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‘Shock and awe’: the use of terror as a psychological weapon during the Bruce –

Balliol civil war, 1332-1338

Ravaging land, burning crops, stealing livestock and killing peasants: this is how war was fought in the middle ages. These tactics constituted a form of warfare that minimised the dangers of meeting an enemy in battle, while maximising the destruction that could be inflicted upon the opposition. They also enabled the seizure of booty, the acquisition of which was important in keeping an army in the field since armed forces of the time were often unpaid. English armies in Scotland had employed destructive tactics from the beginning of the Wars of Independence, while the Scots had behaved similarly when pursuing attacks upon northern England.¹ The psychological impact of these attacks, whether submission of an overawed population or payment of protection money from terrified inhabitants, was essentially a by-product of the type of war being fought. Although the terrorising of a particular area was useful, it was nevertheless not the principle aim of armies in the Anglo-Scottish conflict. The use of terror as a targeted form of war, as a weapon in and of itself, was more applicable to the conditions of the Bruce-Balliol civil conflict. Robert I had employed terror in the form of targeted violence in his *herschip* of Comyn lands in 1307-8, as he attempted to establish hegemony over a unified Scotland. This was the means the Bruce partisans chose to adopt in order to maintain a grip on the allegiance of the Scottish people against the Balliol threat during the renewed fighting of the 1330s.

The opening phases of the Second War of Independence were relatively devoid of such action. The Disinherited army that landed at Kinghorn in August 1332 had little time to pursue any sort of terror campaign in the Scottish countryside before it was met in battle at Dupplin Moor. Victory vindicated the arrival of Balliol and his supporters, and encouraged a large part of the local nobility and clergy to rally to the Balliol cause.² A concerted campaign of violence was unnecessary in enforcing allegiance. Many of Balliol's new supporters seem to have come of their own accord, having perceived divine intervention in the defeat of the Bruce army by the much smaller Disinherited force.³ The Bruce party was not, however, militarily destroyed at Dupplin. A second army remained in the field and soon besieged the Disinherited at Perth. A relief army from Balliol's traditional base of support in Galloway drew the Bruce partisans away from the town. This provoked a violent response that included the use of destructive tactics for the first time in the Second War of Independence.⁴ The Bruce army marched into Galloway, 'and put it to fire and flame, and drove the people from the country and took and carried off everything they could find.'⁵ This punitive raid was not primarily intended to overawe the Balliol partisans in the southwest. Instead, it was intended as a distraction, forcing Edward Balliol to abandon his position around Perth in order to rescue his major Scottish supporters. Balliol then attempted to entice the Bruce partisans into a further

¹ For the destructive nature of Scottish raiding of northern England and its impact, see for example C. McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces: Scotland, England and Ireland 1306-1328* (East Linton, 1997), 72-115; J. Scammell, 'Robert I and the North of England', *EHR*, 73 (1958), 385-403.

² *Chron. Bower*, vii, 81; *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 272; B. Webster, 'Scotland without a King', in *Medieval Scotland Crown, Lordship and Community: Essays Presented to G.W.S. Barrow*, (ed.) A. Grant and K.J. Stringer (Edinburgh, 1998), 223-238, at 229, 237.

³ The English chroniclers stated that God supported the Disinherited cause at Dupplin Moor. They were not alone in such an assertion, and the Scottish chronicler John of Fordun also supported a religious cause for the defeat, stating that the army was 'struck down, not by the strength of man, but by the vengeance of God.' (*Chron. Fordun*, i, 347. See also *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 271; *Scalacronica* (Maxwell), 90-1.).

military confrontation. In this he was partially successful, capturing Andrew Murray and John Crabbe at Roxburgh Bridge.⁶ Balliol's determination to engage the Bruce forces in battle did not, however, involve ravaging of the countryside. No large-scale attempt was made to terrorise the rural landscape. This was a mistake. The essence of good lordship rested on the ability of the lord to defend his lands from attack. Sustained destruction of Bruce territory would have forced the Bruce partisans to march to its defence, or risk forfeiting the allegiance of their tenants. This would have afforded Balliol the possibility of a final decisive battle, or the allegiance of important areas of Scotland. The lack of a terror campaign instead allowed the Bruce partisans to dictate the course of the war's early stages. It also ensured that Balliol lacked numerical support when the Bruce Scots duly attacked him at Annan and drove him from the kingdom.

The invasions of 1333 began very differently from those of the previous year. On entering Scotland, Balliol's army now 'raided several places and did great damage to their enemies' before moving on to besiege Berwick.⁷ Raiding parties were sent out from the siege to attack the surrounding countryside. The earl of Atholl led one foraging expedition, while another attacked the market at Haddington.⁸ Meanwhile, the English defenders of the West March raided Scotland and 'began to burn and kill all before them, and they took sheep and other fat beasts in great plenty.'⁹ These examples present a picture of conventional warfare, comprised of raiding, foraging and seizure of booty, but it can be argued that these attacks also involved attempts to win by force the loyalty of

⁴ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 272-3

⁵ *Chron. Anonimalle* (Childs and Taylor), 153.

⁶ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 273-4; *Chron. Bower*, vii, 89; *Scalacronica* (Maxwell), 91-2; *Chron. Anonimalle* (Childs and Taylor), 153-5.

⁷ *Chron. Anonimalle* (Childs and Taylor), 155; *Chron. Hemingburgh*, ii, 306-7.

⁸ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 277; *Chron. Melsa*, ii, 368.

the southern Scots. Targeted attacks of the very lands that would be ceded to Edward III following the Bruce collapse ensured the subjection of southern Scotland. Here were the beginnings of a campaign, using terror, in order to achieve a dominance that Balliol had failed to gain in the preceding year. Circumstance once again denied Balliol the necessity of extending such a policy over a prolonged period. The victory of the Disinherited/English armies at Halidon Hill was emphatic. Terror was no longer required since the culmination of two heavy defeats in less than a year had shattered temporarily the ability of the Bruce partisans to resist. What followed seems to have been a return to the tactics of the previous year, with Balliol attempting to portray himself as a magnanimous conqueror and rightful king. The Disinherited took the opportunity to reclaim their lands and exercise lordship over their tenants. This seems to have been a relatively peaceful process. The chronicles contain no lurid tales of violence as the Disinherited completed their conquest. Indeed, the Steward's principal tenants gathered at Renfrew to give fealty to David de Strathbogie as their lord. This reflected the pattern of submissions across Scotland throughout 1333.¹⁰ Following the collapse of the Bruce cause, and the delay in mounting a counter offensive, it is hardly surprising that the population switched allegiance as readily as it did. The early use of targeted violence during this campaign, and the result of the battle of Halidon Hill, allowed a smooth transition to a Balliol/English administration. Terror, targeting specific areas, was briefly introduced and followed by the imposition of new lords on a subdued populace. This was

⁹ *Chron. Anonimale* (Childs and Taylor), 159. See also *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 277-8; *Chron. Hemingburgh*, ii, 307; *Chron. Melsa*, ii, 367-8.

