89/1; David Scott, "The Barwis Affair," English Historical Review 115, no. 463 (September 2000): 843–63.

Cattle raids are mentioned 13 times in all throughout Tullie's narrative, see Tullie, A Narrative of the Siege of Carlisle, 7, 12-14, 18, 25-34, 42.

⁷⁸ Tullie, A Narrative of the Siege of Carlisle, 7.

⁷⁹ Tullie, A Narrative of the Siege of Carlisle, 7.

John Morris, receipts for the garrison of Pontefract, Kew, national Archives, ASSI 47/20/11.

Tullie, A Narrative of the Siege of Carlisle, 7; Gregory Clark, "The Price History of English Agriculture, 1209-1914," Research in Economic History 22 (November 2004): 41-123, at 63.

Tullie, A Narrative of the Siege of Carlisle, 7.

troopers were assigned to protect the livestock, which resulted in repeated small skirmishes. Battles over cows set to graze beyond the walls were a relatively common occurrence at sieges. At Pontefract in Yorkshire, on May 26, 1645, a boy cutting grass to feed the animals within the walls was shot in the face. Stikewise on June 10, also at Pontefract, "the enemy shott a boy of ours [who] was houlding of a Cow at gras. Stikewise on June 10 to the case that these skirmishes were definitely an example of persistent border mentalities, but what should be noted is that these battles, mentioned thirteen times in all, are the most common single feature of Tullie's narrative. This focus is not unnatural given the prominence of cattle theft in the region's history.

Furthermore, Tullie heroized raiding by Royalist soldiers and even acknowledged the martial dignity of enemy soldiers who perished in the cattle skirmishes. One of these was a "Captain Forester," a Covenanter or Parliamentarian officer who fought in multiple skirmishes before his death. Tullie later recounted an alleged sighting of Forester's ghost demanding his former comrades' defection to the Royalists, thus transforming a dead "rebel" into a Royalist hero.86 Relevant to border continuities is the fact that "Forester" is a possible variation on "Forster," a reiver surname from the English middle marches. Forester's exact identity is uncertain, but given his presentation by Tullie being firmly in the tradition of heroized border violence—a daring raider who fought valorously in small-unit actions over cattle-suggests that Tullie saw him as a continuation of the traditional martial virtues of the region.87 Walter Scott of Satchells, a descendant of the reiver families writing in the late-seventeenth century, may have declared that "the bold and patriotic "free-booter" [that] may be many a man's relief...but a thief," since "King James the sixth to England went, There has been no cause of grief." But Tullie's heroic narrative of raiders at the siege of Carlisle suggests that such an identification with the border reivers retained its force during the Civil Wars, even amongst those born decades after the 1603 union.88

Conclusions and consequences

The British Civil Wars were not the last time the "Middle Shires" were militarized—Carlisle in particular experienced the Jacobite Rebellions and still hosts a small military presence—but were the last occasion within living memory of the pre-union border system in which the region was subject to generalized violence. This violence was directed and expressed—in institutional, practical, and cultural terms—in a manner familiar to the Anglo-Scottish borderlands of a half-century prior. The Stuart monarchy attempted to solve the crisis imposed on it by the Covenanter revolution in Scotland

⁸³ Alison Walker ed., The first and second sieges of Pontefract Castle: Nathan Drake's diary (Pontefract: Gosling Press, 1997), 35.

Walker ed., The first and second sieges of Pontefract Castle, 41.

⁸⁵ See Tullie, A Narrative of the Siege of Carlisle, 7, 12–14, 18, 25–34, 42.

Tullie, A Narrative of the Siege of Carlisle, 21.

Tullie, A Narrative of the Siege of Carlisle, 11.

Groundwater, "The chasm between James VI and I's vision of the orderly 'Middle Shires' and the 'wickit' Scottish Borderers between 1587 and 1625," 127; Walter Scott of Satchells, Metrical History of the Honourable Families of the Name of Scott and Elliot (Edinburgh: 1892), 9

through the mobilization of not only Scottish but also Irish and English military resources, including the semi-dilapidated border fortresses of the northernmost counties of England.89 The military strongholds of Newcastle and Carlisle received emergency renovations that attempted to reverse the neglectful decline the fortresses had undergone in the past four decades of peace.90

Moreover, the Caroline government and the subsequent Royalist movement employed the traditional remedy to the weakness of the state in the Borders, namely using powerful local magnates as agents of military mobilization, in particular the Earl of Cumberland. Finally, the siege of Carlisle (1644–1645) demonstrated the persistence of reiver patterns of violence, with regular cattle raids forming the most common form of direct combat during the siege. The heroization of these skirmishes by Tullie, which even included the valorization of enemy combatants, showed that despite the criminalization and official demonization of traditional reiver behaviour, such violence remained both militarily practical and socially acceptable, at least among Borderers, under the emergency conditions imposed by civil conflict.

The renewed Covenanter occupation of Northern England saw Edinburgh attempt to eliminate the English Borders' defensive system through a policy of occupation and slighting, working towards the destruction of the region's fortresses in order to demilitarize it.94 This not only fulfilled the Jacobean objective of pacifying the Borders for the purposes of bringing Scotland and England together, but it also left open the possibility for the Covenanters to more easily intervene in England in the future.95 Ultimately, most of the region's fortresses remained intact when they were given over to the Parliamentarians in 1647, for whom they provided a base of operations for the New Model in their victorious 1648–49 and 1650–1652 wars with the Covenanters. The protracted political and later military struggle between the Covenanters and Parliamentarians over the border fortresses illustrated their renewed strategic relevance. This renewal came about through both Caroline and Royalist efforts to restore the border military system for mobilization during civil conflict.96

Finally, while the emergence of the Moss-Troopers, a new generation of house-mounted raiders, in the Scottish Borders in the 1650s and 1660s is beyond the scope of this article, it has still demonstrated how the regular passage of mostly Covenanter and subsequently Parliamentarian armies and endemic violence in the previous decade restored many of the patterns

⁸⁹ CAS, CAC, PR 122/324.

Gal. S. P. Dom., Charles I, vol. 13 (1638–1639), 376: SP 16/410 f.137; Spence, "Henry, Lord Clifford and the First Bishops' War, 1639," 148; Chatsworth House, Bolton MSS, Book 270, title "Reparations".

⁹¹ Spence, "Henry, Lord Clifford and the First Bishops' War, 1639," 148.

⁹² Tullie, A Narrative of the Siege of Carlisle, 7, 12–14, 18, 25–34, 42.

Tullie, A Narrative of the Siege of Carlisle, 21.

Keith Brown et al., eds., The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707, St Andrews, 2007–2017, 1646/11/95, accessed 11/2017, http://www.rps.ac.uk/trans/1646/11/95.

⁹⁵ Parliaments of Scotland and England, A solemn league and covenant, 12.

The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707, 1646/11/95.

of behaviour that typified the sixteenth-century Borders.⁹⁷ Ultimately, a second programme of state-directed disciplinary violence would be required to pacify the region and restore the "Middle Shires" of the Jacobean settlement.⁹⁸ The need to repeat the pacification demonstrated how the British Civil Wars drove the Anglo-Scottish Borders back to their pre-1603 condition. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the developing British body politic was once again a "divided or monstrous body" requiring the same purgative to correct.⁹⁹

Eamonn Ó Ciardha, "Tories and Moss-Troopers in Scotland and Ireland in the Interregnum: A Political Dimension", in Celtic Dimensions of the British Civil Wars, ed. John. R. Young, (Edinburgh, John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1997), 141-63.

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⁹⁹ James I, "Speech to the Westminster parliament, 19 March 1603," 136.

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