

## **Lancastrian Rule and the Resources of the Prince of Wales, 1456-1461**

**Tim Thornton, University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield, HD1 3DH UK**

Tel: 00 (44) (0) 1484-472215; email: t.j.thornton@hud.ac.uk

**Biographical note:** Tim Thornton completed undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at Oxford, the latter a DPhil on Cheshire, 1480-1560, under the supervision of Chris Haigh. Author of a number of books and articles on late medieval and early modern political history, he is a Royal Historical Society prize winner (David Berry prize, Alexander prize *proxime accessit*). He is currently Professor of History and Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Huddersfield.

### **Abstract**

This paper challenges the idea that the Lancastrian regime of the late 1450s was distinctive for its reliance, from the midlands, on the principality of Wales and the palatinate of Chester. The common emphasis on its association with Cheshire is a product of the late sixteenth century, and, beyond that, contemporary and near-contemporary perceptions even of a link with the midlands were limited. When the court moved to the midlands in 1456 the resources of the principality and earldom were far from easily accessible, and even thereafter the efforts made to draw on them were limited in their ambition and impact. Financial flows to the regime were restricted, and the political networks established, especially in the North and in Cheshire, were limited and highly dependent on the Stanleys. By 1459-60, therefore, the regime found little to rely on there, and the Yorkists were able to supplant them with relative ease. (150 words)

Keywords: Henry VI; Margaret of Anjou; Lancastrian regime; Wars of the Roses; Wales; Cheshire

The idea that the Lancastrian regime in the late 1450s was distinctive in its reliance on the territories of the prince of Wales, drawn on from a deliberately regional base has become something of a historiographical fixture in recent years. This was a critical period in the reign of Henry VI: after two periods of protectorate under his kinsman Richard, duke of York (the second arising directly from York's military victory over his rivals at court, at St. Albans in May 1455), from the early months of 1456 historians have, to a greater or lesser extent, described increasing instability, controversy and factionalisation. By the end of 1459 York and his allies were in exile, and preparing for a return that would expel their enemies, associated with the queen, Margaret of Anjou – only for themselves to be overwhelmed in turn, with York killed near Wakefield in December 1460. York's heir, however, soon after triumphed and was proclaimed king as Edward IV, with Henry beginning what was to become a long exile. For most historians, in this phase of development from 1456 an alleged reliance of the Lancastrian regime on the territories of the prince of Wales, drawn on from a deliberately regional base associated with Henry VI's move to Coventry and Kenilworth, has held a deep significance: destabilising and disruptive to the normal pattern of English politics. For B.P. Wolffe, for example, Henry's move 'signified the collapse of normal political life'; and for John Watts, this was a period of 'anarchy'. By contrast, others have seen the beginnings of a radical reconstruction, as in the case of E.F. Jacob's comment that '[r]oughly from 1456 the government of England was conducted not from London but from the provinces.... This was a signal for the restoration of the crown's absolute authority.'<sup>1</sup> Whether historians have seen this as a period of deepening crisis, dramatic change or relative continuity, and whether they have

---

<sup>1</sup> Bertram Wolffe, *Henry VI* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, London: Yale University Press, 2001), 309; John Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 331; E.F. Jacob, *The Fifteenth Century*, repr. with corrections (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 513.

detected difficulties arising from the personality of the monarchy, from the state of society, or from a debate over the proper approaches to royal government, this 'provincial regime' has potentially held answers to the questions of the nature of the crisis and the reason why it was resolved, eventually, through civil conflict. Some regional aspects of the politics of these years have recently been well studied. We have benefited in particular from the work of Christine Carpenter and Helen Castor on Warwickshire and the West Midlands more generally, and on the Duchy of Lancaster, in understanding how the presence of the court in the midlands interacted with local gentry politics and represented an attempt to develop again a powerful Duchy interest after years of neglect. Their conclusions suggest the limitations to the benefits offered by this particular regional location;<sup>2</sup> as a result, in their work and elsewhere the other aspects of the alleged 'regional regime', especially the role of the territories of the prince of Wales, have become by implication firmer causes for such a dramatic decentring of royal government and held out greater prospects for explaining its distinctive behaviour in the late 1450s.

Here, the predominant role for these territories has been to offer both a spur to royal action and a resource upon which the crown could draw. For many historians, this was a period in which a breakdown of order and control in Wales in particular demanded a response from the centre and indicated the extent of the regime's weakness. Alternatively or additionally, Wales and Cheshire offered opportunities to a queen, Margaret of Anjou, and her party as they sought to escape some of

---

<sup>2</sup> Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401-1499* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), chapter 12, esp. 478-86; Helen Castor, *The King, the Crown, and the Duchy of Lancaster: Public Authority and Private Power, 1399-1461* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 38-50, 193-312 ('few of the region's gentry proved willing to fight on her behalf', p. 44).

the traditional boundaries of English politics as they were challenged by her opponents. The most fully developed of these approaches is the first. Robin Storey pioneered the study of what he called ‘confederations of private forces’ in the intersections of local feuds, and he and Ralph Griffiths have explored the politics of South and West Wales and Herefordshire, especially through the careers of Sir William Herbert and Gruffudd ap Nicholas, whose ‘domination in West Wales was the more complete as royal government under Henry VI grew feebler.’<sup>3</sup>

The second approach has been most prominently expounded by Griffiths. He has argued that Coventry was chosen by the court because of its good communications towards the north west and the loyal and powerful areas of Chester and North Wales, and the Welsh March. ‘After the manner of Richard II’s plans in the 1390s, the Lancastrian court, under the direction of Margaret of Anjou, looked to Cheshire, Lancashire and north Wales as a bastion of loyalist power and a reservoir of cash and retainers in the late 1450s. If their legendary pugnacity could be harnessed by the Lancastrian crown, then the courtship would have been well worth while.’<sup>4</sup> From a different perspective, and one which recognises the limitations of the English midlands as a resource for the court, Christine Carpenter describes Queen Margaret, filling the vacuum left by Somerset in the

---

<sup>3</sup> R.A. Griffiths, ‘Gruffydd ap Nicholas and the Fall of the House of Lancaster’, *Welsh History Review* 2 (1964-5): 213-31 (quotation at p. 230); R.L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), 6 (quotation), 228-30 (the civic disputes in Hereford).

<sup>4</sup> R.A. Griffiths, *The Reign of Henry VI*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Stroud: Sutton, 2004), 778-9; M. D. Lobel, *Historic Towns: Maps and Plans of Towns and Cities in the British Isles, with Historical Commentaries, from Earliest Times to 1800*, ii (London: Scolar Press for the Historic Towns Trust, 1975), 1. Cf. James H. Ramsay, *Lancaster and York* (2 vols, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), 2: 200, ‘Margaret was nursing a party among the warlike gentry of the Palatinate’.

household, looking to Wales, and making ‘extensive use of manpower’ from Cheshire, given that there the ‘king was almost as absolute a lord as the marchers were within their lordships’.<sup>5</sup>

While these historians tend to allow continental European contextualisation to remain implicit, their approach fits an underlying assumption of the precocious centralisation of the English political system, in contrast to royal polities elsewhere. A focus on the importance of regional appanages and power structures in France, for example, is presented in work aligned with the main Whig and Marxist schools of British historiography as a key contrast with an England culturally more accustomed to the direct control of its king and his administration at Westminster.<sup>6</sup> Recent work on France may have emphasised the complexities to this situation, as royally appointed governors replaced hereditary princes, while remaining embedded within local clientage networks which made them, as in Normandy in the War of the Public Weal, potentially resistant to central direction.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 484; *eadem*, *The Wars of the Roses: Politics and the Constitution in England, c. 1437-1509* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 69-70, 122, 142, 151-2.

<sup>6</sup> George Burton Adams, *The History of England from the Norman Conquest to the Death of John (1066-1216)* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1905), 56-7; F.W. Maitland, *The Constitutional History of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908), 41, 162-4; George Macaulay Trevelyan, *History of England* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), 122-3, 255; A.L. Morton, *A People’s History of England* (London: V. Gollancz, 1938), 61; Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 4-5, 14.

<sup>7</sup> Graeme Small, ‘The Crown and the Provinces in the Fifteenth Century’, in David Potter, ed., *France in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 130-54; Gareth Leonard Lee Prosser, ‘After the Reduction: Re-structuring Norman Political Society and the *Bien Publique*,

Nonetheless, the contrast remains. The hereditary territories of the heir to the English throne, in Cheshire, Wales and Cornwall, associated in the former two cases in particular with powerful jurisdictional autonomy, have always provided a partial contrast to this situation, and the events of the late 1450s the most prominent test of how this provincial exception might prove the centralised English rule.

Outside Griffiths' detailed work on south Wales, these aspects of the Lancastrian regime in the late 1450s have, however, by contrast to work on the English midlands and Duchy, received little attention, and so the intention here is to consider the ways in which the alleged provincial regime operated, and in particular how it interacted with the principality of Wales and earldom of Chester during the period. After having considered the manner in which contemporary accounts and sixteenth-century historiography characterised the regime and its location, demonstrating the narrow and often partizan evidential foundation on which later accounts of a 'provincial regime' were constructed, the paper will assess the evidence for the involvement of queen and prince in the midlands, Cheshire and Wales, arguing that as queen Margaret had relatively little stake outside the hinterland of Coventry where the court spent much of its time. The development of the prince's interest, from 1456, is then considered, but its limitations are emphasised, especially in financial terms, and more generally a contrast is drawn between the successful development of political connections around Jasper Tudor in parts of the south and west of Wales, and the failure to create a viable, broad-based court connection in Cheshire and North Wales. The crisis of 1458-61 is therefore more clearly understood as one in which the Lancastrian regime found little backing in

---

1450-65' (PhD thesis, University College, London, 1996); Robin Harris, *Valois Guyenne: A Study of Politics, Government and Society in Late Medieval France* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1994), part 3; Jean Kerhervé, *L'état breton aux XIVe et XVe siècles: les ducs, l'argent et les hommes* (2 vols, Paris: Maloine, 1987).

what many have assumed should have been a reliably loyal group of territories and proved consequentially (and perhaps less surprisingly than recent accounts might imply) vulnerable.