¹⁰ *Chron. Wyntoun*, ii, 407; R. Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots: the formative years of a military career, 1327-1335* (Oxford, 1965), 148.

adopted increasingly as policy by both sides in the battle for the allegiance of the Scottish people.

The rebellion of the Bruce partisans in 1334 witnessed the beginning of more concerted attacks on the countryside. In Clydesdale, the Steward's followers attacked his own lands and 'laid the country waste, plundered for spoils, led men away as prisoners or brought them over to the Scottish side.' These attacks determined that 'within a short time they brought under their subjection the lower part of Clydesdale and its inhabitants, regardless of whether they were willing or not.'¹¹ The expansion of this campaign into Carrick, Cunningham and Kyle achieved the submission of Balliol's sheriff of Ayr, Godfrey de Ross, who was 'dragged or forced along after some resistance.'¹² The involuntary nature of the defections reported by the chroniclers provides some explanation as to why terror was a necessary weapon. The notion of good lordship was accompanied by the idea of strong lordship. In the circumstances of civil conflict, it was the claimant with the ability to mete out destruction against the land that had the best chance of enforcing his will on his tenants and ensuring their support. Instead of returning as the rightful lord, exiled from his lands by an unwelcome usurper, the Steward won back his lands by force, inflicting a campaign of terror and destruction on his own people in order to regain their allegiance. This was possible in part because the disinherited lord, David de Strathbogie, had never meaningfully gained the allegiance of the Steward's tenants. Bower stated that the barons of Renfrew 'spontaneously approached the Steward, and humbly presented themselves to him as their own lord.'

¹¹ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 107.

¹² *Chron. Bower*, vii, 107. Wyntoun is more ambiguous in his relation of events surrounding Ross's submission, stating 'And qwhat for luwe, and qwhat for awe,/Till Scottis pes (thai) can hym drawe.'
(*Chron. Wyntoun* (Laing), ii, 416.)

These were presumably the same men who had submitted to Strathbogie less than a year before.¹³ Strathbogie's absence in the north created a power vacuum that was exploited by the Steward. A policy of terror issued a challenge to the Disinherited lord to protect his newly acquired possessions. Failure to do so demonstrated a lack of power and influence within the Stewartry and reinforced the perception that the Bruce party remained pre-eminent.¹⁴ The Steward's successes led to the deployment of similar tactics in Galloway and the southern sheriffdoms of Scotland, the latter officially held by the English crown. In July the Bruce Scots 'violently attacked the Galwegians', and it would seem that their raids encouraged the temporary defection of Duncan MacDowall to the Bruce side.¹⁵ Further defections followed, leading to the outbreak of civil conflict within Galloway itself, where the people 'naturally destroyed each other'.¹⁶ MacDowell consistently changed sides throughout the remainder of the war. However, the defection of such a prominent Balliol supporter, along with others like him, supports the argument that changes in allegiance were linked to particularly violent raids. MacDowell, Godfrey de Ross and the Steward's tenants were forced to reconsider their allegiance by violent attacks aimed at themselves and their lands. The longevity of such defections would

¹³ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 107; *Chron. Wyntoun* (Laing), ii, 407.

¹⁴ Strathbogie's concern for the Steward's lands seems to have been minimal. He was more anxious to establish a base of support within his ancestral territory of Atholl. Bower noted Strathbogie's pre-eminent position in the north in the autumn of 1334 'because of the force at his command', against which 'nobody was found there to gainsay him.' These men were apparently gathered from his earldom and used to further expand Strathbogie's influence in the north as he attempted to gain dominance over former Comyn lands. Ross argues that it was this powerful position that forced the Earl of Moray to negotiate with Strathbogie and bring him into the Bruce camp in late 1334 with the promise of territorial grants. (*Chron. Bower*, vii, 103; see also A. Ross, 'Men For All Seasons? The Strathbogie Earls of Atholl and the Wars of Independence, c.1290-c.1335 – Part 2: Earl David IV (1307-1335)', *Northern Scotland*, 21 (2001), 1-15, at 4-5.)

¹⁵ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 286-7; R.C. Reid, 'Edward de Balliol', *TDGAS*, 3rd series, 35 (1956-7), 38-63, at 55-6, where Reid describes MacDowall as a 'wobbler'.

¹⁶ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 286-7; R.D. Oram, 'Bruce, Balliol and the Lordship of Galloway: South-West Scotland and the Wars of Independence', *TDGAS*, 67 (1992), 29-47, at 43.

depend on the ability of either side to continue to exert violent pressure on the same people to ensure their compliance.¹⁷

Failure to secure control of Scotland prompted the Balliol partisans and their English supporters to rethink their military strategies. Attempts to tread carefully and gather support for the new Balliol regime, following their battlefield victories, had failed. Committed support had always been limited, and their political and military efforts were undermined by the attacks of the Bruce party. In addition, the war increasingly represented an English, rather than a Balliol attempt to conquer Scotland.¹⁸ From the winter of 1334 new strategies were implemented. David de Strathbogie had already used violent means against the tenants of neighbouring Bruce lords in northeast Scotland in the autumn of 1334.¹⁹ Balliol and Edward III followed a similar pattern of behaviour during the Roxburgh campaign in the winter of 1334/5. Raiding parties were sent out to ravage the lands of their nominal subjects, and it was the lands of those who had rebelled the previous summer that were subjected to greatest devastation. The southern sheriffdoms were targeted in a march that was said to have destroyed all the profits and fruits of the land from the Tweed to the Forth.²⁰ Balliol's forces entered the western parts of Scotland and ravaged Annandale, Carrick and Cunningham, 'destroying such towns and other

¹⁷ Webster states that the Bruce war of the 1330s consisted of 'a series of struggles which were able to deny effective rule to either side, but whose principal result was widespread devastation in the Scottish countryside.' However, the examples provided above show that the Bruce Scots' principal *aim* was the destruction of the countryside. This did indeed deny the Balliol/English side the ability to rule, but it was also part of a wider struggle for the allegiance of the Scottish population. This war emphasised the ability of the Bruce Scots to mete out devastation. And its continual use highlighted the inability of the Balliol/English to complete the transition to a Balliol regime in Scotland. (Webster, 'Scotland Without a King', 223.)

