1

Raising a Fleet

Raising a fleet of ships for either transportation of troops or delivery of victuals was a complex operation. Although in the past the procedure for assembling a fleet of requisitioned merchantmen has been described as relatively straightforward a more detailed examination of the process provides evidence of an underlying sophistication. Not only was a large team of clerks required but also sergeants-at-arms, bailiffs, sheriffs and shipmasters. These groups would work separately or together in order to supply the required numbers of ships demanded by the crown. Yet the workings of this procedure and the sheer scale of the task is little understood. We do have an outline of the careers of some of the clerks and we know something of the methods they employed to raise an armada in the fourteenth century. But the system of arrest, muster and review that the clerks had to undertake in order to untangle all the information generated by the process of requisitioning large numbers of ships, from hundreds of ports, into payrolls with exact dates of service is yet to be fully appreciated. Therefore, in order to show the complexities and sophistication of this process this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section includes a discussion of the methods employed by the crown during this period to assemble a fleet. Following this is an analysis of the types of requisition orders that were issued, the implications of these orders for ship owners and a discussion on the men who organised naval expeditions. Third, there is an examination of the bureaucratic procedure that underpinned the raising of an armada. Finally, we examine how the fleet-raising procedure was altered after 1342, before examining the problem of return transport for troops in the field.

Sources of Shipping

In the fourteenth century the king had nine sources from which he could assemble a fleet for his use.[1] The first and most important source of ships was to requi-

[1] The historiography to date stresses that the king only had three methods of collecting ships. See, for example, *BND*, p. 33; T. J. Runyan, 'Naval logistics', pp. 79–81; D. Hannay, *A short history of the royal navy 1217–1688* (London, 1912), pp. 9–11; A. T. Hall, 'The

sition merchant vessels. This prerogative right of the crown had its origins in Anglo-Saxon times, but the Edwardian kings stretched the meaning of this right to the limit.[2] The call on merchant ships to provide military service was originally only to defend England from attack, yet all three Edwards requisitioned fleets for the offensive purpose of transporting invading armies to various kingdoms. Of course, these offensive armadas were justified by the king because technically he was defending his Scottish and continental possessions and rights. This process did provoke criticism however. For example, when Edward I requisitioned a fleet in 1297 he assured the ports that the service he asked from them in no way would be taken as a precedent and he mainly relied 'on his usual mixture of appeals to patriotism and threats to persuade the seaports to comply with the request'.[3] This being said vessels 'arrested' from the merchant fleet remained by far the largest element of any armadas that put to sea during this period. For instance, in the Low Countries campaigns of 1338–40 Edward III commanded the services of 370 ships, of which the majority were merchant vessels; and in 1342 out of 675 ships serving as transports during the Brittany campaign, 665 were supplied by the merchant fleet.[4] These contingents suggest that the merchant contribution was of paramount importance.

A second source was the king's own ships. These were vessels owned by the king and used personally by him for his transportation and supply needs. These ships never served in large numbers during the military expeditions and they would only provide for the king's requirements and possibly those of his immediate circle of advisors and clerks. For example, in the Scottish campaign of 1322 Edward II had access to ten of his ships.[5] Yet even with such numbers of vessels for his own use he still found it necessary to employ William le Prest, master of the *Michel* of Hull, to carry his victuals.[6] In fact, on 23 June 1323 the king himself

employment of naval forces', Chapter 3; C. Candy, 'The Scottish wars of Edward III', pp. 240–43. J. Sherborne, 'Shipping and manpower', p. 166, notes four ways in which a king could raise a fleet by including in his assessment the hiring of ships from foreign kingdoms. On clerical officials involved in fleet raising, see T. J. Runyan, 'The English navy in the reign of Edward III', Chapter 4, which deals with Thomas Snetesham and Willim Clewer; *idem*, 'A fourteenth century cordage account for the king's ships', *MM* 60 (1974), pp. 311–28, which details the career of Matthew de Torkeseye; *The navy of the Lancastrian kings*, ed. S. Rose, pp. 6–27, which charts the career of William Soper.

2 On the Anglo-Saxon antecedent of requisition, see F. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edition (Oxford, 1971), p. 431.

3 M. Prestwich, *War, politics and finance*, p. 142.

4 B. Lyon, 'The infrastructure and purpose of an English medieval fleet in the hundred years war', in *Handelingen der maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde te Gent* (Ghent, 1997), pp. 61–76, p. 67. For 1342, see Chapter 3, pp. 128–36 below. Twelve ships that served in 1342 were foreign so the English merchant fleet contributed 653 ships.

5 BL, Stowe MS 553, fols 76r–76v.

6 *Ibid.*, fol. 76v.

felt it necessary to board a private vessel at Hull to take him back to London:[7] it seems that his own ships had completed their service by April and were unavailable for his return voyage.[8] Edward III's royal fleet was just as insufficient as his father's. For example, during the Roxburgh campaign of 1334–35 Edward III only had two royal vessels serving.[9] Though this campaign was conducted during the winter, expeditions undertaken in the summer months also failed to produce large numbers of royal ships. For instance, during the much larger expedition conducted over the summer of 1335 Edward III still had only two royal ships on active service.[10] This probably reflects the fact that Edward had thrown off the yoke of Mortimer and Isabella only five years before this campaign, and for three of these years he had not been at war and had no need of a large royal fleet.[11] Edward's continental ambitions soon altered this situation and by October 1342 he had ten royal ships serving in the Brittany campaign.[12] The fact that only small numbers of royal vessels served should not be taken as evidence that the king only owned a few ships. On the contrary, by the middle of the fourteenth century the crown certainly possessed large numbers of ships, but these never seem to have formed a major part of military campaigns. The most ships that the king contributed to any one fleet were the twenty-five vessels that participated in the 1346 transport fleet.[13] The reason for this is that the king's vessels were hired out to merchants and carried out other duties for the crown. A further explanation is that the king owned only part shares in many of the vessels that have hitherto been described as 'king's ships', which meant he was not entirely in full control of their duties. As such at any one time their numbers were diluted.[14] In short, the king's vessels only provided a small core of ships around which to build a larger armada.

The third way in which the king could raise a fleet was to call upon the service owed to the crown by the Cinque Ports. The Ports, according to their charters, were to provide fifty-seven ships, each manned by twenty-one mariners, for fifteen days.[15] This could be commuted so that a smaller number of vessels

7 *Ibid.*, fol. 77r. The ship was the *Cog Saluatozis* of Dartmouth commanded by Gilbert Coleman.

8 *Ibid.*, fol. 76v. The last ship of the king's to complete its service was the *James* of Westminster commanded by John Lutle and crewed by forty-eight mariners: they served until 6 April 1323.

9 BL, Cotton MS, Nero C.VIII, fol. 264r. These were the *Welfare* and an unnamed barge, commanded by John Pettot and Thomas Springet.

10 *Ibid.*, These were commanded by Thomas Springet (the *Cegedware*) and Hugh de Reppes (the *Rodecogge*).

11 *Foedera*, II, ii, p. 698; SC1/42, no. 59. In March 1327 Edward had sold some of the ships remaining from his father's reign.

12 E36/204, p. 221; E101/20/39, nos 12, 41, 45.

13 BL, Harleian MS 3968, fol. 132r.

14 See G. R. Cushway, 'The lord of the sea', pp. 83–106. Cushway argues that Edward III owned or had shares in over 100 ships.