\*\*\*\*\*

It is first important to establish that the regime which is now so commonly associated with the English midlands, Wales and Cheshire was not at the time widely perceived as atypically located or supported. Key narratives produced by the regime itself placed little emphasis on the provinces. For example, the account of the preceding years given in the attainder of the Yorkist lords of 1459 mentions 'youre citee of Coventre' just once, in relation to the duke of Buckingham's speech 'in youre grete counseill holden there', and Kenilworth also once, in reference to the earl of Salisbury's intention to go to the king, in the journey that led eventually to Blore Heath and Ludford (both of which are also directly mentioned).<sup>8</sup> The text which defended that attainder, the *Somnium Vigilantis*, mentioned Lord Audley's death at Blore Heath but offered no location for these events other than to say that it was when 'the kyng accordyng to his pleasure lay in pesable wyse in his castell of Kenelworth'.<sup>9</sup> Many contemporaries outside the regime found nothing significant to comment upon in the location of events in 1456-8. Bale's chronicle, for example, until its mention of the Coventry parliament, gives no sense of the court having gone to the midlands,<sup>10</sup> while others

---

<sup>8</sup> Chris Given-Wilson et al., eds., *[The] P[arliament] R[olls of] M[edieval] E[ngland] 1275-1504* (16 vols, Woodbridge, London: Boydell; The National Archives, 2005), 12: 456-61.

<sup>9</sup> J.P. Gilson, 'A Defence of the Proscription of the Yorkists in 1459', *English Historical Review* 26 (1911): 512-25, at p. 519.

<sup>10</sup> 'Bale's chronicle', in Ralph Flenley, ed., *Six Town Chronicles*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), 148.

prefer a more generic reference to a move to the ‘north’.<sup>11</sup> Writing early in the reign of Edward IV, John Hardyng found it hard to know what to make of the period and did nothing to place events in the midlands or west, other than at Blore Heath.<sup>12</sup> And even that battle, for contemporaries, was not necessarily an issue for geographically based regional armies. Bale’s chronicle recounts baldly that Salisbury ‘slewe and toke xv knyghts and divers Gentiles’; ‘Gregory’ has the ‘Quenys galentys’ confront Salisbury with no geographical context.<sup>13</sup> Even the usually much more precise ‘Benet’s chronicle’, while accurately locating the action near Newcastle-under-Lyme, does not describe the conflict in terms of the involvement of regionally based forces.<sup>14</sup>

A small number of contemporary observers do, however, associate the queen’s actions in the late 1450s, and especially the campaign of Blore Heath, with Cheshire in particular and other adjacent

---

<sup>11</sup> ‘Rawlinson B’, in *Six Town Chronicles*, 110 (queen and prince ‘equitaverunt versus borean’; then, ‘Et cito rex equitavit versus borean’). Other references to Coventry include that to a ‘pesse’ made there, evidently in error for the ‘Loveday’, in James Gairdner, ed., *The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century*, Camden Soc., n.s., xvii (London: printed for the Society, 1876), p. 203, which is otherwise silent on the midlands.

<sup>12</sup> S.L. Peverley, ‘John Hardyng’s Chronicle: A Study of the Two Versions and a Critical Edition of Both for the Period 1327-1464’ (PhD thesis, University of Hull, 2004), 550. ‘Benet’s Chronicle’ alone is very specific on the move to a council at Coventry in 1456: G.L. Harriss and M.A. Harriss, eds., ‘John Benet’s Chronicle for the Years 1400 to 1462’, in *Camden Miscellany*, 24, Camden Society, 4<sup>th</sup> ser. 9 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1972), p. 217.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Bale’s chronicle’, p. 148; *Historical Collections*, p. 204.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Benet’s chronicle’, p. 224. He does, later, mention the captivity of Thomas Harrington and the Nevilles in Chester.



shires including Shropshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire – though never, significantly, with Wales. Abbot Whethamstede recalled Salisbury’s campaign as a victory over ‘totam quasi militiam Comitatum Cestriae et Salopiae’.<sup>15</sup> A few of the more detailed London chronicles also did so, for example the text in Cotton Julius B I which described how in 1459 the king, queen and lords ‘lete make a grete gaderyng of people northward, wherof was grete noise’, and then how in response to the manoeuvring of the Yorkist lords the queen ‘lay by the way as he [Salisbury] come with xiiij m<sup>l</sup> of the floure of Chestreshire, Lancastreshire and Derbyshire, which set upon the seid erle of Salisbury and his compeigny at Blore heth, the xxiiij day of Septembre; and there were slayne of the quenes partie the lord Awdley, with many knyghts, squiers, and other people’.<sup>16</sup> The association of

---

<sup>15</sup> Henry Thomas Riley, ed., *Registra quorundam abbatum monasterii S. Albani, qui saeculo XV mo. floruerunt*, Rolls Ser., 28, part 6, vol. 1, *Registrum abbatiae Johannis Whethamstede* (London: Longman, 1872), 338. The abbot’s previous oppositionist politics may have been softening by this stage, so it is hard to make this simply an expression of anti-court sentiment: James G. Clark, ‘Whethamstede [Bostock], John (c. 1392-1465), scholar and abbot of St Albans’, in [H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds.,] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (60 vols, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 58: 455-8.

<sup>16</sup> Edward Tyrrell and N.H. Nicolas, eds., *A Chronicle of London: From 1089 to 1483, Written in the Fifteenth Century, and for the First Time Printed from Mss. in the British Museum: To which are Added Numerous Contemporary Illustrations, Consisting of Royal Letters, Poems, and other Articles Descriptive of Public Events, or of the Manners and Customs of the Metropolis* (London: printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green; and Henry Butterworth, 1827), 133-47, at p. 140. Other groups of London chronicles are less specific, while still mentioning Cheshiremen as the main casualties in 1459: e.g. that represented by [London,] B[ritish] L[ibrary], Cotton MS Vitellius A XVI (Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, ed., *Chronicles of London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), 169, 276 (‘moche people of Chesshyre’; ‘many Kynghytes and Squyers of Chesshyre and of

the regime with Cheshire was also a factor when the Yorkist partizan, Thomas Gascoigne, wrote that the queen had taken the king to Chester ('ad locum mansionis suæ, in comitatu Chestyr').<sup>17</sup> One pro-Yorkist Brut continuation, known usually as Davies' English Chronicle, makes the most extensive and specific allegations about Margaret's association with Cheshire directly in conjunction with one of the emerging themes of anti-Lancastrian propaganda – the charge that Prince Edward was illegitimate, in this case not *her* son:

[Margaret,] dreding that he [Edward] shulde nat succede hys fadre in the crowne of Englund, allyed vnto her all the knyghtes and squyers of Chestreshyre forto haue theyre benyuolence, and helde open householde among theym, and made her sone called the prince yeue a lyuerey of swannys to alle þe gentilmen of the contre, and to many other thourght the lande, trustyng thorough thayre streynght to make her sone kyng

The same mistrust of Cheshire is exhibited by this author when he recounts how, not long before the battle of Northampton, it was proclaimed there, and in Lancashire, that 'yef so were that the kyng had the vyctory of the erles, that thanne euery man shulde take what he myght and make havok in'

---

Lancastreshire')). But then other London Chronicles tend to offer no details beyond the battle name, e.g. R. Arnold(?), *In this Booke is Contained ye Names of the Baylyfs Custose Mayers and Sherefs of ye Cyte of London from the Tyme of Kynge Richard the Fyrst ...* ([Southwark, printed by P. Treveris, 1525?]), [B v]; John Gough Nichols, ed., *Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London*, Camden Soc., liii (London: printed for the Society, 1852), 20.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Gascoigne, *Loci e Libro Veritatum: Passages selected from Gascoigne's Theological Dictionary illustrating the Condition of Church and State 1403-1458*, ed. James E. Thorold Rogers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881), xl, 203-4.

Kent, Essex, Middlesex, Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire and Wiltshire - '[b]ot Got wolde nat suffre suche fals robberye'.<sup>18</sup>

There were obvious parallels to be drawn by this Yorkist sympathiser, responsible for the section of the text covering 1440-61, with the Lancastrian critique of Richard II's association with Cheshire found in the words of the earlier chronicle-elements to which he added, covering 1377-1437: 'the kynge hymselfe sende to Chesshire for a grete multitude of yeomen and archeres, and ham he helde in his house, and ham most loued and cheresshede aboue all o[th]er, the wheche sone afterward turned vnto his vndoynge.'<sup>19</sup> This historical reference point for the events of the 1450s in the accounts of Richard II was widely available, given its presence in the main versions of the Brut. The version finishing in 1419 survives in more than 100 copies and criticises Richard's involvement with Cheshire, drawing on a Lancastrian propaganda tradition which exaggerated the connection with the county and had begun in the 'Record and Process' of Richard's deposition.<sup>20</sup> It

---

<sup>18</sup> William Marx, ed., *An English Chronicle, 1377-1461* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), 78, 91.

Marx's speculation that the patron of the copying of one of the two surviving MSS of this continuation might have been a Ruthin merchant may suggest a possible local resentment in North East Wales as the basis for mistrust of Cheshire, although the other MS is from the South East and this may imply a more straightforward regional hostility: *English Chronicle*, xvi-xxii.

<sup>19</sup> *English Chronicle*, 18.

<sup>20</sup> Tim Thornton, 'Cheshire: The Inner Citadel of Richard II's Kingdom?', in Gwilym Dodd, ed., *The Reign of Richard II* (Stroud: Tempus, 2000), 85-96, 144-8; 'And þe kyng hym self sent ynto Chestirschire, vnto þe Chefteynes of þat cuntre, and þay gagred and brou[yogh]t a grete and an huge multitude of peple, bothe of kny[yogh]tis & of Squyers, & prynspally of yemen of Chestreschire, ... and most ham loued & best trust. The which sone aftirwarde turned þe King to gret losse, schame,

is intriguing, however, that other Yorkist writers did not rise to this particular bait. Partly this may have been due to this territorial narrative being overwhelmed by that relating to the threat from the ‘north’: the propaganda of the period around the battle of St Albans II was directed at ‘northerners’, and this may have smothered the first beginnings of a revived tradition of fear of Cheshire.<sup>21</sup> It was also, significantly, due to the relative lack of interest at the time in a territorial interpretation of politics in the late 1450s as possibly associated with Wales, the English midlands, and Cheshire.

It is also significant that there is little sign of a legacy of the events of the 1450s in Cheshire and Wales. The compilers of stories of miracles attributed to Henry VI drew little information from Cheshire or the principality. Only one story is attributed to an inhabitant of Cheshire, none have any relevance to North Wales, and two, only tangentially, relate to South Wales; by comparison, there are two each from Lancashire, Staffordshire and Shropshire. That Cheshire story, of the cure of a mute man called John Williams from Malpas, shows no particular details suggestive of a local memory of the king.<sup>22</sup> Nor is there evidence to support such an interest in Cheshire or Wales in

---

hyndryng, and his vtirly vndoing and destroccon’: Friedrich W.D. Brie, ed., *The Brut or The Chronicles of England, Edited from MS. Rawl. B 171, Bodleian Library, &c.*, Early English Text Society, o. s. 131, 136 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1906, 1908), 2: 353-4.