¹⁸ Webster, 'Scotland Without a King', 231; Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots*, 236.

¹⁹ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 103, 107.

²⁰ *Chron. Melsa*, ii, 373; Higden, *Polychronicon*, viii, 330.

property as they came upon, because the inhabitants had fled'.²¹ These demonstrations of power were intended to terrify the population of areas visited by the Bruce Scots in their raids the preceding summer, but they were merely a preliminary to greater endeavours. The summer of 1335 witnessed a larger two-pronged invasion that accentuated the devastation of the winter and spread the destruction over a wider area. One English chronicler stated that the Balliol/English armies 'freely marched through all the land on this side of the Forth and beyond it, burning, laying waste and carrying off spoil and booty.'²² This general description of events masks the more targeted nature of the offensive. The destruction dispensed by the western invasion force's march through Kyle, Cunningham and Clydesdale was a deliberate punishment of those areas that had been prominent in the rebellion of 1334. These successive campaigns in the southwest ensured its pacification, and this allowed for the expansion of campaigning north of the Forth. The intensification of warfare encouraged many to return to their former allegiance. However, these successes were mostly illusory. Those who returned to the Balliol/English party were predominantly individuals who had supported the Disinherited from the beginning, but had adopted a Bruce allegiance due to the success of the 1334 rebellion. Individuals such as David de Strathbogie, Godfrey de Ross and Geoffrey and Alexander Mowbray were welcomed back into the faith of the two Edwards. These submissions were accompanied by those of the earl of Menteith and the Steward.²³ The majority of these men, fearing for their safety if caught fighting for the wrong side,

²¹ *Chron. Hemingburgh*, ii, 310; *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 289.

²² *Chron. Melsa*, ii, 376. For further descriptions of destruction throughout the invasion, see *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 292; *Chron. Bower*, vii, 109; *Chron. Avesbury*, 298; *Chron. Hemingburgh*, ii, 310-11.

²³ *Chron. Avesbury*, 302; *Chron. Melsa*, ii, 376; *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 294; *Scalacronica* (Maxwell), 101.

readily submitted. That fear had arisen in response to the violent nature of warfare during the invasions of 1334-5. The submission of the Steward was in response to the determined attacks against his and his supporters' lands. The destruction wrought in Kyle, Cunningham and Clydesdale provided a powerful object lesson. Even this, however, did not convince the majority of the Bruce partisans that the war was in any way lost.

Although the Bruce party avoided opposing the Balliol/English armies in the field during 1335, they quickly returned to their previous tactics when it was safe to do so. Once again, targeted attacks were employed to reverse the changes of allegiance brought about by the two Edwards' massive invasion. One English chronicle stated that men such as the Earls of March and Ross, Andrew Murray, Maurice Murray, William Douglas and William Keith, gathered their supporters around them and 'committed much injury upon those who had accepted peace.'²⁴ Several of these Bruce commanders were then involved in the campaign that resulted in the battle of Culblean. David de Strathbogie had once more undertaken a campaign of terror in northeast Scotland, in an attempt to subdue areas that were consistently supportive of the Bruce cause. It was the attacks on Andrew Murray's lands, as much as the siege of his wife in Kildrumny Castle that forced Murray to ride north. If Strathbogie had been allowed to proceed unopposed with a campaign of terror in the northeast, it could have upset the balance of support for the Bruce party in this vital area.²⁵ The success of these campaigns for the Bruce partisans prompted further violent raids and terrorisation by the Disinherited/English during the 1336 Lochindorb campaign. Violence and destruction were unleashed upon areas of

²⁴ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 294.

²⁵ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 115.

Scotland hitherto relatively unscathed. The burning of much of Moray and the agricultural lands of the east coast on the army's return, affected a major base of Bruce support. It also provided a direct attack against several members of the Scottish army at Culblean, principally Andrew Murray, and those local men who had assisted the Bruce Scots in the battle. Once more, however, the Bruce partisans were able to await the departure of the invading armies before descending upon the very areas recently attacked by Balliol/English forces. One Scottish chronicler was prompted to state that 'by the continual depredations of both sides the whole land of Gowrie, Angus and the Mearns was reduced to almost irredeemable devastation and extreme poverty.'²⁶ Once again this was a targeted attack by the Bruce Scots, devastating lands recently attacked by the Balliol/English forces, in order to emphasise their continued ability to punish those whose allegiance wavered. Murray's campaigning continued to focus on strongholds of Balliol support. Fife was attacked in 1337. Along with the seizure and destruction of many of the castles in the earldom, the Bruce army 'laid waste the land everywhere around, with the inhabitants captured and held to ransom'.²⁷ Lothian too was raided during the Bruce siege of Edinburgh castle. On this occasion the area was attacked successively by the Bruce Scots, and then by the English, who attempted to ensure the area's continuing quiescence under their rule. Bower's comment that 'there followed the total destruction of Lothian, both by the Scots and by the English', probably reflected the situation rather well.²⁸ As well as Fife, Lothian and the northeast, Galloway was targeted once again. One English chronicler stated that the Scots 'once more destroyed the

²⁶ *Chron. Fordun*, i, 361-2.

²⁷ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 125-7; *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 300-1.

wretched Galwegians on this side of the Cree like beasts, because they adhered so firmly to their lord King Edward Balliol.²⁹ As in previous campaigns, this had the desired effect of persuading a prominent Balliol supporter to switch sides. Eustace Maxwell, keeper of Caerlaverock Castle, ‘false to the faith and allegiance which he owed to my lord King of England, went over to the Scottish side.’ His tenants followed, and a retaliatory raid by Ranulph Dacre against Maxwell’s lands failed to redress these defections.³⁰ Balliol had lost his principal supporter in the southwest.³¹

Webster described the campaigns of Murray and other Bruce leaders as including an inevitable element of devastation: ‘destruction is an inescapable consequence of such warfare.’³² The argument, however, can be made that far from being a consequence of the war, destruction was a principal element in the attempts of the Bruce leaders to dominate the Scottish people, and enforce such dominance through violence and terror. The impact of these tactics on the countryside is difficult to quantify, though chronicle evidence offers some insight into the effects of raiding. In Galloway, the Bruce partisans attempted to drive Balliol supporters physically from the very land on which they lived. The Lanercost chronicler stated that few were killed since few remained on their land.