15 *CCHR, 1300–1326*, p. 32; F. W. Brooks, *English naval forces*, p. 84.

were provided but for a longer period. The history of this service has attracted much attention, particularly the origin of such obligations; but the issue that concerns us here is how many ships they provided during the period covered by this study.[16] In the 1322 campaign Edward II did call on the obligatory service of the Ports and none of the Ports' ships are included in the *vadia nautarum* section of the Wardrobe accounts, which suggests they were serving for no pay.[17] Yet this evidence of obligatory service is contradicted elsewhere because other sources make it clear that the full quota of fifty-seven ships was not ordered, and instead the Ports were commanded to contribute twenty-seven ships.[18] This trend continued at speed during the fourteenth century and by the time of Edward III's Scottish and French campaigns the Ports' obligations to provide ships in return for local freedoms had ceased. Indeed, the evidence points to the fact that unless there was an issue of a feudal summons, such as happened in 1322 and 1327, the ships supplied by the Ports were paid their full wages for their service that usually went beyond fifteen days.[19] For example, in 1342 Thomas Symond, master of the *Nicholas* of Sandwich, and sixteen mariners were paid £4 14s 6d for twenty-one days' service and the rest of the Cinque Ports ships which served during this campaign received pay commensurate with their days of service.[20] Nevertheless, the Cinque Ports continued to play an important role as advisors to the crown in naval affairs, they still provided large numbers of

[16] For example, see F. W. Brooks, *English naval forces,* Chapter 6 and A. T. Hall, 'The employment of naval forces', pp. 41–51.

[17] *CCR, 1318–23*, p. 533.

[18] *Ibid*., p. 708.

[19] See N. A. M. Rodger, 'Naval service of the Cinque Ports', pp. 392–403; C. Lambert, 'An army transport fleet', p. 84; A. T. Hall, 'The employment of naval forces', p. 42. Recent criticisms of the importance of the Cinque Ports as ship providers are not entirely supported by an examination of the sources. For example, in the 1338 Low Countries transport fleet Winchelsea (equal with Hull) was the second largest supplier of ships after Great Yarmouth, and in the 1342 Brittany campaign only London and Great Yarmouth provided more vessels than Winchelsea: Winchelsea supplied 17 ships in 1338 and 25 in 1342, see *Norwell*, pp. 366–67; E36/204, p. 226. In fact, if there was a league table of England's ports ranked according to their contribution of ships to the wars of Edward II and Edward III, Winchelsea would be in a respectable fourth position, while Sandwich would only be placed below towns such as Newcastle, Hull, King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth, Ipswich, Dartmouth and Southampton. See BL, Add MS 7967, fol. 99v; BL, Cotton MS, Nero C.VIII, fol. 265r; *Norwell*, pp. 366–70; C47/2/35; E36/204, pp. 222–26;E101/17/10; E101/17/24; E101/18/35; E101/19/22; E101/19/38; E101/19/39; E101/21/7; E101/389/8, m. 16; *CCR, 1318–23*, pp. 533, 591, 660; *CCR, 1330–34*, p. 410; *CCR,1333–37*, pp. 22, 25, 29, 652; *CCR, 1337–39*, p. 216; *CCR, 1343–46*, pp. 128–32; *Foedera*, II, ii, p. 703; *Rot. Scot*. I, p. 212; *Rot. Scot*. I, pp. 225, 226, 232, 233, 234, 248–49. See also D. Martin and B. Martin, *New Winchelsea, Sussex: a medieval port town* (London, 2004), who argue that the size and importance of Winchelsea should be reconsidered and that it may have been much larger than previously thought. For recent criticisms of the contribution of the Ports to the wars in this period, see N. A. M. Rodger, *Safeguard of the sea*, p. 125.

[20] E36/204, p. 222.

ships for expeditions and their ports were regularly used as embarkation points for continental campaigns.[21]

Another method that the crown employed to raise ships involved making non-financial contractual agreements with shipowners and port burgesses. Such contracts were drawn up so that the specified parties would provide an agreed number of ships. Thus, in 1335 Thomas Gargrene, clerk, formed an agreement with John de la More, William Grenole and William Cholale, all from Liverpool. This indenture stated that they would provide the ship *Nicholas* well armed and victualled for the king when required.[22] Similarly the burgesses of Dartmouth agreed to supply two ships of 120 tuns burthen, *dupplici eskippamentum*, to 'follow the king whenever he calls upon other ships of the realm to set forth, and to remain with him for forty days'.[23] In return the providers of these ships would usually be granted freedom from local tolls and other taxes. From Edward's point of view agreements such as these could bolster the numbers in his paid fleets and also reduce the administrative duties of his clerks because it was not necessary to include these ships in the bureaucratic process.

The fifth way for the crown to raise ships was to hire vessels from private persons or make arrangements with certain kingdoms, territories or city-states. For example, in 1359 the king hired eight ships from the Low Countries to transport troops to Calais for the forthcoming expedition.[24] Although this method of acquiring ships never contributed large numbers, the king did employ envoys to organise the hiring of such vessels. The most famous of these was Nicholinus de Flisco (Fieschi), sometimes called the cardinal of Genoa. He was employed in 1336 to obtain vessels for Edward to transport English horses 'for the king's service'.[25]

The sixth method the king could employ to raise a fleet was to ask a group of ports to supply a specified number of ships. During the preparations for the 1322 Scottish campaign, rather than sending out officers (from the centre of government) to requisition vessels in the normal fashion Edward II negotiated directly with some port towns. The result of these discussions was that nine ports located in East Anglia were ordered to provide five ships, irrespective of the

[21] *RP.* IV, p. 252

[22] C47/2/25, no. 10. The evidence from this source alters the argument made by J. S. Kepler, 'Naval Impressment', p. 71, n. 9, where he suggests that Edward III made no use of such agreements.

[23] *CCHR, 1341–1417,* p. 3; and, see also M. Jones, 'Two Exeter ship agreements of 1303 and 1310', *MM* 52 (1967), pp. 315–19, which draws attention to two similar agreements made between the crown and local port dignitaries. *Dupplici eskipammentum* is an ambiguous term but it usually refers to the practice of doubling the usual crew numbers that would, under normal circumstances, operate merchantman of the period. See p. 200 below.

[24] *Foedera*, III, i, p. 444.

[25] *CPR, 1334–38*, p. 321. See also R. M. Hedley, 'The administration of the navy in the reign of Edward III' (unpublished MA thesis, Manchester, 1922), pp. 10–11.

fact that these communities had already contributed two vessels to this fleet.[26] This process is reminiscent of the new obligations that Edward and his councillors had been developing with regard to the recruitment of land-based troops. Just as towns were required to provide a certain quota of armed men, ports were assessed to contribute a specified number of ships, manned, armed and victualled. Sometimes, as in the East Anglian example, this meant several ports pooling their resources to meet the demands of the crown.[27] Although raising ships in this way was not entirely novel, asking groups of towns to provide ships free of charge for nothing in return certainly seems to have been a new development.

A seventh way in which the king could assemble ships for his fleet was to use those vessels which were taken in acts of piracy or as prizes of war. For example, in 1338 William Montagu, then admiral of the fleet to the south and west of the Thames, sent four ships called the *Hulk* of Bruges, *Cristofre*, *Shavenecogge* and *Godesburgh*, all taken in war, to Scotland loaded with men for the campaign which centred around Dunbar castle.[28] The eighth means available to the king was for him to order specific towns to construct barges or other forms of ships for use in his wars.[29] These were never ordered in large numbers, however, and their ownership was also a complicated issue. For example, it is clear that some of the ships that were built as results of orders from the king did in fact remain the property of the port and the king actually shared in their upkeep.[30] Only in times of war would the king use these vessels, the rest of the time they were employed by the town that constructed them.