<sup>21</sup> Margaret Lucille Kekewich et al., eds., *The Politics of Fifteenth-century England: John Vale's Book* (Stroud: Alan Sutton for Richard III & Yorkist History Trust, 1996), 142-3; Andy King, ‘The Anglo-Scottish Marches and the Perception of the North in Fifteenth-century England’, *Northern History* 49 (2012): 37-50.

<sup>22</sup> Paulus Grosjean, ed., *Henrici VI Angliae regis miracula postuma: ex codice musei Britannici regio 13. c. viii* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1935), 86\*, 103\*-104\*, 295-8. Two Welsh cases relate to Montgomery and to Newnham Bridge, south of Ludlow: pp. 80\*, 56, 271-3. Leigh

either the finds of pilgrim badges from Henry's cult at Windsor or in the material assembled in the decades from the 1450s and gathered, in conducive circumstances and relatively near, by John Rous at Warwick in the late 1480s.<sup>23</sup>

A historiographical canon in relation to the 1450s which located key events geographically away from the capital was, however, not slow in appearing. It gave prominence not so much to Wales and Cheshire but to the midlands as a forum for confrontation between rival parties. In the Brut continuation covering 1419-61, probably produced by Caxton for his 1480 publication, disorder in London is the direct cause for the departure of the court from the south east in 1456: 'Anone After, þe King, þe Quene, & othir lordes rode to Covente, & with-drew þame fro London for this cause'.

---

Ann Craig's enthusiasm for the range of Henry's appeal ('Royalty, Virtue, and Adversity: The Cult of King Henry VI', *Albion* 35 (2003): 187-209, at pp. 191-4), should be tempered; the identification of Henry in glass of c. 1500 at Ashton-under-Lyne nearby in Lancashire is highly questionable: P. Hebgin-Barnes, *The Medieval Stained Glass of Lancashire*, Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, Great Britain Summary Catalogue, 8 (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2009), cxliv, 7, 14, 17; plate 1b. (CVMA inv. no.019507).

<sup>23</sup> Brian Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges* (London: The Stationery Office, 1998), 189-92; idem, 'King Henry of Windsor and the London Pilgrim', in Joanna Bird, Hugh Chapman and John Clark, eds., *Collectanea Londiniensia: Studies in London Archaeology and History Presented to Ralph Merrifield*, London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, special paper, 2 (London: The Society, 1978), 235-64, esp. pp. 251-7 (one instance from Coventry, otherwise London and S. of England); John Rous, *Historia Regum Anglie*, ed. Thomas Hearne (Oxford: e Theatro Sheldoniano, 1716), 210; Martin Lowry, 'John Rous and the Survival of the Neville Circle', *Viator* 19 (1988): 327-38.

York, Salisbury, and Warwick were then summoned by privy seal to Coventry, and ‘almoste deceyved’.<sup>24</sup> There is then little further sense of the significance of a midland location, until a brief account of the battle of Blore Heath, in which ‘Lorde Awdley was slayn, & many gentilmen of Chesshire’, and after which Salisbury’s sons were taken to Chester.<sup>25</sup> Amongst the London chronicles, the ‘Great Chronicle’, completed in 1512, follows this very closely, with an occasional variation of vocabulary.<sup>26</sup> The *Newe Cronycles*, printed in 1517 and traditionally associated with Robert Fabyan, also make London the prime cause, but give the queen the key role in moving to Coventry: Margaret, ‘suspectynge the cytie of London’, considering it favourable to York, ‘causyd the king to remoue from London vnto Couentre, and there helde hym a longe season’. A sign of the weakness of the association of the narrative with Wales, Cheshire or even other parts of the midlands is that this influential printed work, bringing the London chronicle tradition to a national audience, made Blore Heath Salisbury’s confrontation with Audley and his ‘retynew’ – with no mention of their supposed Cheshire origin.<sup>27</sup> Polydore Vergil, completing his work by about 1513 but not in print until 1534, had a clear and contrasting sense of the causation, while continuing the focus on the queen and the move to Coventry. He argued that York, Salisbury and Warwick were determined to take power and hence subtly removed the king’s councillors, so that eventually they might ‘without resistance, deprive king Henry eyther of kingdome or life at their pleasure’.

---

<sup>24</sup> *Brut*, 2: 523.

<sup>25</sup> *Brut*, 2: 526.

<sup>26</sup> A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley, eds., *The Great Chronicle of London* (London: printed by George W. Jones at the Sign of the Dolphin, 1938), 188-91.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Robert Fabyan’, *The New Chronicles of England and France* (London: printed for F.C. and J. Rivington; T. Payne; Wilkie and Robinson; Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Co.; Cadell and Davies; J. Mawman; and J. Johnson and Co., 1811), 631, 634.

Somerset and Buckingham, perceiving this, persuaded Margaret to ‘separate her husbande from those who lay in waite to destroye him’; she warned the king, and he ‘under colour of seeking for a more wholsome place’ withdrew to Coventry, where he discharged York from the protectorship. For Vergil, disorder in London was a consequence, not a cause, of this action. Vergil, like the *Newe Cronycles*, interpreted Blore Heath purely in terms of a clash between Audley, as Margaret’s general, and Salisbury, with no reference to a geographical context.<sup>28</sup> Anyone consuming this history in the first four decades of the century would therefore have had little sense of a ‘provincial regime’, and if they did would have associated it with Coventry and not with Cheshire and Wales.<sup>29</sup>

It is therefore critically important that Edward Hall (perhaps in part motivated and informed by his Shropshire and marcher connections) in his history published in 1548 enhanced what became two key elements in the narrative, the role of Coventry in the manoeuvring of queen and nobles, and the geographical context to Blore Heath in association with Cheshire, taking the opportunity to focus on the internecine and decentring aspects to the conflict. Hall established that the removal of York from the Protectorship took place around the capital, and that there was disorder there in the

---

<sup>28</sup> H. Ellis, ed., *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English history: Comprising the Reigns of Henry VI., Edward IV., and Richard III*, Camden Society, o. s., 29 (London: printed for the Camden Society, by J. B. Nichols and son, 1844), 97-9, 102-3.

<sup>29</sup> J. Rastell, *The Pastyme of People: The Cronycles of Dyuers Realmys and most Specyally of the Realme of Englund* ([London: printed by John Rastell, 1530?]) STC 20724, for 1456-9, maintains the narrative of the queen’s initiative in attempting to trap the lords at Coventry, and Blore Heath as a confrontation between Salisbury and Audley without geographical context. Harding’s confusion reappears in Grafton’s edition: *The Chronicle of Ihon Hardyng in Metre, fro[m] the first Begynnyng of Engla[n]de, vnto ye Reigne of Edwarde ye Fourth* (London: printed by Richard Grafton, ‘1543’ [i.e. January 1544]), fol. ccxxv<sup>v</sup>.

following months. The initiative in moving to the midlands he ascribed to the queen's 'entendynge the destruccion of the duke of Yorke and his frendes', given her recognition that London favoured the duke. She therefore 'caused the kyng to make a progresse into Warwyckeshyre, for his health & recreacion, and so with Hawkyng and Huntyng came to the cite of Couentrey', and once there summoned her enemies, but they escaped by fleeing to Wigmore, Middleham and Calais.<sup>30</sup> There is then no mention of a midland location until the account of Blore Heath. Here, however, Hall now emphasises that Cheshire bore the brunt of what he portrayed as a fratricidal battle, something absent from all previous sources: 'the greatest plague lighted on the Chesshire men, because one halfe of the shire, was one the one part, and the other, on the other part, of whiche nombre wer sir Thomas Dutton, sir Ihon Dunne, and sir Hugh Venables.'<sup>31</sup> The influence of this account was ensured when Holinshed, himself a Cheshireman, more or less replicated it, with a reinforcement of key details associated with Cheshire, in 1577.<sup>32</sup> In very similar words, he made Cheshiremen the victims of a fratricidal battle, but he emphasised that Audley recruited from Cheshire and Shropshire, added the detail of the devising of the swan livery 'whiche cognisaunce she [Margaret] had giuen to many Gentlemenne of Cheffhire, and other countreyes thereabout', and extended Hall's list of three named Cheshire casualties by a further six.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Edward Hall, *The Union of the two Noble and Illustrate Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke* (London: Richard Grafton, 1548), fol. clxx<sup>v</sup>-clxxi.

<sup>31</sup> Hall, *Union*, fol. clxxiii<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> Raphael Holinshed, *The Firste [-Laste] Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* (2 vols, London: printed [by Henry Bynneman] for John Harrison / G. Bishop, 1577), 2: 1289-95.

<sup>33</sup> Holinshed, *Chronicles of England*, 2: 1295-6.



John Stow provides a further example of the ways in which the reassertion of the role of Cheshire was a product of the later sixteenth century. His *Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles* from 1565 had made no mention of either Cheshire or the midlands in its account of the 1450s. Yet his *Annales* from 1580 provided a detailed description of the Cheshire strategy of the queen.<sup>34</sup> It did so because Stow had rediscovered the contemporary account which emphasised more than any other that the 1450s saw a regime which drew strength from Cheshire: the continuation of the Brut usually known as Davies' English Chronicle. As we have noted, this chronicler is unique in connecting Margaret's association with Cheshire directly to the Yorkist allegation that Prince Edward was illegitimate, and Stow mirrored his words closely in recording:

wherefore she dreading that he shoulde not succede his father in the Crowne of Englande, allyed vnto hir all the Knightes and Esquiers of Chestershire, for to haue theyr fauour: she helde open housholde among them, and made hir sonne the Prince to giue a liuerie of Swannes to all the Gentilmen of the Countrey, and to many other through the land, trusting through their strength to make hir sonne King[.]

Michael Drayton then in the early seventeenth century took the recently established tradition of fratricidal conflict into his account of the Wars of the Roses and gave it the literary power that ensured it had lasting influence: 'There Dutton, Dutton kils, A Done doth kill a Done, / A Booth, a

---

<sup>34</sup> *Summarie of Englyshe chronicles* (London: printed by Thomas Marsh, 1565), fol. 151r-2v; *A Summarie of the Chronicles of England* (London: printed by John Harison, 1604), 162-4; J. Stow, *The Chronicles of England from Brute vnto this present yeare* [later editions published as *Annales*] (London: printed by [Henry Bynneman for] Ralphe Newberie, at the assignement of Henrie Bynneman, 1580), 679-91, esp. 687-8. Stow used Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lyell 34: *English Chronicle*, xxv.