²⁸ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 131. Lothian had already suffered from targeted attacks, such as the campaign of the earl of Moray in the spring of 1335 ‘to bring the southern Scots back to loyalty.’ (*Chron. Bower*, vii, 107-9.)

²⁹ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 300-1.

³⁰ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 303-4; *Chron. Anonimale* (Galbraith), 10; Oram, ‘Bruce, Balliol and the Lordship of Galloway’, 44; B. Webster, ‘The English Occupation of Dumfriesshire in the Fourteenth Century’, *TDGAS*, 3rd series, 35 (1958 for 1956-7), 64-80, at 71-2.

³¹ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 304-5. Maxwell was one of several nobles who changed sides on numerous occasions, although he seems to have been the most successful, having escaped severe punishment for his actions. Webster states that it was the importance of Maxwell, and to a lesser extent MacDowell, in the strategically important southwest that allowed for such behaviour. MacDowell was, however, eventually punished for his turncoat behaviour and imprisoned by the English in 1346. Others fared worse. The earls of Fife and Menteith were sentenced to death as traitors following their capture at Neville’s Cross. Fife earned a reprieve, but Menteith suffered a traitor’s death. (Webster, ‘The English Occupation of Dumfriesshire’, 69, 73.)

³² Webster, ‘Scotland Without a King’, 228.

The Anonimalle chronicle noted that the Bruce Scots had driven the people from the land, and many seem to have fled the oncoming Bruce army, some even crossing the border to relative safety in England.³³ Those who remained found themselves involved in a civil conflict between the followers of Bruce and Balliol.³⁴ The extent of the destruction caused in Galloway was not defined by the chronicles beyond the usual descriptions of burning and stealing cattle. The ability of the population to feed itself and to garner some profit from its agricultural labours was, however, presumably affected greatly. Elsewhere, similar consequences ensued. Bower stated that the people of Perth were reduced to eating grass and even to cannibalism in order to fend off starvation during the siege of 1339.³⁵ Raiding during the Roxburgh campaign, although conducted in winter, was said to have targeted the ‘fruits of the land’.³⁶ The Lochindorb campaign witnessed the destruction of the best and most fertile land around Elgin.³⁷ Around Aberdeen the Balliol/English armies were involved in ‘destroying crops which were then nearly ripe for harvest.’³⁸ And the English invasion of 1337 targeted agricultural produce, ‘burning houses and corn, which had then been stored in the barns.’³⁹ Although these incidents all relate to English raids, it is likely that the Bruce Scots employed similar tactics. Bower commented that Andrew Murray reduced Scotland ‘to such desolation and scarcity that more perished through hunger and extreme poverty than the

³³ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 272-3; *Chron. Anonimalle* (Childs and Taylor), 153. The people of Galloway had also fled to relative safety in northern England during the raids of Edward Bruce in 1308. (McNamee, *Wars of the Bruces*, 44.)

³⁴ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 286-7.

³⁵ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 143-5.

³⁶ *Chron. Melsa*, ii, 373.

³⁷ H. Ellis, *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, 3rd series, i (London, 1846), 37.

³⁸ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 298.

³⁹ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 305-6.

sword destroyed from the time of the outbreak of the war.⁴⁰ Putting aside the inherent dangers of chronicle exaggeration, the image provided by such comments is likely to be closer to the truth than not. The immediate effect on those that suffered as a result of several years of constant warfare was presumably profound. In this respect, the type of war employed in the theatre of agricultural land was very successful. It was the ability to continue such a war over a long period that would determine which side gained most from the terrorisation of the countryside.

Terror as a military tactic was employed in the countryside to secure the allegiance of nobles, who possessed the land, and their tenants. There remained, however, two other important groups within Scottish society whose allegiance was important to both sides. The support of urban communities and the ecclesiastical establishment was vital to either party's chances of establishing a working administration within Scotland. Towns constituted bases of local government and of commerce. With control of the towns came the ability to govern effectively. Their possession was an essential part of the war for Scotland.⁴¹ As in the countryside, the contest for control of urban centres at times involved unchecked violence and looting. This was sometimes a consequence of the inability to control victorious troops, but could also be used as a deliberate ploy to demonstrate the futility of resistance.⁴² Terror could be used to induce a town's

⁴⁰ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 125, 137.

⁴¹ With reference to the First War of Independence, McNamee states that 'towns played a crucial role in determining the course and nature of the Wars of the Bruces'. (McNamee, *Wars of the Bruces*, 206).

⁴² The most obvious example of such an occurrence in the Anglo-Scottish arena is the capture of Berwick by the army of Edward I in 1296. The descriptions of the streets running with blood and the sacking of the town for several days constituted behaviour permitted under the laws of war, as the town was taken by storm. What is open to question, however, is the extent to which Edward I had any control over his army's actions, and whether he had intended to make an object lesson of Berwick to ease his conquest of Scotland. (M. Keen, *The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages* (London, 1965), 121-4; M. Strickland, 'A Law of Arms or a Law of Treason? Conduct in War in Edward I's Campaigns in Scotland, 1296-1307', in *Violence in Medieval Society* (ed.) R.W. Kaeuper (Woodbridge, 2000), 39-77, at 64-68.)

population to surrender, or to punish those within for their belligerence. It could also be used as a punitive example to others of the futility of resistance.

Direct targeting of a town, with its subsequent destruction and the death of its population, was limited during Bruce-Balliol/English conflict. The sack of the town accompanied the fall of Perth to the Bruce partisans in 1332. The Bruce Scots 'slwe at thare lykyng', following which they destroyed Perth's defences and possibly also set fire to part of the town.⁴³ This early example of urban terror was deployed against burgesses who had submitted readily to the Balliol party, and it may have been applied specifically in response to their defection. The violence was not, however, uncontrolled. Despite Wyntoun's description of general slaughter, prominent individuals were instead captured, including the earl of Fife and his family, as well as Andrew Murray of Tullibardine.⁴⁴ Murray's capture was important to the Bruce administration. His trial and execution assisted the Bruce Scots in their attempts to re-establish their position as the rightful authority in the kingdom.⁴⁵ The sack of the town also acted as an example to other urban communities of the dangers of flirting with the Balliol opposition. Nevertheless, as an example of terrorising Scottish towns it is an isolated example from the early stages of the conflict. It was not until the winter of 1334/5 that behaviour against the urban landscape, as it had in the countryside, became much more aggressive. The invading

⁴³ *Chron. Wyntoun* (Laing), ii, 394 (slaughter); *Chron. Bower*, vii, 83 (defences); *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 273 (burning the town).