Finally, to increase the size of his fleet the king could also offer pardons to shipowners/masters, as well as to full crews, in return for providing both their ships and themselves free of wages. In this way in 1342 Edward was able to add seven vessels in this way to his fleet. The shipowners/masters and crew were expected to serve *'pur deux mois de aler sur meer en notre compaigne en le dit voyage par la temps avantdit'* and their ships were to be provided *'bien aparaille'* with *'gentz armees'*.[31] Similarly, the king could lift the threat of confiscation provided that the owner/master served the crown in some capacity during a

[26] *CCR, 1318–23*, p. 463. The ports were Sniterle (near Norwich); Wiveton; Cleye; Salthouse; Baudreseye; Covehithe; Guston; Waleton (Walton in North Essex) and Filltustowe (Felixstowe).

[27] *Ibid*., p. 463. For example the ports of Sniterle, Wiveton, Cleye and Salthouse were to find three ships between them. For a discussion of the recruitment of the land forces by means of this assessment, see B. C. Keeney, 'Military service in England, 1272–1327', *Speculum* 22 (October, 1947), pp. 534–49; M. Powicke, 'Edward II and military obligation', *Speculum* 31 (January, 1956), pp. 91–119; M. Prestwich, *Armies and warfare*, pp. 78, 134.

[28] *CCR, 1337–39*, p. 227.

[29] G. R. Cushway, 'The Lord of the sea', p. 231.

[30] *Ibid*., p. 87.

[31] SC1/39, nos 15, 39, 81, 157; SC1/40, nos 10–20; SC1/41, no. 66.

campaign.[32] In these ways the king could usually add quite large numbers of ships to a fleet and save money.[33]

The issuing of pardons for ship service in 1342 seems to be an entirely novel method of bolstering a fleet and as such is worthy of further investigation. Although it is true that Edward I had issued pardons to mariners for service in his wars, he did so on the requirement that the men in question participated in his land campaigns rather than the maritime expeditions. In addition, Edward I also offered such mariners wages for doing so.[34] Edward III on the other hand issued the 1342 pardons not only on the condition that the shipmasters/owners provided their service free, but also that the crews who manned the vessels they provided drew no wages. Seen in this light shipowners were expected to supply a ship fully manned and armed at their own expense. On this evidence Edward III's use of pardons seems to have been a new development.

The 1342 pardons were distributed in three different formats.[35] First, seven were issued to individuals.[36] As noted above these seven men were to serve for two months for the '*defense du royalme*'. The second category of pardon was issued directly to shipowners who were expected to send their ships to the embarkation port to arrive '*bien apparaille*', and with '*gentz armees*' aboard.[37] This category of pardon, because it names the ships' masters, can be compared directly with the

[32] *CCR, 1341–43*, pp. 687, 689–90, provides evidence of ships and masters that could escape punishment for aiding the king in the Brittany campaign.

[33] In addition to the seven ships, a further thirty-three served for pardons in the Brittany transport fleets of 1342. See C. Lambert, 'An army transport fleet', p. 33.

[34] See R. G. Marsden, *Law and custom of the sea, vol. 1, AD 1205–1648* (London, 1915), pp. 31–34.

[35] This equates with the evidence of pardons issued to land-based forces. For example, H. Lacy, 'The politics of mercy: the use of the royal pardon in fourteenth-century England,' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of York, 2005), pp. 20–21, 49–51, 61–62 and appendices 2 and 4, notes that there are three types of pardon: individual pardons, general pardons or group pardons. The ones issued to the mariners in 1342 seem to equate with individual pardons. Although Lacy suggests that military service was usually linked to the general pardon, that many of the shipmasters/owners, and indeed full crews, are mentioned individually suggests that these were individual pardons. Some of the maritime pardons make no mention of service at own costs (for example SC1/40 no. 18). However, the presumption must be that free service was required and although it has been noted that pardons were usually issued on the premise that some men could still draw wages (Lacy, p. 22) and the issuing of pardons was used as a means to bolster numbers at the muster points, the likelihood is that many recipients did serve for no pay. In addition, the fact that none of the pardoned masters appear in any of the related payrolls suggests that they were serving for two months at their own costs. Lacy also makes the suggestion that only on two occasions were pardons not recorded through the Patent Rolls in the Chancery (Lacy, p. 50). However, Lacy seems to be mistaken on this last point. See, for example, A. Ayton, *Knights and warhorses*, pp. 144–45 who notes that pardons were recorded on the Treaty Rolls, privy seal warrants and the Scottish Rolls.

[36] SC1/40, nos 14–18.

[37] SC1/39, nos 15, 81; SC1/40, nos 10, 12, 19; SC1/41, no. 66. SC1/40 no. 12 accounts for two ships.

Wardrobe accounts and other payrolls relating to the Brittany campaign. This reveals that none of the masters named in these seven pardons are recorded as having received pay for this campaign. In effect their service was given for free in return for a pardon against their crimes. The third type of pardon was issued to the whole crew who served on board the *Margrete*, which was one of the two ships provided by John Perman.[38] This pardon evidence shows that Edward III cast his net widely when it came to ship requisition. Many possible means were exploited in order to raise sufficient numbers of ships and mariners for his needs.

In most cases the issue of pardons related to an act of piracy. Deliberate taking of enemy, or indeed friendly vessels, was common practice throughout this period. For instance, in 1338 a large number of East Anglian vessels attacked allied Flemish shipping.[39] This being so it was in 1342 that the most famous incident of piracy occurred. This act resulted in what is called here the '*Taryte* affair' and ultimately led to the issuing of the pardons noted above. What actually occurred during this episode is difficult to piece together for the main reason that the crown seems not to have known the exact details. As a consequence what we are left with are a series of orders and writs that were issued over the summer and winter of 1342 and 1343, which are not consistent and changed in response to new information delivered to the Chancery. Nevertheless, the evidence supports two interpretations. First, this incident became so 'famous' in the court proceedings that some subsequent acts of piracy were also recorded as being against the *Taryte*. In short the term became a euphemism for acts of piracy. Alternatively, '*Taryte*' might have been a descriptive word for a type of ship. In March 1340 Robert Morley was given a commission to investigate and arrest the men who had 'boarded a large ship called a *Taret* on its way to Flanders and taken away its cargo'.[40] Furthermore, in February 1362 another commission was launched to investigate the taking of merchandise worth £70,000 from a ship in Devon 'called a *Tarrit*'.[41] Such evidence indicates that the compilers of these writs were describing a type of ship rather than an individual vessel.[42]

Although it is hard to create a clear picture as to what actually happened during 1342 it is possible to give an outline of the incident. It would seem that in the spring of 1342 a large number of ships from East Anglia, Sussex, Hampshire, Devonshire and the Netherlands, perhaps as many as fifty or sixty, attacked several other Flemish vessels off the coast of the Isle of Wight that were 'laden with wine and divers other merchandise' to the value of £18,000.[43] The specific English towns implicated were King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth, Ipswich,

38 SC1/40, no. 10.

39 *CPR, 1338–40*, pp. 491–92.