Booth, and Leigh by Leigh is ouerthrowne; / ... O Chesshire wert thou mad, of thine owne natiue  
gore / So much vntill this day thou neuer shedst before!’<sup>35</sup> This new-found focus on Cheshire was  
so powerful that it even affected the local historiography of Cheshire itself. The Chester mayoral-  
list annals as they are recorded from the 1570s initially show no sign of Henry VI’s visit, simply  
mentioning one visit by his queen: later, fuller, accounts in these manuscripts are almost certainly  
derived from Stow and not from local knowledge.<sup>36</sup> As the sixteenth century formed a sense of the  
Wars of the Roses as a coherent and distinctively internecine conflict, and one from which Henry  
VII and his heirs had recovered peace and unity (in the face of contingent threats due to new  
religious and foreign discords), so the idea of a regional and community based response in the mid-  
fifteenth century, and especially one in which communities might have been divided against  
themselves, became historiographically useful – however little it had featured in earlier accounts of  
the decade.

The distinctive focus on Cheshire in the historiography of the late sixteenth century and beyond is  
therefore an artificial construct. There is, however, no question that in the 1450s the Lancastrian

---

<sup>35</sup> *The Second Part, or a Continuance of Poly-Olbion from the Eighteenth Song* (London: printed by  
Augustine Mathewes for Iohn Marriott, Iohn Grismand, and Thomas Dewe, 1622), 41.

<sup>36</sup> BL, Add. MS 29,777 (‘1452’ Margaret visit, no reference to Blore Heath; c. 1579); [Chester,]  
C[heshire] A[rchives and] L[ocal] S[tudies], CR 469/542, unfol. (‘1455’ Margaret visit; ‘1457’  
‘Bellu’ Blore heathe’; c. 1594); BL, Stowe MS 811, fol. 46v (again places visit in ‘1455’ and  
Bloreheath in ‘1457’; mid-1630s?); BL, Add. MS 29,780, fol. 62, and Add. MS 11,335, p. 39 (both  
mid-1640s, adding reference to 1459 visit by the queen and Edward, ‘where she kept open house  
hoping thereby to draw this country to her party which she did to the losse of many of their lives in  
1459 at Blackheath [sic]’ – so probably derivative of Stow, not local tradition).

regime explored the potential of resources in the English midland counties, especially through the activism of the queen. This has been illuminated by the work of Helen Castor and Christine Carpenter, and depended in particular on the landed base provided by Margaret's dower, settled by parliament in 1446. Drawing mainly on the duchy of Lancaster, amongst its most significant elements were the honours of Tutbury, Leicester and Kenilworth, along with lands in Essex, Hertfordshire, Middlesex, Surrey and London, and the ancient south parts of the duchy, comprising lands in Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorset, Devon, Cornwall, Oxfordshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire.<sup>37</sup> Her rights were enhanced in July 1453, probably on news of her pregnancy.<sup>38</sup> These estates had previously been the basis for a powerful element of the Lancastrian affinity, but the gentry had sooner or later been left to develop patterns of mutual dependency resistant to easy alignment with any national political grouping. Although some have argued that the queen's policy was at least in part an attempt to reconstruct the duchy affinity, it was difficult for her to do this

---

<sup>37</sup> Robert Somerville, *History of the Duchy of Lancaster*, vol. 1, 1265-1603 (London: Duchy of Lancaster, 1953), 208-9; Anne Crawford, 'The King's Burden: The Consequences of Royal Marriage in Fifteenth-Century England', in Ralph A. Griffiths, ed., *Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1981), 33-56, at p. 45; Diana E.S. Dunn 'Margaret of Anjou, Queen Consort of Henry VI: A Reassessment of her Role, 1445-53', in Rowena E. Archer, ed., *Crown, Government and People in the Fifteenth Century* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1995), 107-43, at p. 126.

<sup>38</sup> Helen Maurer, 'Delegitimizing Lancaster: The Yorkist Use of Gendered Propaganda during the Wars of the Roses', in Douglas L. Biggs, Sharon D. Michalove, and A. Compton Reeves, eds, *Reputation and Representation in Fifteenth-Century Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 169-86, at p. 173; *PROME*, 12: 294-303; *C[alendar of] C[lose] R[olls] 1447-54*, 390-2; *C[alendar of] P[atent] R[olls] 1452-61*, 114-16.

after two decades in which the crown's representatives, especially the duke of Buckingham, had offered no leadership.<sup>39</sup> Ultimately unsuccessful though this might have been in the crisis of 1459-61, it was to be these duchy estates that would be the focus of so much of the politics of the later 1450s in the midlands, in terms of location, alliances and hard cash.<sup>40</sup> It is important to note, however, that where previous queens' dower and other interests had in some cases extended into Wales, the marches and Cheshire, and so overlapped with the potential powerbase of their sons in principality and earldom, this was not the case with Margaret. Isabella, wife of Edward II, had, for example, benefitted from extensive lands in Cheshire and North Wales; Margaret had none.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, 476-86; D.A.L. Morgan, 'The House of Policy: The Political Role of the Late Plantagenet Household, 1422-1485', in David Starkey et al., eds., *The English Court: From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London: Longmans, 1987), 25-70, at pp. 51-2; S.J. Payling, *Political Society in Lancastrian England: The Greater Gentry of Nottinghamshire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 147-8; Castor, *King, the Crown, and the Duchy*, 300-2; Susan M. Wright, *The Derbyshire Gentry in the Fifteenth Century*, Derbyshire Record Series, viii (Walton, Chesterfield: Derbyshire Record Society, 1983), 98-101.

<sup>40</sup> E.g. Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 784-5, 787-8; Diana Dunn, 'The Queen at War: The Role of Margaret of Anjou in the Wars of the Roses', in eadem, ed., *War and Society in Medieval and Early Modern Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 141-61, at pp. 150-1.

<sup>41</sup> *CPR 1317-21*, 115-16; Seymour Phillips, *Edward II* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 322, n. 229. Cf. Eleanor of Castile's holdings in Cheshire and North Wales: John Carmi Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995), 158, 162-3, 168-9.

Turning to Wales and Cheshire, many historians have accepted an account of their coherence, power and militarism, and its potential direction by royal lordship, especially in the latter.<sup>42</sup> Yet the state of society in these areas was far from uncomplicated. Uncertainty even affected what many have seen as the strongest connection between court, palatinate and North Wales, the role of the Stanleys. Closely associated with the court in the late 1440s, Sir Thomas Stanley had imprisoned Eleanor Cobham after the death of the duke of Gloucester and led men from Cheshire and Lancashire in wreaking revenge on Kent for Cade's rebellion.<sup>43</sup> Sir Thomas held the justiceship of Chester from 1443 jointly with the duke of Suffolk, and since the latter's death alone. On 20 May 1452, however, a grant of the office, in reversion, was made to John Talbot, viscount Lisle, eldest of the sons of John earl of Shrewsbury by his ambitious second wife, Margaret Beauchamp. Sir Thomas also held the justiceship of North Wales and the chamberlainship there, but in the anti-court backlash of 1450-1 lost them both (though he resisted violently), and through the 1451 resumption

---

<sup>42</sup> Esp. H.J. Hewitt, *Cheshire under the Three Edwards* (Chester: Cheshire Community Council, 1967), and *The Organization of War under Edward III* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966); cf. Philip Morgan, *War and Society in Medieval Cheshire, 1277-1403*, Chetham Soc, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., xxxiv (Manchester: Manchester University Press for the Chetham Society, 1987), esp. pp. 3-8; idem, 'Cheshire and Wales', in Huw Pryce and John Watts, eds., *Power and Identity in the Middle Ages: Essays in Memory of Rees Davies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 195-210; A.D. Carr, 'Welshmen and the Hundred Years' War', *Welsh History Review* 4 (1968-9): 21-46.

<sup>43</sup> Michael J. Bennett, 'Good Lords and King-makers: The Stanleys of Lathom in English Politics, 1385-1485', *History Today* 31, no. 7 (1981): 12-17; idem, *Community, Class and Careerism: Cheshire and Lancashire Society in the Age of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), ch. 10; idem, 'Stanley, Thomas, First Baron Stanley (1406-1459), magnate', *ODNB*, 52: 236-7.

had been forced to give up Mold and Hawarden. Although the Stanleys were to recover, for example regaining those Welsh offices by July 1452 and the lordships even sooner,<sup>44</sup> and although Talbot's death at Castellon in July 1453 removed the immediate potential for discontinuity in the Cheshire justiciarship, their relationship with the court was not uncomplicated. It was after York's victory at St Albans that Thomas Stanley became chamberlain of the household and received a peerage. His heir Thomas married Eleanor, daughter of the earl of Salisbury: there are signs of an alliance between the families in an agreement over Hawarden in December 1454.<sup>45</sup> The elder Thomas retained at least intermittently a positive relationship with the court, as seen for example in his elevation to the Garter in 1457.<sup>46</sup> But when he died in February 1459 he was unable to pass on

---

<sup>44</sup> *CPR 1446-52*, 403, 419, 539, 581; B.P. Wolffe, *The Royal Demesne in English History: The Crown Estate in the Governance of the Realm from the Conquest to 1509* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971), 261; Ralph Griffiths, 'Richard, Duke of York, and the Crisis of Henry VI's Household in 1450-1: Some Further Evidence', *Journal of Medieval History* 38 (2012): 244-56. The Cheshire justiceship was unaffected: Dorothy J. Clayton, *The Administration of the County Palatine of Chester, 1442-1485*, Chetham Society, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., xxxv (Manchester: Manchester University Press for the Chetham Society, 1990), 146-7, 203, n. 17.

<sup>45</sup> Francis Green, *Calendar of Deeds and Documents*, vol. 3: *The Hawarden Deeds* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1931), no. 14; 37<sup>th</sup> *Annual Report of the] D[eputy] K[eeper of the Public] R[ecords]* (London, 1876), appendix II], 355; Michael A. Hicks, *Warwick the Kingmaker* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 25.