⁴⁴ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 83; *Chron. Wyntoun* (Laing), ii, 394; *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 273.

⁴⁵ The Scottish chroniclers report Murray's trial and execution as a result of his treason to David II. Bower records Murray's involvement in leading the Disinherited to the ford that allowed them to cross the River Earn before Dupplin. He had no doubt that following his trial, Murray 'underwent the death which a traitor deserves.' Wyntoun makes no mention of Dupplin, stating: 'But dowl, with hym the court stwde hard;/ Agayne the Kyng and his hey crown/ Conwyct he wes off fals tresown./ For-thi to that dede dwne he wes,/ That the lawch wald in that cas.' Both chroniclers, however, make the point that the Bruce Scots were enforcing the rule of law, and demonstrating their continued ability to do so. (*Chron. Bower*, vii, 83; *Chron. Wyntoun* (Laing), ii, 394.)

armies of the Roxburgh campaign marched through the border sheriffdoms, ‘destroying such towns and other property as they came upon’.⁴⁶ Dundee was burned in an attack by English ships during the large-scale summer invasion of 1335.⁴⁷ The Bruce Scots attacked Perth once more in 1336. Balliol arrived at the town to find it ‘burnt by the Scots because they dared not await his coming there.’⁴⁸ Following this, the Disinherited/English forces of the Lochindorb campaign burned the town of Forres and spent three days destroying Aberdeen.⁴⁹

Damage to Scottish towns was also possible without recourse to attacks on the towns themselves. Urban communities were susceptible to attacks directed at their hinterlands. Destruction of outlying arable land jeopardised a town’s ability to feed its population, as well as damaging trade and commerce.⁵⁰ The accounts of the English sheriffs of southern Scotland for 1335-6 suggest at the widespread nature of such a tactic. Eustace Maxwell reported that there were no blanch-farm returns from Kircudbright as the lands were waste. Sanquhar too provided no revenue for Edward III. As a new escheat to the English crown, however, it may very well have been the English who had caused the devastation in the town.⁵¹ In Roxburgh, the bulk of town revenue was produced by the market and related tolls. The town farms produced negligible returns

⁴⁶ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 289.

⁴⁷ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 292.

⁴⁸ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 298. Attempts had been made to strengthen the town’s defences in 1335, but these seem to have been insufficient to repel the Bruce Scots. Balliol undertook further strengthening in 1336. The accumulated efforts of those years succeeded in making Perth a more imposing target, and it was not until the major siege of 1339 that the town fell. (*Chron. Melsa*, ii, 376; *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 298; R. M. Spearman, ‘The Medieval Townscape of Perth’, in *The Scottish Medieval Town*, (ed.) M. Lymch, M. Spearman and G. Stell (Edinburgh, 1998, 42-59, at 52.)

⁴⁹ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 119; *Chron. Hemingburgh*, ii, 311-2; *Chron. Melsa*, ii, 377-8; *Chron. Wynthoun* (Laing), ii, 430; Ellis, *Original Letters*, 37-8. Aberdeen’s representatives declared in 1341 that no revenue could be raised from the burgh farms in 1336, because the English had burned the town. They also declared that nobody dared to live within the burgh during that period, except those who were adherents of the English. (*ER*, i, 472).

⁵⁰ E. Ewan, *Townlife in Fourteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1990), 117-120.

and the town's mill was destroyed.⁵² Similarly, the burgh of Haddington produced little from its farms 'because of the destruction of the war'.⁵³ Elsewhere, the Disinherited/English armies of the Lochindorb campaign did more than destroy northeast Scotland's towns. They specifically targeted the urban hinterlands as a vulnerable target. Forres' hinterland was put to the flames along with the town, while the lands around Elgin were treated in similar fashion. Elgin itself escaped destruction, apparently out of reverence for the Holy Trinity to which the town's church was dedicated.⁵⁴ Such religious piety does not detract from the damage that the town invariably suffered through the destruction of its main source of sustenance, along with much of the neighbouring countryside.

The use of terror in the urban landscape was also apparent during a siege situation as a means of enticing the inhabitants to surrender. The most obvious example of this was the behaviour of Edward III at Berwick in 1333. Bower's retrospective comment that 'the townspeople very much feared the ferocity of...Edward' is probably based on the king's actions during the siege.⁵⁵ The hanging of Thomas Seton before the walls of Berwick sent a clear message to the townsmen that surrender was their only viable option if they wished to escape alive. This was further reinforced by a threat to hang two prisoners a day until the town surrendered. Chroniclers debated whether Edward was right to act in this way, their arguments reflecting their national bias. The Scottish writers reported that Edward demanded the surrender of the town a day early, and

⁵¹ *CDS*, iii, 317-8, 318-9.

⁵² *CDS*, ii, 320-1.

⁵³ *CDS*, iii, 346-7.

⁵⁴ Ellis, *Original Letters*, 36-7; *Chron. Anonimale* (Galbraith), 7; *Chron. Bower*, vii, 119.

⁵⁵ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 91; *Chron. Wyntoun* (Laing), ii, 398. Ironically, the chronicles state that it was the townsmen's fear of Edward III that persuaded them to negotiate in the first place, and hand over the very hostages that Edward was to use to his benefit.

ignored a partial relief of Berwick by elements of the Bruce army.⁵⁶ English commentators accused the Scots of attempting to retain the town by underhand means, which were against the tenets of the agreement reached with Edward III for its surrender.⁵⁷ Whatever the case, Edward III's actions had the desired effect. The defenders of the town submitted to further negotiations, and agreed the means by which Berwick could be relieved, which ultimately led to the battle of Halidon Hill.

Two later examples offer alternative outcomes to the use of prisoners during sieges. The Lanercost chronicler related that in 1338 William Douglas captured members of the Edinburgh garrison, including John de Stirling, the castle's custodian. Douglas led his prisoners before the walls of Edinburgh. There he threatened that if the garrison failed to surrender 'he would cause Sir John to be drawn there at the tails of horses, and afterwards to be hanged on gallows before the gate, and all those who were prisoners there with him to be beheaded before their eyes.'⁵⁸ The garrison refused and Douglas chose not to carry out his threat. Similarly at the siege of Dunbar, William Montague was said to have brought the captured earl of Moray before the castle walls. Moray was threatened with death unless his sister, Agnes countess of March, surrendered the castle. Her refusal to submit resulted in the return of the earl to English imprisonment, as 'the English would not do what they had threatened'.⁵⁹ The use of terror in siege situations depended on willpower and resolution. Edward III presumably felt justified in hanging Seton in response to the Berwick inhabitants reneging on agreed terms of surrender. His actions also had the benefit of terrorising the townspeople into further negotiations that were

⁵⁶ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 91; *Chron. Wyntoun* (Laing), ii, 399-400.