40 *CPR, 1338–40*, p. 491.

41 *CPR, 1361–64*, p. 209. The value of the cargo here is surely exaggerated.

42 See also *CPR, 1340–43*, p. 469, which shows that a *Taryte* may have been a type of ship rather than a name of an individual vessel.

43 *Ibid*, pp. 469, 591, 594.

Colchester, Dunwich, Sandwich, Portsmouth and Dartmouth. After capturing the *Taryte* and the others vessels they sailed them to Portsmouth, which is significant.[44] During the spring of 1342 John Watenhul had arrested 117 English ships for service in the forthcoming Breton expedition. By June of that year this had increased to 145 vessels.[45] What is more significant is that the (145) arrested ships were stationed in the Portsmouth area throughout the spring and summer of 1342. As we shall see below in the discussion on the Brittany campaign these vessels were kept in port for several months before participating in the earl of Northampton's transport fleet in August. It would seem that some of the assembled vessels undertook raiding voyages into the surrounding coastal areas to secure booty (thus offsetting some of the losses the shipowners and masters were incurring through loss of trade while they were forced to remain in the vicinity of Portsmouth) and, perhaps, such forays would provide a distraction from the monotony of sitting in Portsmouth.

So far we have seen that in the spring of 1342 a flotilla of English ships attacked several Flemish vessels off the coast of the Isle of Wight before sailing their prizes into Portsmouth harbour. Yet, the story does not end here because while at Portsmouth they seem to have become nervous about their prizes and as a result they moved the captured ships to Dartmouth and Falmouth. No doubt this owed a lot to the fact that by this time Portsmouth harbour would have been full of the king's officials who were organising the military expeditions. Initially this ploy seems to have worked for it was not until some months later that a commission was launched to 'make inquisition in the counties of Devon and Cornwall touching a ship called a *Taryte,* broken up at the port of Dartmouth, and a like ship, which put in at the port of Falmouth and into whose lands these came'.[46] It seems clear that what occurred is that after capturing the ships the booty was split with the result that the captured vessels were taken to several ports across southern England. This resulted in the confused orders that were issued throughout 1342 and 1343. Nevertheless, this incident was in some ways fortuitous for Edward III and although several people were eventually hanged for taking part in this act of piracy many more were pardoned, which provided Edward with forty ships' crews free of charge for his transport fleet of 1342.[47]

Requisition Orders

The discussion above has described the methods that the king had available in order to assemble a fleet. This section examines the nature of the requisition

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] E101/22/39; E372/187, mm. 42, 45.

[46] *CPR, 1340–43*, p. 594.

[47] For the evidence on the hangings, see R. Ward, *The world of the medieval shipmaster*, p. 32. For the numbers of pardons issued, see Chapter 4 below.

writs that were issued before such vessels were arrested. During this period requisition orders were issued in five different formats. First, an order to arrest ships from every port in the kingdom could be issued.[48] Second, all vessels from one chosen admiralty could be requisitioned.[49] Third, ships could be ordered to appear at muster from a selected number of ports.[50] Fourth, vessels that lay within a specific geographical 'zone' within an admiralty could be arrested. For example, in August 1337 all ships over thirty tuns and more were to be arrested from the 'port of London and elsewhere on the coast of the river Thames as far as la Rewe'.[51] Finally, ships could be ordered from individual shipowners. This latter point is interesting because it raises the question of whether or not requisition officials regularly targeted the same ships when they visited ports. The sources certainly suggest that in some cases the king's officials knew who owned large vessels. In 1333 William Ferriby was told to provide his ship 'which is reputed to be the best ship of Ravenserodde to come with the king against the Scots'.[52] Are we to assume, therefore, that shipowners like William suffered disproportionally when fleets were requisitioned? This is difficult to answer conclusively for the main reason of record linkage. As we shall see below (Appendix two) we can only be sure that a ship is individual when we can link its name to that of a master *and* a port. When we do this it is possible to suggest that out of a total of 4,065 individual vessels serving in the period 1320 to 1360 only 175 did so on more than one occasion.

These figures bring out two immediate points. First, such a low number of repeat servers prove that the same ships were not constantly requisitioned. Second, the high turnover of vessels participating in naval campaigns suggests that the availability of ships was such that the king did not need to target the same vessels. Of course, if arresting officials arrived in a port and knew who owned the largest ships they were sure to attempt to arrest those first, but there was also a degree of unpredictability because officials could only arrest the ships that were at anchor when they arrived. This had implications for more than just the arresting clerks. Repeated requisition of the largest vessels would surely impact on the economy of a port. Identifying which aspects of ports' trade that would be most affected (long distance or coastal) is nevertheless a complex issue because large vessels were not only employed in long distance trade but were also used in the coastal trade involving bulk goods such as coal.[53] That the repeated arrest of ships did create problems, however, is evidenced by the complaints made by the burgesses of Great Yarmouth.[54] However, the data suggests that any shipowner

48 See, for example, *Foedera*, II, ii, p. 1015; *CCR 1337–39*, p. 323.
49 See, for example, *CCR 1341–43*, p. 59.
50 See, for example, *Foedera*, II, ii, p. 703.
51 See, for example, *CCR 1337–39*, p. 189.
52 *CCR, 1333–37*, pp. 25, 99.
53 See, for example, G. V. Scammell, 'English merchant shipping', pp. 327–40.
54 *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, III, n. 14.

who had his vessels repeatedly requisitioned should be viewed as unfortunate. Thus if we examine Great Yarmouth's shipping contributions to the wars we find that this port supplied 347 ships to the maritime operations between 1320 and 1360. It is reasonable to argue that at least 200 or more of these 347 ships were individual vessels. The most ships Great Yarmouth supplied to any one fleet were sixty-one during 1338.[55] So, it would seem that Great Yarmouth contributed some 25 to 30 per cent of its shipping resources to the 1342 expedition.[56] This is not to suggest that the loss of so many ships would have had little or no impact on the economy of the port, only that caution should be used when interpreting the complaints of port communities.[57] There were situations, however, when the same ships would be rearrested after they had completed one voyage for service in another fleet. From March to May 1370 Guy Brian was at sea with a fleet of twenty-four ships drawn mainly from the south-west ports of Dartmouth, Fowey, Plymouth and Bristol. Many of these ships were rearrested for service with Walter Hewett in June and July 1370. In August they were involved in the transportation of John of Gaunt. The fact that these vessels were requisitioned on three occasions over 1370 may explain why the mariners were given 6d per week in *regard*.[58] On a cautious note, however, it is important to recognise that Devonshire and Cornish ports were closely linked to the crown through the duchy of Cornwall and because of this they received favourable grants off the crown. Such royal patronage may have influenced Devonshire and Cornish shipowners to be more compliant in providing their ships.[59]

Moreover, when considering the effects of repeat requisition on individual shipowners or port economics we must also bear in mind the complexities of ownership. It was common for several individuals to own shares in a vessel. Alternatively merchants could hire a ship from a private owner and as such only possess shares in the cargoes and not the vessel.[60] In fact in this period it was not unusual for an English ship to have anywhere up to twenty or thirty individual owners, and continental merchants are known to have held only a 1/128

55 *Norwell*, pp. 379–82.