<sup>46</sup> J. Anstis, *The Register of the Most Noble Order of the Garter* (2 vols, London: printed by John Barber, 1724), 1: 158-61.

his major offices to his son, and his successor as justice of Chester was the earl of Shrewsbury and as chamberlain of North Wales Lord Dudley.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, the personnel of the Chester palatinate administration, which had been remarkably stable in the first four decades of the century, was disturbed in the following twenty years by challenges to the role of the Troutbeck family in particular. Having occupied the chamberlaincy of the county since 1412, with John succeeding his father William in 1439, the family had its tenure brought into question when, on 13 February 1445, Thomas Daniel of Frodsham was granted the post in reversion (with earlier possession should Troutbeck offend in any way), only for Troutbeck to obtain an exemplification of his letters patent on 29 March. This clearly represented the influence of royal connections, given Daniel's remarkable relationship with the king; Daniel had already, in 1441, obtained a grant of the Cheshire manor of Frodsham so generous that it had to be reissued. If, however, there was a possibility that the reversionary grant might have enhanced the capacity of the crown to manage the shire more directly, it did not have this effect in practice.<sup>48</sup> Troutbeck's willingness to represent the privileges of the palatinate community against Westminster ambitions had already been evident in 1441 in his successful negotiation of a continuation of Cheshire's

---

<sup>47</sup> 37 *DKR*, 138; Clayton, *Administration*, 149, 151-2. Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 783, is more sceptical than Storey, *End*, 186, about deterioration in the relationship.

<sup>48</sup> Harris Nicolas, ed., *P[roceedings and] O[r]dinances of the] P[rivy] C[ouncil]* (7 vols, London: printed by George Eyre and Andrew Spottiswoode for the Commissioners on the Public Records, 1834-7), 5: 144-5; [London,] T[he] N[ational] A[rchives of the United Kingdom], E 28/68/17, /75/44; Wolffe, *Henry VI*, 109. Daniel: Watts, *Henry VI*, 219; Castor, *King, the Crown, and the Duchy*, 119-27, 140-55, 183-4.

exemption from English parliamentary taxation;<sup>49</sup> it was apparent again in the successful defence of those same privileges in 1450-1;<sup>50</sup> and it was probably decisive in the dogged resistance of the county to resumption in 1451. Then, a sequence of meetings saw groups of, in total, over one hundred Cheshiremen refuse to accept the legitimacy of English parliamentary resumption. All suffered imprisonment; Troutbeck's significance may be judged from his receiving a fine of £100.<sup>51</sup>

Troutbeck's difficult relationship with the court, acting as chamberlain on behalf of the county's privileges, entered a new phase with, on 7 August 1453, his indictment for fraud, the supposed grounds for this being his receipt of 50 marks in relation to his earlier successful negotiation with the crown in 1441 - only for him to be acquitted on 9 January 1454.<sup>52</sup> The acrimony of the confrontation grew further the following year when, responding to an attempt to cite James Hall,

---

<sup>49</sup> CALS, DSS, Vernon MS, f. 190; Tim Thornton, *Cheshire and the Tudor State, 1480-1560* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), 2-3.

<sup>50</sup> H.D. Harrod, 'A Defence of the Liberties of Chester, 1450', *Archaeologia* 2<sup>nd</sup> ser., 7 (1900): 71-80; George Ormerod, *The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester*, rev. Thomas Helsby (3 vols, London: George Routledge and Sons, 1882), 1: 127.

<sup>51</sup> Tim Thornton, 'A Defence of the Liberties of Cheshire, 1451-2', *Historical Research* 68 (1995): 338-54; Wolffe, *Royal Demesne*, 130-8. Daniel suffered eclipse thanks to York: he was charged with treason, but acquitted in spring 1451, then again in Oct. 1452 was the subject of treason allegations: *CPR 1446-52*, 413, 468, 498, 532; Helen Castor, *Blood and Roses: The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Faber, 2004), 67-8, 83, 98-9; eadem, *King, the Crown, and the Duchy*, 165-8.

<sup>52</sup> Thornton, 'Defence', 340, n. 10.



rector of Northenden, to the bishop's court at Lichfield in contravention, as he argued, of the extensive and long-established rights of the archdeaconry of Chester, Troutbeck on 22 July 1455 alleged the rights of the earl were under threat.<sup>53</sup> Lichfield's Bishop Boulers was close to the court; Troutbeck's defiance met a swift and violent response from King Henry himself, from Westminster on 31 July, threatening his 'grevous indignacion' if Troutbeck repeated his resistance.<sup>54</sup> This organised and ideologically developed resistance of elements of the county's administration and wider community, working to defend the palatinate's privileges, was only one aspect of the challenge faced by anyone seeking to draw on Cheshire's resources. In 1455-6 'the Commons of the City [of Chester] did arise in manner of a Tumult, and were therefore committed to the Northgate, and after to the Castle in Ward'. Details are not clear, but the event was significant enough to impact on civic memory, in most versions of the otherwise sparse city annals.<sup>55</sup>

We do not have the detailed evidence for North Wales that allows us in Cheshire to understand something of the tensions and weaknesses manifest in taxes resisted or poorly paid. Still, in the counties of the North, a deteriorating financial position lay behind a request for financial aid in 1453, which, though granted, was then very poorly paid, and which resulted in further visits by local officials the following year for negotiations. The arrears recorded in the surviving Chamberlain's account of the first half of the 1450s ran to over £850. In Flintshire a grant made in

---

<sup>53</sup> Lichfield R[ecord] O[ffice], B/A/1/11 f. 68r (Peter Heath, 'The Medieval Archdeaconry and Tudor Bishopric of Chester', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 20 (1969): 243-52; document printed at pp. 251-2).

<sup>54</sup> Lichfield RO, B/A/1/11, ff. 68v-69r (printed Heath, 'Medieval Archdeaconry', 252).

<sup>55</sup> William Smith, *The Vale-Royall of England, or the County Palatine of Chester Illustrated* (London: printed by John Streater, 1656; STC K488), 73; see also BL, Add. MS 29,777 (1455); BL, MS Stowe 811, fol. 46v.

1447 of 1,000 marks was being paid over subsequent years, but with diminishing success suggestive of levels of engagement with the regime by 1455-6 that had plumbed new depths.<sup>56</sup>

Further, although Cheshire seems to have avoided the worst of the factional excesses unleashed by the first period of Henry's insanity and York's protectorate, it was not immune to these local impacts of national politics. Cheshiremen were involved in the events in Derbyshire in April 1454 focussed on the politically isolated Walter Blount: the sheriff's officer acting on Blount's initiative who challenged John Longford at his manor of Hough (Withington, Lancashire) was held at John Warren's manor of Poynton, the other side of the Mersey, beyond Stockport, en route back to Derbyshire, and Sir John Bromley of Bromley, Sir John Mainwaring of Peover, and Robert Fouleshurst, among others, campaigned against Blount in the following days.<sup>57</sup> It is just possible, too, that an awareness of the discontents of Cheshire lay behind the duke of Exeter's efforts in May-June 1454 to involve the county, along with Lancashire, in his rising.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Merioneth: TNA, SC 6/1217/2, m. 9; *CPR 1452-61*, 124. Flintshire: TNA, SC 6/779/1, m. 2; /3, m. 2; /4, m. 2 (reaching £33 6s. 8d. in 1455-6, when the yield should have been nearly £100).

<sup>57</sup> Storey, *End*, ch. 11, at p. 153; Castor, *King, the Crown, and the Duchy*, 289-93; A. Carrington and W.J. Andrew, 'A Lancastrian Raid in the Wars of the Roses', *Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* 34 (1912): 33-49, at pp. 39-47; A. Carrington and E.M. Poynton, 'A Lancastrian Raid in the Wars of the Roses', *Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* 35 (1913): 207-44, at pp. 230-6, 239-43; Wright, *Derbyshire Gentry*, 134-8.

<sup>58</sup> TNA, DL 37/24/29, /33; KB 9/273/2, /7; *POPC*, VI, pp. 130-1. Ralph Griffiths suggests Exeter's focus was the Duchy: 'Local Rivalries and National Politics: The Percies, the Nevilles, and the Duke of Exeter, 1452-55', *Speculum* 43 (1968): 589-632, esp. 612-16; Storey, *End*, ch. 10, esp. pp. 145-6; Somerville, *Duchy of Lancaster*, 1: 227.

Compared to Cheshire and North Wales, the situation of South Wales has been far more clearly understood for some time, thanks to the researches of Ralph Griffiths. His account of the 1440s and early 1450s makes for sorry reading. The appointment of James, Lord Audley as chamberlain in 1439 instigated a period in which arrears rose; with Sir John Beauchamp as justiciar from 1447 the practice of redeeming the general eyre became common – and the weakness of the regime in both regards is clearly seen in the ever-smaller sums obtained for that redemption. Fines to redeem fell to just £100 in Cardiganshire in 1452 and £133 in Carmarthenshire by May 1456. By 1452, auditors had abandoned the practice of imprisoning recalcitrant officials, this ultimate means of extracting revenue from those who were responsible for delivering it being lost as the officialdom of the area became dominated by a network of local men.<sup>59</sup> Griffiths has ably described the way in which Gruffydd ap Nicholas took advantage of the ‘languid administration of Henry’s later years’ to achieve a remarkable degree of personal control in south and west Wales. His actions, which included judicial murder and direct challenges to royal authority, exhibited a ‘contempt for justice, for the Crown, and for human sympathy [that] was boundless’. The duke of York’s challenge to this behaviour, manifest from May 1454, was (in Griffiths’ account) ‘futile’, as demonstrated by the ordeals of Gruffydd’s local rival Gruffydd ap David ap Thomas.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> R.A. Griffiths, ‘Royal Government in the Southern Counties of the Principality of Wales, 1422-1485’ (PhD thesis, University of Bristol, 1962), 400-20, 423-4.

<sup>60</sup> R.A. Griffiths, ‘Gruffydd ap Nicholas and the Rise of the House of Dinefwr’, *The National Library of Wales Journal* 13, no. 3 (1964): 256-68; idem, ‘Gruffydd ap Nicholas and the Fall of the House of Lancaster’, 212-24.

In the early 1450s, therefore, the queen had no direct stake in Wales and Cheshire, and the exercise of royal authority there was neither straightforward nor profitable. What introduced the possibility of an attempt to bring the resources of Wales and Cheshire into play was the growing significance of Prince Edward. Born on 13 October 1453, he had become prince of Wales and earl of Chester, the titles confirmed in parliament on 15 March 1454.<sup>61</sup> This was title alone, however, and the lack of recent precedent makes it hard to determine the significance of a grant to a royal first-born who was just six months old; it seems the uncertainties surrounding royal authority at the centre and attempts to secure legitimacy for York's position were a major factor, in particular an underlying design to ensure the acceptability of the duke as protector. That grant was confirmed during the second session of the 1455 parliament, from 12 November, York having recognised the prince and been again appointed Protector after the battle of St Albans, ostensibly until Edward came of age; at around the same time Edward received the principality and earldom, and their associated lands and rights, although the revenues were reserved to the king, with the exception of £1,000 p.a., until the prince reached eight years of age.<sup>62</sup> This was primarily a matter of English politics and not local developments in Wales or Cheshire.