⁵⁷ *Chron. Melsa*, ii, 368-9; *Scalacronica* (Maxwell), 95; *Brut*, 282-3.

⁵⁸ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 312.

⁵⁹ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 314.

weighted in his favour. The agreement reached not only afforded the opportunity of the town's capture, but also the defeat of the Scots in a pitched battle of his choosing. Such clinical use of terror, however, was exceptional. The examples of Douglas and Montague highlight the use of terror purely as a threat. Their respective prisoners had been captured in combat and had formally submitted to captivity and ransom. Keen states that hostages handed over as sureties of a town's surrender did not possess the same legal status as prisoners. The lack of quarter in a siege situation was extended to such individuals if the terms to which they had agreed were not adhered. Edward III was therefore within his rights to execute as many prisoners as he saw fit. The recognition of this right was reflected in the Scottish account of events. They asserted that Edward sought the surrender of the town before the agreed date and in spite of its partial relief. In the Scottish portrayal of events, it was Edward III himself who broke the agreement, and not the defenders of Berwick.⁶⁰

As with the agricultural landscape, the treatment of Scotland's urban communities changed after the Roxburgh campaign. The severe treatment meted out against Aberdeen highlights the destructive nature of that English campaign, and the increasingly violent treatment of Scottish urban communities by both sides.⁶¹ Attacks on Scottish towns had become the norm in an attempt to overawe urban populations and influence their allegiance. By contrast the Bruce Scots had a more limited impact on the urban environment. They primarily intimidated towns by ravaging their hinterlands. Their ability to continue this form of warfare was sufficient to convince many that the Bruce

⁶⁰ Keen, *The Laws of War*, 130-1; *Chron. Bower*, vii, 91; *Chron. Wyntoun* (Laing), ii, 399-400.

⁶¹ Both English and Scottish sources relate that there was an element of revenge involved in the destruction of Aberdeen, due to the behaviour of the town's inhabitants. Wyntoun described the event as a

partisans remained a powerful force in Scotland. The Balliol/English attempt to terrorise the Scottish urban population culminated in the direct assaults on the northeast, a strong base of Bruce political and economic support. That this policy failed was in part a consequence of the refocusing of English foreign policy towards adventures in France. No longer could Edward III afford to send large armies to terrorise the Scottish population. Neither could he afford the massive outlay in men and money required for garrisoning a large number of Scottish towns and castles. The withdrawal of forces to protect the English-administered south removed the threat of terror from much of the rest of Scotland, and the Bruce partisans were able to regain control over many of Scotland's urban communities. The later successes with the fall of Perth, Stirling and Edinburgh were the result of the greater freedom of action enjoyed by the Bruce Scots following the effective withdrawal of Balliol/English forces after 1338.

The treatment of the clergy and ecclesiastical property was regulated by law, in theory at least. Clerical immunity from the ravages of war was provided by canon law, while the laws of war attempted to reduce incidents of unchecked destruction of ecclesiastical property. Nonetheless, it appears that the clergy were more easily protected than their possessions.⁶² Accidental damage to ecclesiastical estates was often committed by the ravaging armies of both sides that had little knowledge of, or paid little attention to, ownership of the land that they destroyed. This is suggested by a willingness to pay compensation for damage done to church estates and buildings, for example the compensation paid to both Newbattle Abbey and Manuel Priory for damage sustained

consequence of the death of Thomas Rosselyn, English constable of Dunottar Castle. (*Chron. Wyntoun* (Laing), ii, 430; Ellis, *Original Letters*, 37.)

⁶² Keen, *The Laws of War*, 192-4.

during the Balliol/English invasions of 1335.⁶³ Further accidental damage could be inflicted by the indiscriminate weapons employed during sieges. Once again the English king was petitioned for financial assistance, this time by the monks and nuns of the *Maison Dieu* of Berwick for damage sustained during the 1333 siege.⁶⁴ There was, however, a major difference between such damage and the deliberate targeting of clerics and church lands. The position of members of the clergy as secular lords, holding lands, taking part in armed expeditions and providing resources for the sustenance of war, left them open to attack. Ecclesiastical wealth also attracted looters. As with the urban communities, the support of the Scottish clergy was vitally important for the competing parties. The clergy could act as the mouthpiece for the royal line that held its support. The question was how this support would be won, and if terror, already employed in the rural and urban landscapes, had a place within the ecclesiastical sphere.

It had been the unstinting support of the Scottish clergy that had assisted Robert I in his fight both to gain the kingdom against internal enemies, and then to retain it against English attacks. Several of these men were, however, actively engaged as leaders of the war at that time. Edward I's treatment of the bishops of Glasgow and St Andrews reflected their political and military position. They had forfeited their clerical immunity by their behaviour and were more likely to suffer severe censure *because* they were men of the church.⁶⁵ Examples of punishment against the clergy are, however, lacking from the 1330s. This suggests that the clergy were less influential in this stage of the conflict, or at least that the clerics did not take such an active role in its leadership. The death of

⁶³ Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots*, 205.

⁶⁴ According to the claim, 'their church and houses were utterly cast down by the engines during the siege, and the master has spent so much in repairing them that he has pledged his chalices and vestments.' (CDS, iii, no. 1105, 199).

the bishop of Glasgow provided the only prominent example of violence against a major Scottish ecclesiastic at this time. His death onboard ship during confused fighting for control of the vessel was probably accidental.⁶⁶ It was not, though, a deliberate act of terror against a member of the Scottish clergy.

As already indicated, the conduct of the war changed during the winter of 1334/5. Before the campaign of this year there is little evidence of attacks against the clergy and their churches. However, military action in the following years increased in severity and a more 'total' form of warfare became the norm, affecting ecclesiastical interests in the same manner as in the rural and urban landscapes. The Lanercost chronicler declared that the Balliol/English armies of the 1335 invasions looted various churches, the Welsh drawing special criticism for 'plundering regulars and seculars impartially.'⁶⁷ Particular mention was made of the dormitory and schools of the Minorite Friars in Dundee, which were plundered and burned along with a large part of the town. This attack was blamed on piratical sailors from Newcastle, and it is they who took the extreme measure of burning a member of the order who had previously been a knight. The attackers went so far as to steal the friars' bell, which was later sold to an English monastery.⁶⁸ The interesting point about these descriptions is that they came from an English source. The chronicler condemned the violence wrought upon the Scottish churches, whilst focusing the blame on renegade elements within the English army. His attempts to blame the Welsh and unruly sailors suggest that, at least in certain quarters, attacks on the

⁶⁵ Keen, *Laws of War*, 193-4;

⁶⁶ The difficulties of combat at sea were highlighted by the death of most of the crew, but the English chroniclers spend some time explaining that the bishop died either through refusing to eat, or because of grief. It is probably safe to assume that despite his position as a man of the church, he was caught up in the fighting, and was himself killed. (*Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 305; *Knighton's Chronicle*, 5.)