56 See pp. 217–18 below.

57 A. Saul, 'Great Yarmouth and the hundred years way', pp. 108–09 states that Yarmouth had roughly 100 great ships and many more smaller ones in the fourteenth century. However, Saul does not seem to have attempted to calculate how many Yarmouth ships were in fact individual vessels. In addition, it is likely that over the forty years covered by this book many of the ships recorded in 1320 had ceased to sail by 1359 so the above number should be viewed as the maximum number of individual ships that sailed out of Great Yarmouth during a forty year period, not the number of vessels they had in port at any one time.

58 E101/30/29, mm. 2–6.

59 See, for example, M. Kowaleski, 'The port towns of fourteenth-century Devon', in *The new maritime history of Devon*, vol. 1, ed. M. Duffy et al. (Exeter, 1992), pp. 62–72, p. 70.

60 In Norwich, for example, merchants usually formed a group in order freight goods in the same ship. See P. Dunn, 'After the Black Death: society and economy in late fourteenth century Norwich' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of East Anglia, 2003), p. 195.

share of a ship.[61] This has immediate implications in terms of the effect ship requisition had on trade. If, for example, twenty individuals owned a ship the arrest of this vessel would mean that each merchant only lost a twentieth of his potential profits. Alternatively, if that same merchant owned shares in several ships he would, of course, feel the effects of this requisition across several vessels. This being said there are many examples of ships that were owned by a single individual. For example, between 1337 and 1340 311 vessels failed to appear at the embarkation port for service in the French war. Of these five ships were owned by the master that operated them, two masters owned half the ships they commanded, one vessel had two owners while eighty-nine (29%) were owned by one individual.[62] Finally, in 1342 the owners of fifty-eight ships were awarded compensation by the crown for the damage their vessels incurred while in the king's service.[63] Of these fifty-eight vessels thirty-nine (67%) were owned by one individual. Because the 1342 (E101/24/9 (b)) document records all those who owned shares in each damaged ship, we can be certain that two-thirds of the vessels in this record were owned by one individual. Another document of interest records the owners of sixty-four ships that were involved in acts of piracy in 1338.[64] Of these sixty-four vessels fifty-three (83%) were owned by one individual. Taken together between 1337 and 1342 of a visible 217 (there are 431 individual vessels recorded on these three documents but some entries fail to record the owners' names) ships for which we have the names of the owners recorded 181 (83%) were owned by just one person.[65] It may be that Exchequer payrolls or Chancery rolls do not record all the owners of a ship and simply reveal the principal owner. This being said there will be some modicum of accuracy because during the requisition process hundreds of documents would have been produced. Unfortunately we are only left with the final account that was submitted to the Exchequer. It is likely that these hundreds of subsidiary docu-

[61] On English ownership, see R. Ward, *The world of the medieval shipmaster*, pp. 49–50. On continental share ownership, see H. Brand, 'Roundtable reviews of Robin Ward, The World of the Medieval Shipmaster', International Journal of Maritime History 21, no. 2 (2009), pp. 306–13.

[62] C47/2/30. 214 entries list only the master and not the owner. The word *seignor* is usually placed after the person who owns the ship, even if this is the master. Consequently when this word is not recorded it is presumed that the clerk did not know who the owner was. The two ships that were part owned by their masters were the *Plente* of Blackeneye commanded (and part owned) by Thomas Stoyn, the second owner being Thomas Blanford; the *Mariote* of Blackeneye commanded (and part owned) by John Maleman, the second owner being Adam Brime. The vessel owned by two individuals (none being the master) was the *Nicholas* of Blackeneye, the owners were Adam and William Hekere. The *Godyer* of King's Lynn was owned by a lady called Margaret Colbothe. One vessel was owned by the earl of Derby and another was owned by Thomas Ughtred (both from Hull), which shows nobles were ship owners.

[63] E101/24/9 (a) and E101/24/9 (b).

[64] *CPR, 1338–40*, pp. 491–92.

[65] If we include all the 431 ships 42% of ships would still be owned by one individual.

ments contained the names of all the owners.[66] The crown, of course, would only be interested in collecting any outstanding debts from the principal owners. Presumably the largest shareholders in the vessel would then have to approach their partners in order to receive compensation from them. This way the crown saved valuable time by not having to trace dozens of individuals.

As such the evidence listed in these documents argues that single ownership was not uncommon in the mid fourteenth century. Interestingly, the compensation source from 1342 also reveals that when several individuals possessed one ship the owners did not necessarily live in the same port. For example, the *Jonette* of Winchelsea was owned by five men of whom only two resided in Winchelsea.[67] As such the loss of revenue that resulted in this ship being arrested for service was actually spread over more than one port. Of course, the people who would most suffer with regard to ship requisition are those shipmasters who also owned the vessels they commanded. Although they would receive 6d per day in wages it is uncertain if this would have been enough to cover the losses they would incur because they could not hire out their ship.

We can examine this further. In 1338 Alexander Witton of Hull, master of the *Trinite*, served for twenty-seven days and as such he would have received just over 13s in wages.[68] This is a complex calculation to attempt and is given here only as a means of creating an impression as to what some of the losses and costs may have been. In this period it was normal for shipowners to charge roughly 20s a tun for freightage.[69] If we were to say that most trading voyages lasted anywhere up to three months we can examine how much a ship, for which we have tunnage figures, would earn under normal trading circumstances and analyse how requisition into the king's service may have affected this. It is important to note that in addition to the wages of the crew and freightage costs there would also be local port charges to pay for. The *Blithe* of Weymouth, a ship of 120 tuns, served in the St Sardos expedition for a total of thirteen weeks.[70] If this vessel had been hired for a private trading venture the freightage charge would have been in the region of £120, whereas in 1324 the wages of one master, one constable and twenty-four mariners came to just under £29. The master's wage alone would have been £2 3s 6d. If the master was the owner of this ship he would have lost roughly £110–£115 while he was kept in the king's service. Of course the crew would still

[66] See discussion below entitled 'Process of Requisition', for more information on the administrative process.

[67] The owners of the *Jonette* were Charles de Winchelsea who was also the master, William Bydere of London, another William of London (the surname name is missing on the MS) John Vigeron of Looe and John Bartelot of Winchelsea. This was not the only such vessel that was owned by men from different ports. For example, the *Godyer* of Hull was owned by John Seward of Hull and John Colyer of Nottingham, see E101/24/9 (b), nos 17 and 37.

[68] *Norwell*, p. 375.

[69] N. A. M. Rodger, *Safeguard of the sea*, p. 125.