When first Margaret and then Henry took the road to the midlands in 1456, therefore, it was not bringing the court into closer proximity with a rich, compliant pool of resources in Wales and the palatinate that was already being tapped. The potential was evident, but it was potential only and

---

<sup>61</sup> *Calendar of Charter Rolls 1427-1516*, 127; *PROME*, 12: 274, is confirmation in the 1455 parliament of his creation as prince and earl on 15 Mar 1454. Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 833, ascribes the grant of title to 15 Mar 1456.

<sup>62</sup> *PROME*, 12: 347-67. It is unlikely that all the grants in favour of the prince can be dated precisely to 12 Nov 1455, as on the roll: p. 332.

associated with great and growing challenges. York's second protectorate had ended in February 1456, and Margaret had been in the midlands since the subsequent June when in August she was followed to Coventry by Henry himself. The occasion for their journey was at least in part a council, summoned probably at the latest in the week commencing 20 September, which opened in Coventry on 7 October. The major business of the council related to changes in the great offices of state,<sup>63</sup> but there were also around this time the beginnings of the creation of an establishment for the prince and therefore it is reasonable to argue that the move from the South East may have been in part undertaken with this agenda in mind and at the queen's instance. 26 September 1456 saw the appointment of Robert Whittingham, husband of one of the queen's ladies, as receiver general of the prince's rents and John Morton as Edward's chancellor.<sup>64</sup> The systematic development of the prince's interest became even more evident in the weeks immediately after the Council closed. The king began a short excursion that took him into Cheshire. This was already rumoured on 16 October, and by 19 October Henry was at Stafford, the following day at Eccleshall, and on 24

---

<sup>63</sup> Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 773; A.J. Pollard, *Warwick the Kingmaker: Politics, Power and Fame* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), 33-4; Hicks, *Warwick*, 129-30. The chronology does not support attempts to link the king's move (probably beginning on 16/17 Aug: Wolffe, *Henry VI*, 370) directly to the Aberystwyth-Carmarthen raid by William Herbert and Walter Devereux (who left Hereford only on 10 Aug) in which Edmund Tudor was taken prisoner: e.g. A.J. Pollard, *Late Medieval England, 1399-1509* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 151; idem, *Warwick*, 33; Hicks, *Warwick*, 130; Wolffe, *Henry VI*, 304.

<sup>64</sup> By Apr 1458 Whittingham was also keeper of Margaret's great wardrobe. *CPR 1452-61*, 323; A.R. Myers, *Crown, Household and Parliament in Fifteenth-Century England* (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), 183; J.L. Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens: English Queenship, 1445-1503* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 151; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 782.

October Chester.<sup>65</sup> From there Henry went to Shrewsbury, before returning to Coventry on 4 December.<sup>66</sup> Then, the first weeks of 1457 saw the queen further consolidating the control represented by her authority over and through the prince. The chief steward of the prince's lands, appointed on 20 January, was John Viscount Beaumont, who held the same position in the Queen's household.<sup>67</sup> Giles St Lo, appointed keeper of the prince's great wardrobe on 25 January, was like Robert Whittingham married to one of the queen's ladies, and he was an usher of the Queen's chamber and her butler.<sup>68</sup> On 28 January 1457 a formal council was appointed for Edward's tutelage and guidance, which could only act with the queen's authorization;<sup>69</sup> Thomas Throckmorton was made his attorney general on 20 February;<sup>70</sup> and on 24 February he was given

---

<sup>65</sup> 'Benet's chronicle', 217; James Gairdner, ed., *[The] P[aston] L[etters]*, 6 vols. reprinted as 1 (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1983), 3: 107-9.

<sup>66</sup> M.D. Harris, ed., *The Coventry Leet Book, or Mayor's Register*, Early English Text Society, o.s., 134, 135, 138, 146 (London: published for the Early English Text Society by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1907-13), 297. After a New Year spent at Leicester, he was then to remain at Coventry for some time.

<sup>67</sup> *CPR 1452-61*, 338; Myers, *Crown, Household*, 190; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 781-3; Laynesmith, *Medieval Queens*, 151-2 (pointing out, however, that, unlike Elizabeth Woodville, she was never a *member* of her son's council).

<sup>68</sup> *CPR 1452-61*, 334; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 782.

<sup>69</sup> Thomas Rymer, *Foedera* (20 vols, London: A. & J. Churchill, 1704-35), 11: 385-6; *CPR 1452-61*, 359; Maurer, 'Delegitimizing Lancaster', 133-4.

<sup>70</sup> *CPR 1452-61*, 335. Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 782, acknowledges Neville links, but emphasises midlands and Sudeley connections.

further control of his inheritance, through an inspeximus of the November 1456 act and a revision of the reservation to the crown of issues from Wales, Chester and Cornwall.<sup>71</sup>

This was part of an effort to enhance the court's control in Wales and the other territories of the prince. One element was military, perhaps with an eye to recent disorder, which had in mid-1456 seen Sir William Herbert and Sir Walter Devereux, York's agents, seizing Aberystwyth and Carmarthen, and taking prisoner Edmund Tudor himself: in December 1457 Jasper Tudor authorised a reconstruction of Tenby's defences.<sup>72</sup> Far more of this initiative, however, in Wales and in Cheshire, was financial and part of an effort to enhance the productivity of the prince's resources. In May 1457, the communities of Caernarfonshire and Anglesey agreed grants of subsidy, of 700 and 600 marks respectively, and around the same time Flintshire consented to 1,000 marks.<sup>73</sup> More was extracted from leases of office and property, including concealed lands.<sup>74</sup> Money began to flow into the prince's coffers: nearly £300 from North Wales in 1458-9, and from

---

<sup>71</sup> *CPR 1452-61*, 357.

<sup>72</sup> Charles Norris, *Etchings of Tenby: Including many Ancient Edifices which have been Destroyed...* (London: John Booth, 1812), facsimile opposite p. 25. Compare the sympathetic royal response to Carmarthen regarding naval losses, 1 Sept 1457: TNA, C 81/1467/4. Those responsible for the disturbances were the focus of anoyer and terminer commission involving the king himself in Hereford in Apr 1457: TNA, KB 9/35; *PL*, 3: 118; Watts, *Henry VI*, 341; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 780.

<sup>73</sup> TNA, SC 6/1217/3, m. 2; SC 6/779/7, m. 2. Griffiths' suggestion that in May 1457 the North Wales shires offered a subsidy of £12,667 over 6 years, for Edward's creation, may be a decimal-place error, 19,000 marks for 1,900: *Henry VI*, 836, n. 108.

<sup>74</sup> E.g. 37 *DKR*, 138, 554, 567, 603.

Cheshire nearly £250 in 1456-8 and over £300 in 1458-9.<sup>75</sup> In the south, a visit in 1457 resulted in the failures of royal officers being punished with imprisonment. The year was one of just four occasions between 1438 and 1461 when the great sessions in Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire were not redeemed. The following year, when the practice of taking a fine to redeem the sessions resumed, it was at double the level of 1456.<sup>76</sup>

Yet the extent of this engagement and contribution can be overestimated. While the spring and summer of 1457 were chiefly spent by the king and queen in the midlands, the French raid on Sandwich at the end of August drew the focus of politics back to the South East. It was there that the stage was set for the peacemaking efforts of the 'Loveday' of the following March.<sup>77</sup> The ease with which politics was drawn back into the south east of England in 1458 was at least in part due to the limitations of the initiatives of 1456-7 in the territories of the prince. In 1457/8 there were no receipts at all from Aberystwyth and five of the nine commotes of Northern Cardiganshire.<sup>78</sup> Neither in Cheshire nor in the southern counties of the principality had 1456-7 seen a grant of subsidy, and in those southern counties officers' debts unpaid at the prince's advent were removed

---

<sup>75</sup> TNA, SC 6/1217/3, m. 8; /779/6, mm. 10-11; /779/7, m. 11.

<sup>76</sup> Also enhanced audit efforts, Carmarthen (Sept 1458, 1459) and Cardigan (1459). TNA, SC 6/1162/7, 8; /1168/8, /9; Griffiths, 'Royal Government', 421, 425, 427, 439, 549.

<sup>77</sup> Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 801-6, 815-16; Watts, *Henry VI*, 340-3; Pollard, *Warwick*, 34-5; Hicks, *Warwick*, 131-2; P.A. Johnson, *Duke Richard of York 1411-1460* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 179-81.

<sup>78</sup> TNA, SC 6/1162/8; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 788; Griffiths, 'Royal Government', 204, 419-22 (probably the beginnings of a collapse across the whole of the shire, complete by 1460-1).



for ever from the records.<sup>79</sup> Even in the north of the principality the subsidy that had been granted was slow to raise meaningful amounts and in 1458/9 yielded just £58.<sup>80</sup> The conduct of administration in Cheshire and North Wales may suggest reasons for these limits. The severity of auditors' decisions on the fees in the county administration cannot have made friends of the local elite. Amongst those who suffered was Lord Stanley himself, and even the expenditure on a gift of wine to the prince at Eccleshall was disallowed when it came to audit.<sup>81</sup> The most disruptive aspect of this approach, affecting both Cheshire and North Wales, was seen when on Stanley's death in February 1459 his successor as justice of Chester was the earl of Shrewsbury and as chamberlain of

---

<sup>79</sup> Thornton, *Cheshire and the Tudor State*, 64, 66, 70; TNA, SC 6/1224/2, m. 2; Griffiths, 'Royal Government', 425 (effort in the south 'forlorn'), 470. Subsidies: Griffiths, 'Royal Government', 462-76; T.B. Pugh, ed., *The Marcher Lordships of South Wales, 1415-1536: Select Documents* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1963), 145-8; Tim Thornton, 'Taxing the King's Dominions: The Subject Territories of the English Crown in the Late Middle Ages', in W.M. Ormrod, Margaret Bonney and Richard Bonney, eds., *Crises, Revolutions and Self-sustained Growth: Essays in European Fiscal History, 1130-1830* (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, 1999), 97-109.