⁶⁷ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 292.

⁶⁸ *Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 292.

ecclesiastical community were regarded as unacceptable. In spite of such beliefs, further examples imply that attacks against the clergy and their possessions were quite common. During the same invasion, Bower states that English ships plundered the monastery on Inchcolm. The Scottish chronicler took the opportunity to create a religious moral from the events, stating that the sailors were punished for their crime by a storm that miraculously appeared and threatened to sink their ship, until they gave up the goods they had seized.⁶⁹ Bower related a similar miraculous intervention when describing an attack mounted by English mariners who arrived in the Firth of Forth in 1336. They attacked the church at Dollar, the sailors responsible supposedly meeting a grisly end in retribution for a church.⁷⁰ The reliability of Bower's moralising can be questioned. Nevertheless, events such as these were often highlighted by chroniclers who were themselves religious men and who made propaganda use of the sacrilegious behaviour of the opposition.⁷¹ The behaviour of the English sailors at Dundee suggests targeting of churches did take place, but primarily because of the enticement of loot and booty that such buildings offered. Although this example provides a basis in fact for Bower's later moralistic description of similar events, it should not be taken as part of a sustained campaign aimed at the clergy and their possessions.

The most notorious descriptions of such activity revolve around the conduct of John of Eltham and his force, which marched through southwestern Scotland in 1336 before meeting up with Edward III at Perth. According to Bower, Eltham's army ravaged

⁶⁹ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 109.

⁷⁰ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 119-21.

⁷¹ The Lanercost Chronicle contains many later examples of the chronicler's hatred of the Scots when describing their treatment of English border churches during the raids of the 1340s. He goes as far as to compare their behaviour to that of devils, and moralises that the defeat at Neville's Cross was God's judgement upon them for the desecration of so many religious houses on their march to Durham. (*Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 332-5, 338-42.)

various lands and burned a number of churches, including Lesmahagow, with little regard for those who had taken shelter within the ecclesiastical buildings.⁷² Accusations of this sort were commonplace in medieval writing, and represented the propaganda element of chronicle reportage.⁷³ The narrative evidence, as expected, was split along national lines. The English chronicles made no mention of the events.⁷⁴ The Scottish commentators described the destruction of the church at length, and were keen to stress that divine justice prevailed against a man who had destroyed ecclesiastical property with the death of Eltham at Perth soon after.⁷⁵ Bower's creative licence, however, expanded the story into a graphic tale of fratricide by the English king, Eltham being slain against the backdrop of the high altar in the church of St John.⁷⁶ It is highly unlikely that these events actually took place. Nevertheless, the use of such a tale by an ecclesiastical chronicler highlighted the belief that religious property ought to remain sacrosanct during times of war.

⁷² *Chron. Bower*, vii, 123; *Chron. Wyntoun* (Laing), ii, 418-9. Wyntoun has no mention of the burning of the people within the church, suggesting that Bower may have added his own graphic details for effect. Wyntoun agrees, however, that Lesmahagow was the victim of a deliberate act of arson by Eltham, for which no explanation is given.

⁷³ Strickland, 'A Law of Arms or a Law of Treason', 43-47.

⁷⁴ The Lanercost chronicler states that the army 'marched together into Carrick and the western parts of Scotland which were not in the king's peace, laying them waste as much as they could, burning and carrying away splendid spoil, but the people of the country fled before them.' The events at Lesmahagow may well have been included in that broad description. The lack of detail in the chronicler's report of events may be due to problems with his source of information. However, the details may also have been glossed over due to the involvement of the king's brother in this instance. (*Chron. Lanercost* (Maxwell), 299.)

⁷⁵ Bower states that Edward III found fault with Eltham's behaviour 'as was his duty', and that it was his younger brother's insolent reply that led to his murder. Wyntoun provides the moral to the tale: 'For qwha till Haly Kyrk doys ille,/ Suld nevyre to do welle have wenyng./ Bot gyve thai come till amending.' (*Chron. Bower*, vii, 123; *Chron. Wyntoun* (Laing), ii, 419.)

⁷⁶ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 123. The addition of such a detail created parallels between this event and the death of John Comyn at the church of Greyfriars in Dumfries at the hands of Robert Bruce. Indeed, the element of fratricide portrays this as an action even more terrible than Bruce's own.

A further example of damage to church property is provided by the accounts of a siege of Loch Leven Castle.⁷⁷ The Disinherited force, led by John de Stirling, built a siege castle with which to observe the castle garrison and ensure the successful blockade of the island fortress.⁷⁸ Stirling's choice of position for his structure lay within the cemetery of Kinross church. 'In this way, shocking as it was, a church of Christ was despised by people that were Christians only in name, and wrongly converted into a den of robbers.'⁷⁹ The indignation of the Scottish chroniclers, ecclesiastical men themselves, decrying the use of sanctified land for the purpose of war, highlights their belief in the immunity of religious property. However, Wyntoun provided a more ambiguous element to his description of events.⁸⁰ He related that on St Margaret's Day, Stirling and his immediate entourage, leaving a small force behind to continue the siege, travelled to Dunfermline presumably to celebrate the feast of Scotland's sanctified Anglo-Saxon queen.⁸¹ Despite the earlier protestations of the chroniclers, the besiegers were not irreligious men. Indeed, it was the observance of this holy day that allowed the Bruce garrison to overrun the skeleton force manning the siege castle. The Bruce Scots had

⁷⁷ The date of the siege is difficult to estimate, but the editors of Bower's chronicle have tentatively suggested the spring of 1334 as a possibility. (*Chron. Bower*, vii, n.1, 214.)

⁷⁸ The Disinherited force included some Englishmen as well as a number of Scots who had sworn allegiance to the Balliol party. John de Stirling was himself a Scot by birth. Also included were Balliol Scots such as Michael Arnott, Michael and David Wemyss and Richard Melville. David and Michael Wemyss were both knights from Fife who seem to have submitted to Balliol at the same time as their earl. (Webster, 'Scotland Without a King', 229.)