[70] BL, Add 7967, fol. 94r.

require payment so the owners of this vessel would have lost some £80–£90 in potential freightage while this vessel was under arrest.[71] These figures suggest that shipowners were losing a considerable amount of money when their vessels were arrested.[72] Nevertheless, the evidence is uneven and although many vessels were owned by one person it is also likely that many others had multiple owners. In addition, repeat service amongst shipmasters was not common during this period and after 1335, apart from the years when large fleets were raised (for example only eight large fleets were raised between 1335 and 1359), there were lengthy periods when large armadas were not requisitioned. As such the requisitioning of merchant ships may not have had such a devastating effect on an individual merchant's wealth or indeed in trade in general. Moreover, as we shall see in Chapter 4 the English crown carefully managed and exploited the kingdom's maritime resources during this period for several reasons. One of these was that the king relied on the wool and wine trades for taxation that in turn financed the war. However, if, as can be argued, English shipowners favoured re-export and coastal trade, with the result that a majority of export trade was carried in foreign hulls, the impact on taxable exported goods such as wool would not be affected as greatly when English ships were requisitioned.[73]

That certain vessels served more than once, however, cannot be doubted and some individual owners were rather unlucky in this regard. For example, between 1338 and 1342 the owner – or owners – of the vessel *Sefray* from Gosforth commanded by Ralph Gardiner was unfortunate to have this ship requisitioned on four consecutive occasions. Indeed, in 1342 the *Sefray* served twice when in August it was part of the flotilla that transported the earl of Northampton to Brittany before being arrested on its return to participate in the king's October transport armada.[74] This ship therefore lost more or less a full years trading. Similarly the *Leonard* of Hull, commanded by William Broun, was arrested on four occasions between 1334 and 1339.[75] The *George* of Sidmouth, commanded by John Hake, was arrested on five separate occasions in the period 1325–42.[76] Sometimes repeated arrest prompted owners to refuse to allow their ship to appear at muster points. A case in point was the *Nicholas* of Hull, commanded

[71] In the 1380s owners would be paid between 3s 4d and 2s per tun for every three months from the ships appearance at the port of embarkation. Even so this would have only compensated them for one tenth of their losses, see N. A. M. Rodger, *Safeguard of the sea*, p. 125.

[72] Not all this money was profit because the owners would have to pay for any 'overheads'.

[73] For a discussion on this, see Chapter 4, pp. 174–83 below. For the argument that foreign ships dominated the export trade, see D. Burwash, *English Merchant Shipping*, pp. 145–48; P. Dunn, 'After the Black Death', p. 200.

[74] E36/204, p. 238; *CCR, 1343–46*, pp. 129–32.

[75] BL, Cotton MS, Nero C.VIII, fol. 266r; E101/19/6, mm. 1, 2, 2d.

[76] E101/17/3, m. 6b; E101/17/24, m. 4d; E101/19/38, m. 3; E101/19/39, m. 2; CCR, 1343–46, pp. 129–32.

by William Ferriby. The *Nicholas* was requisitioned in 1333 and 1335 for service in the Scottish wars.[77] However, in 1337 when the same vessel was arrested for the planned continental expedition of that year its owner(s) did not allow the ship to appear at the muster point.[78] Consequently we should not view shipowners as submissive partners in the mobilisation of fleets. It is interesting to note, however, that it was rare for shipowners to resist while the clerks and sergeant-at-arms were actually in port, and in the case of the *Nicholas* the crew had taken their wages some months before the vessel was expected to appear at muster. It could be that at the time of the muster the ship was still completing its trading voyages, and that its failure to appear was not a deliberate action.

We have seen, then, that there were five different variations in requisition orders. Yet, within these orders there was also two 'sub' categories. These usually stated that only ships of a certain size (as expressed by tunnage) were to be arrested. For example, in 1326 all ships over fifty tuns were to be requisitioned whilst those vessels under fifty tuns were 'not to go out for the purposes of fishing or another business'.[79] The second type of order that was issued specified no tunnages at all and it is to be presumed that admirals were to collect any ships they could locate. This latter policy could lead to complications. For example, in 1338 when Walter Mauny was admiral of the north the king was petitioned by four shipowners who said that Mauny had arrested their ships which consisted of 'two boats of Robert Ryghtwys and John Ryghtwys called "pykers" in the port of Holm, and two little ships of Martin son of Peter and Adam Scot, which vessels are not suited for the king's passage, not permitting them to fish in these boats'.[80] Clearly Mauny had collected every available ship he could during this period. Consequently, orders that specified no tunnage could create more problems than they solved as unsuitable vessels were arrested at considerable time and cost. In other words officials failed on occasions to use necessary discretion.

Regardless of their precise format the responsibility for arresting ships lay with the individuals who received these orders. Who were these men and did their collective experience encourage the development of a sophisticated system of ship requisition? It will be argued here that there was great continuity in the administrative personnel that served under Edward II and Edward III, and that this continuity was largely responsible for the success of maritime mobilisation in the period 1324–50. Recognition of continuity in bureaucratic personnel is not new, and it has been remarked before that even though there were three changes of government between the years 1327 and 1333, apart from the associates closest to the failed regimes of Edward II and Roger Mortimer, the administra-

77 E101/18/36, m. 2; *Foedera*, II, ii, p. 912.

78 C47/2/30, m. 1. This was probably the same William Ferriby who was reputed to have the best ship in Ravenserodde and who was specifically targeted in the 1333 expedition. Perhaps this explains why he failed to appear in 1337. See p. 20 above.

79 *CPR, 1324–27*, p. 308.

80 *CCR, 1337–39*, p. 351.

tive personnel in the Chancery and the Exchequer remained largely unchanged.[81] For example, the keeper of the Wardrobe in 1320, Roger Northburgh, was still involved in the administration of Edward III in 1341, and he had been at various times keeper of the Wardrobe, keeper of the privy seal and great seal, chancellor and treasurer of the Exchequer.[82] Nicholas Huggate was another figure of continuity who served both Edward II and Edward III, and who had been employed in the royal administration from 1314.[83] More importantly, however, was the fact that he had been the organiser of the St Sardos expedition of 1324, a role that required the organising of continental transport fleets. Another experienced administrator who served both Edward II and Edward III was Richard Bury who was employed on various secret missions throughout his career.[84] Richard Ferriby was another high-ranking official who began his career serving Archbishop Melton in the reign of Edward II, before becoming a Wardrobe clerk for the same king. Following this he was appointed a clerk of the privy seal before finally becoming keeper of the Wardrobe under Edward III.[85] Importantly these men, especially Northburgh, Huggate and Ferriby, had organised large military and naval expeditions to both Scotland and France before Edward III came to the throne. As such when Edward III wanted to raise large supply and transport fleets in the 1330s and 1340s he could call upon the service of able and experienced bureaucrats.

The four administrators described above are what we could call 'heavyweights' and these men were at the highest level of government in the period from 1320 to the mid-1340s. However, under such men there also existed an experienced cadre of clerical officials whose collective experiences of raising fleets aided Edward III when he began to place huge demands on the merchant fleet in the 1330s and 1340s. Two examples of such officials, one working in the northern admiralty and one in the southern admiralty, will show how such expertise was accumulated over long careers. Indeed, we shall see that such men in fact became specialists in ship requisition. James Kingston was a clerk who operated solely under the jurisdiction of the northern admiral. His career, as documented in the records, begins in 1324 when as a petty clerk of the Chancery he issued a petition requesting that the king pay him 'for the cost and troubles he has incurred in suing for the recovery of the prises of wine'.[86] In the later 1320s he seems to have taken on some legal work for the Abbot of Fecamp who had interests in East Yorkshire.[87]

81 Tout, *Chapters*, III, pp. 5–7, 35–36.

82 *Ibid*, pp. 17, 18, 131–33,

83 Tout, *Chapters*, III, pp. 6, 71–72; Tout, *Chapters*, IV, pp. 74–76.

84 On Bury's career, see M. Ormrod, 'The king's secrets: Richard Bury and Edward III', in *War, government and the aristocracy in the British Isles, c. 1150–1500: essays in honour of Michael Prestwich*, ed. C. Given-Wilson, A. Kettle and L. Scales (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 163–78.