<sup>80</sup> TNA, SC 6/1217/3, m. 2; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 836, n. 108. At p. 788, Griffiths speculates bonds entered into in Chester, Nov 1458 - May 1459, may be only a proportion of the total in Cheshire. This set of 25, each in £40, was, however, not a means of raising revenue but of maintaining the peace and ensuring appearance before the Portmote: CALS, ZMB 5, ff. 25r-27r, 34r-36r; Jane Laughton, 'The Control of Discord in Fifteenth-Century Chester', in Richard Goddard, John Langdon and Miriam Müller, eds., *Survival and Discord in Medieval Society: Essays in Honour of Christopher Dyer* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 213-29, at pp. 217-19; cf. use of bonds described in Clayton, *Administration*, 240-77.

<sup>81</sup> TNA, SC 6/779/7, m. 5; /6, m. 10.

North Wales Lord Dudley – and not his son the new Lord Stanley. As late as 23 July 1459 the prince’s council was urged to seek far and wide to increase revenues, suggestive of the extent to which, to that point, the revenues allocated to him had not met the demands being made, with the allocation for his ‘diet’ exceeding the revenues from lands allocated by nearly £600.<sup>82</sup> When in August 1459 Robert Whittingham visited Beaumaris and Caernarfon to hold judicial sessions he was accompanied by a significant group of knights and gentlemen, evidence, as Griffiths suggests, that even then he needed protection.<sup>83</sup>

While in the South Jasper Tudor’s efforts to master the connections previously dominated by Gruffydd ap Nicholas were evidently successful,<sup>84</sup> in general there seems little if any sign of an attempt to construct a court party in North Wales and Cheshire, other than through the Stanleys. In Cheshire, the limited links that did exist were via the Booth connection and some of the queen’s legal counsel. William Booth, from Barton-on-Irwell in Lancashire, whose mother was Joan daughter of Sir Henry Trafford, a man with Lancashire and Cheshire interests, had become her chancellor on her arrival in 1445, and from 1447 bishop of Coventry and Lichfield. His half-brother Laurence succeeded him as chancellor.<sup>85</sup> Her apprentice-at-law John Needham, JCP from 1457, represented the closest link to the palatinate. Needham was deputy justice in Cheshire from 1450 and had strong local connections: the younger son of Robert Needham of Cranage, his mother was Dorothy daughter of Sir John Savage of Clifton, and he married Margaret, youngest daughter of

---

<sup>82</sup> *CPR 1452-61*, 515.

<sup>83</sup> Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 783; cf. the prince’s auditors touring North Wales: TNA, SC 6/1217/3, m. 8.

<sup>84</sup> Griffiths, ‘Gruffydd ap Nicholas and the Fall of the House of Lancaster’, 227-8.

<sup>85</sup> Dunn, ‘Margaret of Anjou’, in Archer, pp. 127, 137

Randle Mainwaring of Over Peover and widow of William Bromley of Baddington.<sup>86</sup> None, however, were a substitute for broader connections amongst the senior gentry at the core of county society. In north Wales, the Stanley nexus was very strong, especially through its connection with the Griffiths family of Penrhyn. Gwilym (d. 1431), whose well timed submission during the Glyn Dŵr rebellion had gained him rewards including his Tudor kinsmen's lands, married Joan Stanley, daughter of Sir William Stanley of Hooton. Their son, also Gwilym, served as deputy-chamberlain to Thomas Stanley and was closely associated to Stanley and others such as Thomas Lathum, Henry Byrom and John Needham.<sup>87</sup> As we have already observed, however, the Stanley connection to the court was far from firmly based.

We occasionally get hints of the insensitivity of the court towards strongly held views on local privileges, and it was apparent that in Cheshire the palatinate administration and community were not to be easily moved at the whim of the court. On 21 February 1457, the highly favoured Sir Richard Tunstall was appointed chamberlain of Chester, the role to that point fulfilled by John Troutbeck. As already noted, three days later the prince's council was to be given control over all issues from Cheshire, as from Wales and Cornwall. Troutbeck himself seems to have been involved in negotiations with several of the key players in this drama, and may not have been an unwilling

---

<sup>86</sup> Josiah C. Wedgwood, *History of Parliament: Biographies of the Members of the Commons House, 1439-1509* (London: HMSO, 1936), 624; Clayton, *Administration*, 156-7; E.W. Ives, *The Common Lawyers of Pre-Reformation England: Thomas Kebell: A Case Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 233, 482-90, 505-7.

<sup>87</sup> Bangor University Archives, Penrhyn Castle MSS, 14, 17-18, 30-1, 393; Penrhyn Further Additional, PFA/1/563-6. A.D. Carr, 'Gwilym ap Gruffydd and the Rise of the Penrhyn Estate', *Welsh History Review* 15 (1990): 1-20; Ralph A. Griffiths, 'Richard, Duke of York and the Royal Household in Wales, 1449-50', *Welsh History Review* 8 (1976-7): 14-25, esp. pp. 16-17.

participant: the next day, he granted his properties to feoffees including Tunstall himself, and he and his wife were aging and were to die in the following months. But the palatinate administration was still acting in Troutbeck's name on 5 March, and only on 6 April was the grant ratified at Chester under the palatinate's own seal, so it is likely that Troutbeck's departure was unexpected there and not immediately welcomed. Even when implemented, the new appointment was treated with strict propriety: while the intention had been for Tunstall's grant to be for life, the ratification at Chester amended this to a grant during pleasure, as was correct during the prince's minority.<sup>88</sup> The palatinate administration was not so simply to be subjected to the whim of the queen and her associates.

The test of the regime's involvement with Wales and Cheshire was to come in 1459. A deteriorating political situation in the autumn of 1458 and spring of 1459 had culminated in a great council in Coventry, summoned for late June – at which the Yorkist lords were indicted, having declined to attend though summoned. Warwick had responded by returning from Calais, and headed for Worcester, where he intended to rendezvous with York and Salisbury, who was at Middleham.<sup>89</sup> It was Salisbury's march south, which Lords Audley and Dudley attempted to block on 23 September, that has most sharply focused attention on the physical resources of the 'provincial' Lancastrian regime. The battle of Blore Heath saw significant numbers of Cheshire gentlemen mobilised for the

---

<sup>88</sup> TNA, CHES 3/45, 37 Henry VI, no. 9; *Calendar of Fine Rolls 1452-61*, 168, 211; *CPR 1452-61*, 338; Clayton, *Administration*, 165-6; Wedgwood, *Biographies*, 882; TNA, E 404/67/238; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 803; Arthur P. Stanley, *Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: J. Murray, 1896), 607.

<sup>89</sup> Watts, *Henry VI*, 347-50; Hicks, *Warwick*, 138, 149-50, 153-4; Johnson, *Duke Richard*, 185-7; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 807-10, 817-18.

court, whatever the tensions that might have existed over its policy in the shire. Community and kinship, interwoven with the families of Audley and Dudley themselves, remained strong enough to bring them to the field.<sup>90</sup> Clayton and Gillespie have shown that the certain or likely Cheshire gentry casualties all fell with Lord Audley: Sir John Done of Utkinton, Richard Done of Crowton, Sir Thomas Dutton, Sir Hugh Venables, Sir William Troutbeck, Sir John Egerton (died of wounds soon afterwards), and probably Peter Dutton and John, Sir Thomas's son and brother, and Sir John Legh.<sup>91</sup> Yet the support of the shire for the court was not universal, and the allegation against Lord Thomas and William Stanley that they prevented the men of Wirral and Macclesfield hundreds from joining the royal forces may in part be true. None of the known casualties on the royalist side came from these areas, and only one other gentleman believed to have fought (Sir Thomas Fitton from Gawsworth) originated there. There is also a notable absence of any Welshmen from the list of those known to have been part of the royal forces that day, in spite of Dudley's recently acquired office of chamberlain of the principality in the north.<sup>92</sup> One of the unanswered (and probably ultimately unanswerable) questions of this conflict, how an apparently much larger royal army was unable to prevent the progress of Salisbury's men, may lie just as much in a combination of a lack of enthusiasm for the royal cause amongst its Cheshire followers, and the effectiveness of the Stanleys in choking off what support might have come from there and further west in Wales, as in the allegedly greater military prowess of the Neville-led northern gentry and yeomanry.

---

<sup>90</sup> E.g. *CCR 1454-61*, 53-4; Elaine A. Thomas, 'The Lords Audley, 1391-1459' (MA thesis, University of Wales (Swansea), 1976), 17-20, 83-92.

<sup>91</sup> James L. Gillespie, 'Cheshiremen at Blore Heath: A Swan Dive', in Joel Rosenthal and Colin Richmond, eds., *People, Politics and Community in the Later Middle Ages* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1987), 77-89, esp. pp. 82-83; Clayton, *Administration*, 79-90.

<sup>92</sup> *PROME*, 12: 505; TNA, CHES 2/133, rr. 10r-d (37 DKR, p. 279); Clayton, *Administration*, 87-8.

If this initial test of the Welsh and Cheshire elements of the alleged provincial regime had found them relatively unconvincing, subsequent events highlighted the degree to which the regime itself was equivocal about the role of these territories. Coventry again provided the setting for the next act in the drama, and the parliament held there was dominated by loyalists, its business led by the attainder of the Yorkists.<sup>93</sup> This parliament was, however, not the instrument of a coherent and victorious regime with clear foundations in the prince's territories. Rather, it heard a request that offices in Cheshire and Flintshire should not be held for life, 'consideryng the grete extorcions and mesprisions contynuelly doon' there, 'and [in] other countees in Wales' by sheriffs, escheators and other deputies and ministers holding in this way, and with the king's lieges not daring to sue for redress. The crown did act to support its agents, evidently in the face of some local and wider dissent, because it ensured provision was made for Jenkin of Stanley and John his son, Ralph Legh (escheators in Merioneth and Chester), and Sir Robert and Sir William Booth (for the shrievalty of Cheshire), but each of them was required to provide surety for their good behaviour to Prince Edward.<sup>94</sup> It is also significant that the Commons wished to include in the attainder Thomas Lord Stanley – a desire denied by the king himself.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 823-5; Johnson, *Duke Richard*, 187; S.J. Payling, 'The Coventry Parliament of 1459: A Privy Seal Writ concerning the Election of Knights of the Shire', *Historical Research* 60 (1987): 349-52.

<sup>94</sup> TNA, C 49/31/8 (*PROME*, 12: 498-9). Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 828, prefers to see this as evidence for the crown's protection of key office-holders in the county. Clayton, *Administration*, 173-5, 182-3 (Booths and Legh, the latter effectively an absentee courtier).

<sup>95</sup> TNA, C 49/31/9 (*PROME*, 12: 504-5).