⁷⁹ *Chron. Bower*, vii, 97-103; *Chron. Wyntoun* (Laing), ii, 409-12.

⁸⁰ Wyntoun's relation of events may be firmly based in the truth, as he was prior of St Serf's priory in Loch Leven. He may have based some of his narrative on local knowledge and oral accounts. (M.A. Penman, *David II* (East Linton, 2004), 9.)

⁸¹ *Chron. Wyntoun* (Laing), ii, 410-11. Stirling's decision to leave the siege with his retinue for the observance of a religious festival was a notable expression of piety. However, in view of the events that took place following his departure, it seems somewhat naïve from a tactical point of view. This raises the possibility that some negotiation had taken place with the castle garrison for a brief truce to enable the observance of St Margaret's day. It seems unlikely that he would simply assume that the Bruce Scots would stop fighting for the duration of the feast. This possibility would then explain the description of Stirling's fury when he learned of the destruction of the siege castle, the theft of his supplies and the defeat of his men. (*Chron. Wyntoun* (Laing), ii, 411-12.)

little compunction in ignoring the festival of a royal saint when a tactical advantage beckoned. And this would seem to represent the position of the ecclesiastical community during this stage of the Second War of Independence. Clergymen and religious possessions suffered from the depredations of war, but in this they were similar to the land and people within both rural and urban landscapes. The increasingly violent conditions of the war after 1334 meant that churches and clergy were more likely to be caught up in the general violence of the period. Unlike the other two areas, however, there was no real attempt to attack the ecclesiastical landscape by either side. The use of terror against clergy and churches was never really attempted, and certainly never established as an effective way to gain ecclesiastical support.

Terror as a weapon had its place in the theatre of medieval warfare. And it had its place in the struggle between the Bruce Scots, the Disinherited and the English during this phase of the Second War of Independence. The use of terror, however, was not deployed equally against the principal elements of Scottish society. The ecclesiastical community suffered from the destruction of war, particularly in 1335 and 1336 as the conflict intensified. Nonetheless, the clergy and churches of Scotland were not specifically targeted with terror by either side. At worst, their privileged status was at times ignored as the fighting of the war took precedence over religious sensibilities. The urban communities of Scotland suffered some destruction at the hands of those who captured or passed through their towns. During siege conditions, the use of terror could prove effective in achieving a town's surrender, or in persuading others to do likewise. Of greater import was the destruction of a town's hinterland. By denying urban communities the opportunity to feed themselves, towns could be forced to alter their

allegiance. Terror through the destruction of crops and the starvation that followed was an important tool in gaining control of the urban landscape. These same tactics were employed with even greater effect in the agricultural landscape.

It is in the attacks on the Scottish countryside and its peasant population that we can perceive the use of terror as an invaluable weapon in the war for Scotland. Barrow described the nature of the English war in southern Scotland in the 1330s as one of dispossession of recalcitrant rebels. 'Their land must be ruined, and since agricultural land has a way of recovering after a few years from even the worst forms of devastation...the deliberate ruination of the land must be inflicted many times over.'⁸² This is certainly true of the English attempt to gain authority over its newly acquired territories. It overlooks, however, the fact that the Bruce Scots employed exactly the same tactics, and to a similar end. Individuals who adhered to the Balliol/English party were targeted over a period of years and forced to change allegiance. The description of individuals and communities submitting to either side following a raid may have been purely short-term attempts at staving off further attacks. It was the return of raiding armies over successive years that reinforced the perception within Scotland that it was the Bruce Scots who were in the ascendant. The argument that the result of the conflict was long in doubt, and that Scottish independence remained in danger until the Treaty of Berwick in 1357, can be questioned by an examination of the use of terror.⁸³ By emphasising its role, and its use by the Bruce Scots as an instrument of policy in their attempts to win the war, another possibility emerges. The Bruce partisans, from their hiding places and refuges in Scotland, were always in a position to descend upon the land

⁸² G.W.S. Barrow, 'The Aftermath of War: Scotland and England in the Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries', *TRHS*, 5th series, 28 (1978), 103-125, at 125.

and ravage those people whose allegiance wavered. The ability of the Balliol/English to do likewise increasingly rested upon the capability of the English crown to raise and fund sufficient forces to harass the Scottish communities. If Balliol had gained a suitable base of support in Scotland, he would have been able to call upon his own forces to repeat the tactics of the Bruce partisans. In this case, stalemate would have ensued in the civil war, and the support of English forces could then have been pivotal in deciding its outcome. Balliol's lack of support allowed the Bruce Scots to choose a war that made use of violence and terror. In this they held the advantage. The Balliol/English forces came close to nullifying this position following the defeats at Dupplin and Halidon, but they lacked further battlefield success that would have ended the resistance. And the raids of 1334-7, although destructive, failed to successfully overawe the Scottish population to the extent that the Bruce partisans would give up the fight and submit. As Campbell has stated, 'large areas and a wide allegiance could be won by the use of big armies, but were lost when they left.'⁸⁴ After failed attempts at a more peaceful transition, the Disinherited and their English allies increasingly followed a similar approach to the Bruce partisans and attempted to use violence to terrorise Scotland into submission. The invasions of large English armies brought temporary support to the Balliol cause, but these were increasingly exposed as purely short-term defections. While Edward Balliol was deprived of the support required to rule, Edward III 'lacked the means to suppress the guerilla war (the Bruce Scots) waged.'⁸⁵ This conflict was one that involved the use of terror against Scottish lands and people, by the very men who claimed lordship over

⁸³ Webster, 'Scotland Without a King', 235; Webster, 'The English Occupation of Dumfriesshire', 64.

⁸⁴ J. Campbell, 'England, Scotland and the Hundred Years War in the Fourteenth Century', in *Europe in the Late Middle Ages*, (eds.) J.R. Hale, J.R.L. Highfield, B. Smalley (London, 1965), 184-216, at 187.

them. It was this ability of the Bruce Scots to attack areas recently devastated by the Disinherited/English, to harass communities outwith the campaigning season, and to return time and again to reinforce their position as the pre-eminent force in Scotland that ultimately led to the success of the Bruce cause.

⁸⁵ Campbell, 'England, Scotland and the Hundred Years War', 186. Campbell goes on to say that by 1336, Edward III 'found himself still involved in a war which he could neither win nor abandon.' (*Ibid.*, 190.)