85 Tout, *Chapters*, II, p. 273; Tout, *Chapters*, III, p. 215; Tout, *Chapters*, IV, p. 79.

86 SC8/270/13478.

87 SC8/258/12890 (b).

However, it was in 1327 that Kingston was appointed to the role that was to form a large part of his career when he was ordered to gather victuals for Queen Isabella's Scottish campaign. Three years after the failed Weardale expedition Kingston was appointed to survey the lands of Roger Mortimer in the aftermath of his execution.[88] In 1333 Kingston was appointed to organise victuals for forthcoming siege of Berwick. In the following year he was appointed to arrest ships in his home town of Hull, and in 1335 his services were called upon again when he was ordered to arrest ships from all the ports in the northern admiralty. In 1335, therefore, Kingston's responsibilities had clearly increased and he was transferred from the role of victual collector to the more complicated task of ship requisition. In 1336 he was again appointed to arrest ships from the northern admiralty and in 1337 he organised the requisitioning of ships from the north country ports for the planned Scottish expedition of that year. By 1341 Kingston's career became cemented, a fact borne out by the description of him as a 'king's clerk' in the existing documentation after this date. In 1344, and in an obvious act of religious compassion, Kingston remembered those less fortunate than himself in his home town of Hull and he built a house called 'God's House' for the care of thirteen 'poor and infirm persons and children'.[89]

Perhaps more influential and impressive than Kingston was the career of John Watenhul of Devon. Watenhul's involvement in the organisation of war spanned the regimes of Edward II, Isabella and Mortimer and Edward III. He first appears in 1325 when he received letters of protection to accompany Hugh Courtney to Gascony.[90] After this he was appointed one of the executors of the will of Aymer de Valence, because in 1325 his name is attached to a petition asking for a manor taken from Valence by the earl of Hereford to be returned to the estate of the Pembroke earls.[91] At this stage in his career Watenhul was clearly a legal specialist for in 1327 he was appointed attorney on behalf of John Lestraunge to fight his case in relation to the lands of John Giffard to which Lestraunge claimed he had right of inheritance.[92] Mortimer's demise does not seem to have affected his career, and by the mid 1330s Watenhul had impressed Edward III, his new master, and had risen through the ranks to become what Wilkinson describes as a 'first grade clerk'.[93] In 1336 Watenhul was first appointed

88 *CPR, 1330–34*, p. 57.

89 On Kingston's career, see *Rot. Scot.* I, pp. 207, 279, 317, 379, 403, 418, 477; *CCR, 1341–43*, p. 295; *CPR, 1343–45*, p. 418. Kingston's father was Adam Helleward. Kingston died in 1355. See C135/126/11. It is possible that Walter Helleward of Hull was also related to James Kingston. Walter was a shipowner who resided in the port of Hull, see *CPR, 1321–24*, p. 86. If so Kingston certainly came from a maritime background.

90 *Foedera*, II, I, p. 605.

91 SC8/77/3814.

92 *CCR, 1327–30*, p. 109.

93 *CCR, 1330–33*, p. 65; B. Wilkinson, *The chancery under Edward III* (Manchester, 1929), p. 80.

to requisition ships and collect victuals and arms for mariners, duties which came to dominate his career over the next decades. His involvement spanned the Scottish wars of the mid 1330s through to Edward III's first expeditions to France in 1338–40, the Brittany campaign of 1342 and the momentous Crécy expedition of 1346. In 1340 and 1341 he was also involved in organising ships for some 'secret business' conducted by the earl of Warwick and for this purpose he requisitioned ships from the area around the coast of Suffolk and Essex.[94] His most intense involvement in fleet raising duties occurred in 1342–43 during the preparations for the Brittany campaign and the subsequent investigation into the desertion of hundreds of shipmasters from Brest and Vannes in October and November 1342. Consequently, Watenhul accumulated vast experience at arresting small groups of ships and much larger fleets. Although he was closely connected to maritime affairs in Devon, which led to him forming a close relationship with the influential Devonshire shipowner/master William Bacoun, he was also active in south-eastern counties and had in 1336 been on commission to investigate certain issues regarding the Cinque Ports.[95]

Although clerical officers played a large role in the requisition process there were also other officials such as sheriffs involved. Indeed, the contribution of sheriffs should not be underestimated. In some cases before the clerks went to the ports the sheriff provided these administrators with detailed information on the availability of shipping. For example, in 1340 Robert de Causton, sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk, provided the crown with a list of shipowners from those counties and how many ships they could contribute to a fleet. This document contains the names of 155 shipowners who between them could supply 177 vessels.[96] Although sheriffs performed a role in fleet raising it is sometimes difficult to determine what part they played in the actual process of arrest. Besides providing information, like Causton, we also know that in the preparations for the Sluys fleet the sheriffs of the maritime counties participated in arresting ships.[97] However, whether they conducted the day-to-day business of visiting ports and recording the names of the arresting ships is uncertain. Most sheriffs at this time would have been illiterate and would have relied on clerks to record the process and prepare returns for the Exchequer. As such we should perhaps view the sheriff as a type of project manager, an intermediary between the admiral and the clerical officials. Sheriff's would have provided the 'on the

94 E101/22/39.

95 On Watenhull's career, see E101/19/38/; E101/19/39; E101/21/7; E101/22/39/; E101/390/12 fol. 6v; E358/2, mm. 11d, 17; E43/529; E358/4, mm. 1, 11d; E156/28/8; *Rot. Scot*, I, pp. 476, 477; *CCR, 1327–30*, p. 109; *CCR, 1333–37*, pp. 620, 623, 641, 730; *CCR 1341–43*, pp. 127, 356, 688, 690; *CPR, 1334–38*, p. 391; *CPR 1345–48*, p. 284; *CPR 1345–48*, pp. 92, 284. On his involvement with Bacoun, see *CCR 1341–43*, pp. 59, 128. Bacoun was an influential Devonshire shipowner who owned several ships, for example, see E101/24/9 (b).

96 C47/2/32, mm. 1–4.

97 E101/398/8, m. 6.

ground' authority for the clerks to requisition ships, and it would probably have been the sheriffs to whom the clerks reported back.

In carrying out the day-to-day work of ship requisition clerks also worked under the auspices of the admirals. This raises the important question of defining the role the admiral played in raising fleets. It is likely that the admirals headed the requisitioning process whilst playing a limited role in the routine work of visiting ports. They provided signed and sealed arrest warrants to the clerks so they had authority to requisition ships, and they probably provided some form of armed escort to accompany the clerks in their duties.[98] It is important to stress, however, that the admiral represented an authority figure who could ensure that pressure was brought to bear on shipowners who were reluctant to have their vessels arrested. In short, it is probable that the admirals provided the authority and support for the clerks who carried out the actual arrest of ships. Indeed, it was unlikely that admirals would concern themselves with the bureaucratic processes that clerks such as John de Percebrigg undertook in 1335, when he spent over two months visiting thirteen ports in order to requisition ships.[99] More broadly we know that the admiral's direct involvement in maritime affairs increased during the fourteenth century and that the admiral's court extended its areas of influence. This legal aspect of the admiral's role was in many ways analogous to the constables and marshals in the army, and as such issues of misbehaviour at sea dominated the admirals' business in these hearings.[100] Nevertheless, the influence of the admiralty declined in the latter part of the fourteenth century with an increasing number of cases being dealt with by local port courts and the Chancery. It may be that the sharp rise in the legal authority of the admiral in the first half of the fourteenth century was directly related to the increased naval effort in the wars of the three Edwards.[101] Constant requisitioning of merchant vessels was bound to increase problems and perhaps, because of the war effort, the duties of the admirals sharply increased during the years of 1324 to 1350. This being said the role of the admiral in the requisition process was probably more 'hands off' than their duties in the courts.