So although this parliament saw the completion of one aspect of the court agenda, with the grant to Edward of full control of his duchy of Cornwall inheritance,<sup>96</sup> it is not surprising that in the north west and Wales this period saw difficulties in the continuity of the previously loyal regime. When on 4 February 1460 a very powerful commission of oyer and terminer was appointed in relation to offences, including treason, in the five counties of the principality, Flintshire and Cheshire (as well as Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Staffordshire, and Shropshire, and the lordships of the attainted lords), it included very few members of the Cheshire and Welsh elite: apart from Jasper Tudor himself, only Sir John Needham and his brother-in-law Sir John Mainwaring could really be counted as representing them. A further commission, to the same group, was issued for Lancashire on 3 March; and another, for Wales and the March, on 13 March added Sir John Botiller of Bewsey.<sup>97</sup> The absence, even from the Lancashire commission, of any representative of the Stanleys of Lathom, confirms their alienation from the Lancastrian cause. In Wales, the regime struggled to exert control, as Denbigh and other York and Neville estates resisted confiscation. Responsibility fell to Jasper Tudor, and even in the effort to recover Denbigh he relied on followers from his estates in the South and West, and seems to have had little backing from further north. It

---

<sup>96</sup> *PROME*, 12: 477-93: specifically for the Duchy as fully as the Black Prince or Henry (V) held it, not more generally, *pace* Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 852, n. 343, with the exception of a mention of Cheshire scutage (p. 487) and reservation of appointments to ‘bisshopriches, dignitees and grete offices perteynyng to the said principaltee and duchie’ to the king (p. 491).

<sup>97</sup> *CPR 1452-61*, 562, 564-5; Ormerod, *Chester*, 1: 481; J.T. Driver, ‘The Mainwarings of Over Peover: A Cheshire Family in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries’, *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society* 57 (1970-1): 27-40, at pp. 32-4; *CCR 1454-61*, p. 53; Wedgwood, *Biographies*, 144.

took a campaign that lasted through the spring before Denbigh surrendered.<sup>98</sup> In Cheshire, a group comprised of Abbot Richard Oldham, Sir John Botiller, William Mynors and Thomas Seyntbarbe attempted to hold together the loyalist cause, communicating busily but ineffectively with Lord Stanley<sup>99</sup> and, with Robert Fouleshurst, Ranulph Brereton, John Delves, and Peter Dutton, holding prisoner in Chester Castle a group captured at Blore Heath that included Salisbury's sons Thomas and John Neville, and Sir Thomas and James Harrington.<sup>100</sup> By this stage, however, the loyalist cause even in Cheshire seems to have been lost. The sense of breakdown identified by Clayton in the absence of a court session after 10 June 1460 until May 1461, and of any deed recording a private transaction after 2 June 1460 until February 1461,<sup>101</sup> can be taken further, with very few

---

<sup>98</sup> *CPR 1452-61*, 534, 564-5, 574, 578, 604; TNA, C 49/32/12A; C 81/1376/9; Rymer, *Foedera*, 11: 444-5; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 828, 851 n. 332, 852, n. 352; Johnson, *Duke Richard*, 194; R.S. Thomas, 'The Political Career, Estates and "Connection" of Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke and Duke of Bedford (d. 1495)' (PhD thesis, University of Wales (Swansea), 1971), 117-33, 180-7.

<sup>99</sup> TNA, SC 6/779/9, mm. 2d-4d.

<sup>100</sup> Ormerod, *Chester*, 1: 481. TNA, SC 6/779/7, m. 12 (not Butler or Oldham; soon after the battle of Northampton the prisoners, also including Ralph Rokeby, Thomas Ashton, and Robert Evereus esqs, were handed to Thomas Stanley). Ashton was pardoned 20 Dec 1459, Rokeby on 2 Jan 1460: *CPR 1452-61*, 537, 545; A.J. Pollard, *North-Eastern England during the Wars of the Roses: Lay Society, War, and Politics 1450-1500* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 271-2, 276-7. Although a later source, it may be significant that Hall indicates they were handed over 'or els the Marche men had destroyed the Gayles. Suche fauor had the commons of Wales, to the duke of Yorkes band and his affinitie, that thei could suffre no wrong to be doen, nor euil worde to be spoken of hym or his frendes': *Union*, fol. clxxiii<sup>v</sup>

<sup>101</sup> CALS, Downes MSS, 132/5/2; Crewe Collection, DCR 35/14/5; Clayton, *Administration*, 93.



surviving records of transactions after January 1458.<sup>102</sup> Queen Margaret was at Coventry when the Yorkists returned and successfully overcame their opponents at Northampton in July 1460; but Wales acted as no more than an escape route for the queen as she fled hurriedly on news of the battle. The regime was able to rely on Jasper Tudor's followers from parts of the south at Mortimer's Cross in February 1461, but not from mid- or North Wales, where his kinsman, Roger Puleston of Emral, was the focus of Lancastrian support.<sup>103</sup> The Stanley nexus in north Wales was so strong that it almost certainly deprived the court of much of its potential support there, especially through the role of the Griffiths of Penrhyn; and the chamberlain there, Lord Dudley, was active as a councillor in the new Yorkist regime and sufficiently well trusted by Warwick to be used on embassy in November 1460.<sup>104</sup>

The scale of this collapse appears all the more acute given the speed of the resumption of normal business across the area of the prince's territories in May 1461, after the victory of Edward IV at

---

<sup>102</sup> From 1458: CALS, DLT A/16/17 (5 Jan); JRULM, Cornwall-Legh muniments, 104 (20 Jan), 105 (11 June); CALS, DLT/B/7, f. 176 (Sept); DLT A/16/11, /28/11 (8 Dec); DVE 1/ M/IV/17 (37 Henry VI [1458-9]). From 1459: CALS, DDX 553 Phillipps MSS/34 (12 July); DLL 4/103 (attorney, abbot of Dieulacres to Thomas Holforde – 3 Oct); JRULM, Cornwall-Legh muniments, 764 (14 Nov).

<sup>103</sup> William Worcester, *Itineraries*, ed. John H. Harvey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 202; W.W.E. W[ynne], 'Historical Papers (Puleston.)', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 1 (1846): 145-7; *POPC*, 6: 302-5; Thomas, 'Political Career, Estates and "Connection" of Jasper Tudor', 187-90; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 866.

<sup>104</sup> Hugh Collins, 'Sutton, John (VI) [John Dudley], first Baron Dudley (1400–1487), courtier and diplomat', *ODNB*, 53: 389-91; *POPC*, 6: 387.

Towton on 29 March; in Wales, this can be seen especially through the appointments of Sir William Herbert in South Wales, and through Sir William Hastings as chamberlain and the earl of Worcester as chief justice in North Wales.<sup>105</sup> This transition is perhaps especially notable in Cheshire. There it was led by the Stanleys, with William appointed chamberlain on 1 May, and, significantly given his role in the last days of Lancastrian monarchy, John Needham. With Lord Stanley and Warwick, Needham formed a triumvirate of justices appointed *hac vice* for the 26 May court. Soon afterwards he was made sole justice during pleasure, and in January of the following year, when Stanley was made justice, he was appointed deputy.<sup>106</sup> The sheriff too, Sir William Booth, continued in his office under the new regime. King Edward visited Cheshire in person en route south from the victory at Towton and was received ‘honorifice’.<sup>107</sup> Signs of unshifting Lancastrian partizanship are few – the primary example is Robert Fouleshurst, one of those charged with the custody of the Nevilles in Chester after Blore Heath, and who had on 4 July 1460 been made escheator of Cheshire, but who was replaced by William Venables of Coppenhall on 20 July 1461.<sup>108</sup> Few bonds for allegiance were necessary, affecting just Sir John Done of Utkinton, son of a casualty of Blore

---

<sup>105</sup> TNA, SC 6/1224/5. Glanmor Williams, *Renewal and Reformation: Wales c. 1415-1642* (Oxford, 1993), 190-2, is unusual in acknowledging how remarkably swiftly the collapse of 1461-2 took place.

<sup>106</sup> 37 *DKR*, 138-9.

<sup>107</sup> ‘Benet’s Chronicle’, 231; TNA, SC 6/779/10, m. 6d; Cora L. Scofield, *The Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth, King of England and of France and Lord of Ireland* (2 vols, London: Longmans, Green, 1923), 1: 177; *PL*, 3: 299-300, 307, 312.

<sup>108</sup> CHES 2/134, r. 1d; Clayton, *Administration*, 95. Mainwaring fortunes also suffered an eclipse, with no further commissions until 1464: Driver, ‘Mainwarings’, 34.

Heath, Thomas Bulkeley, Ralph Bostock, Sir Hugh Calveley, John Done of Flaxyards, and Sir Thomas Manley, who stood as mutual guarantors on 23 December 1461.<sup>109</sup>

In Wales, some aspects of Lancastrian resistance are well known – at Harlech in particular; and through the sons of Gruffydd ap Nicholas at Carregcennen in 1461-2 – and some are less so, as with the apparent short-lived challenges to the new king at Rhuddlan and elsewhere in the north - but restricted in extent.<sup>110</sup> There were even flickerings of trouble later in Cheshire, but scarcely on the scale that might be expected if a regime significantly based on resources of Wales and Cheshire during the 1450s had been a reality.<sup>111</sup> Later writers may have chosen to dramatise the extent to which the Lancastrian regime chose to rely on the resources of the prince as an alternative to a location in and reliance on the traditional sources of power in the south east of England. The reality was, however, that the court had developed only the most limited financial and political nexus there,

---

<sup>109</sup> 37 *DKR*, 67, 106, 117, 215, 508.

<sup>110</sup> W.W.E. W[ynne], 'Historical papers (Puleston.)', 146; Griffiths, 'Royal Government', 527; idem, *Henry VI*, 871; Charles Ross, *Edward IV*, new ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 48-9; Scofield, *Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth*, 1: 202-4; *PROME*, 13: 46; TNA, SC 6/779/10, mm. 1d-2d; Griffiths, 'Gruffydd ap Nicholas and the Fall of the House of Lancaster', 229.

<sup>111</sup> Clayton, *Administration*, 98-101. The arrest of 12 men, none of high status, was ordered on 28 July 1461; on 1 Mar 1464, John Paston junior reported 'The Comenys in Lancasher and Chescher wer up to the nombyr of a x. m<sup>l</sup> or more': *PL*, 4: 95-7; TNA, CHES 2/134, r. 4r(6) (37 *DKR*, 284-5).

suggestive of a lack of ambition in originally devising, of an absence of system in planning, and of poor execution in the practical management of these arrangements.