The accumulation of expertise implicit in the various careers and roles discussed above allowed Edward III to raise huge fleets in the 1330s and 1340s; and as such the success of Edward III's naval policy during these years ulti-

98 The king could and did sometimes bypass the admirals and issue writs directly to the clerks. As such the admiral's role may have been more legal and authoritative rather than a person involved in the day to day business of naval impressments, see G. R. Cushway, 'The lord of the sea', p. 154.

99 E101/19/14.

100 See, R. Ward, *The world of the medieval shipmaster*, Chapter 2.

101 T. J. Runyan, 'The rolls of Oleron and the admiralty court in fourteenth century England', *The American Journal of Legal History*, 19, no. 2 (April, 1975), pp. 95–111, also makes the point that the court may have arisen due to the increased naval activity in the mid-fourteenth century.

mately rested on the skills of these officials. Rather than having the enormous expense of maintaining a standing navy, a task that was beyond the capabilities of a fourteenth-century government, what the English kings opted for was the next best thing, which was a cadre of skilled officials with the collective expertise to raise fleets from private resources.[102] Indeed, although it has been suggested by historians looking back from the vantage point of the Tudor period that in the fourteenth century naval organisation was minimal, it is important to remember that the crown had a large and skilled bureaucratic staff at its disposal.[103] By the 1340s this was fully capable of organising complex naval logistical operations, involving at the extreme fleets of over 700 ships. The evolution of efficient and sophisticated fleet-raising methods by the 1330s and the 1340s invites us to consider the argument that in the late 1360s and early 1370s this system ceased to function as well as it had done.[104] Continuity of personnel provides at least a partial explanation.

We may begin with the highest level of administrators in period of the late 1350s to the early 1370s. It is true that during this time there was an element of stability within the Wardrobe. Nevertheless, this apparent continuity of staff obscures some important details. For example, the campaign of 1359 was beset by administrative difficulties owing to the fact that the keeper of the Wardrobe at the outset of the campaign, Henry Walton, fell ill during his term of office. The result of this was that his successor, William Farley, took up his post during the actual preparations for the campaign. Consequently Farley's accounts were not audited until some years after 1359.[105] Moreover, Farley did not remain in post for long. In 1361 he resigned his office and was subsequently appointed constable of Bordeaux. Indeed, in the period 1359–74 six different incumbents held the post of keeper of the Wardrobe.[106] This does not mean that they were not unfamiliar with the office. Thomas Brantigham (keeper from 1369–74), for example, had

[102] Other clerks who were active in the Scottish wars of Edward II and Edward III, and the later French wars of the 1330s and 1340s were Nicholas Acton and Ambrose Newburgh. On their careers, see *CPR, 1313–17*, pp. 299, 405; *CPR, 1317–21*, pp. 44, 50, 57, 273, 303, 517; *CPR, 1321–24*, pp. 179, 242, 413; *CPR, 1327–30*, pp. 98, 469; *CPR, 1330–34*, p. 321.*Rot. Scot*. I, pp. 260, 364, 379, 403; E101/8/3.

[103] See, for example, D. Loades, *England's maritime empire: seapower, commerce and policy, 1490–1690* (Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 3–7, in which he argues that medieval naval infrastructure was minimal.

[104] See, for example, J. Sumption, *Divided houses: the hundred years war III* (London, 2009). Sumption makes the point throughout his book that in the 1370s English maritime organisation suffered from inconsistencies and failed in many regards to provide a sufficient number of ships for the transportation of armies.

[105] See Tout, *Chapters*, III, pp. 225–33, 451; Tout, *Chapters*, IV, pp. 143–47, 153, 348; Tout, *Chapters*, VI, pp. 136–37; T. F. Tout, 'The chief officers of the king's wardrobe down to 1399', *EHR* 95 (1909), pp. 496–505.

[106] *Ibid*.

been paymaster and treasurer of the army in 1359.[107] Nevertheless, there was not the same level of cohesion of experiences that was maintained in the period 1338 to 1347.

Further down the hierarchy, amongst those who carried out the crucial work of arrest, there is greater discontinuity between the intensive mid-century phase of activity and the efforts of Edward III's twilight years. The officials responsible for arresting ships in 1359 were Robert Crull, Thomas Durant, Thomas Dautre, Walter Harewell, Michael Grendon, Richard Cotenhale, William atte Wode, John Ellerton and John Mayn.[108] Of these men four had previous experience at arresting ships. However, apart from Walter Harewell, this experience was limited to requisitioning only single ships or small groups of vessels.[109] Others admittedly had direct military experience. For example, John Ellerton led a retinue to France in 1359 and William atte Wode served in the retinue of John Beauchamp in the Reims expedition.[110] In addition Thomas Durant had organised a victual operation for the Black Prince in 1357.[111] None of these men were unfamiliar with the organisation of war, but only three of the 1359 'team' were involved in ship requisition in the period 1369–77 and of these only Crull played any significant role.[112] One other important point to note is that the appointment of men like Ellerton, Dautre, Grendon, Mayn and Durant to arrest ships appears to have been a marked departure from the previous methods employed to assemble fleets. All these men were in fact sergeants-at-arms.[113] In the earlier period it was clerks, supported by sergeants-at-arms, who organised fleets. The removal of clerical officials from the logistical operations of 1359 seems to have had an adverse effect on the efficiency of ship requisition. This is not to say that clerks did not continue to play a role in fleet raising in the 1370s. Where the change seems to have occurred, however, is in the relative experience of these

[107] Tout, *Chapters*, III, p. 225.

[108] *Foedera*, III, i, pp. 427–28.

[109] The men were Thomas Dautre, Thomas Durant, Walter Harewell and John Ellerton. Harewell had been involved in the requisition process for the 1342 Brittany campaign and the 1346 Crécy campaign. Dautre had a colourful career and seems closely connected to John Beauchamp and as such he was stationed at Calais during the mid 1350s. He was also involved in several territorial disputes in Yorkshire in the early 1370s. He had on one occasion arranged for supplies to be freighted from Newcastle to Calais, so he was not unfamiliar with merchants. Further, he arranged for the shipment of horses over to Calais to give as a gift to the Lord of Milan. See SC8/41/2049; E43/209; E101/396/3; E101/390/12; E156/28/8; *CPR, 1354–58*, pp. 67, 225, 395, 450, 454, 500–01; *CCR, 1354–60*, p. 257.

[110] *CPR, 1358–61*, pp. 388, 394.

[111] *Ibid.*

[112] The others were Walter Harewell and Thomas Dautre who arrested ships in the 1370s. Robert Crull was clerk of the king's ships throughout this period and organised the maritime dimension of the campaign to reinforce the Black Prince in 1367. See *Foedera*, III, ii, pp. 871, 885; *CPR, 1370–74*, p. 494; Tout, *Chapters*, IV, p. 348.

[113] *CPR, 1354–58*, pp. 67, 94, 225, 322, 395, 444, 450, 454; *CPR, 1358–61*, pp. 133, 272.

men in the organisation of maritime operations. None of the 1370s officials (apart from those responsible for the king's ships) had sustained and continuous involvement in ship requisition comparable to the officials of the 1330s and 1340s. Much of this arose because of the Treaty of Brétigny in 1360, since when, for almost a decade, large fleets were not raised.[114] This meant that the clerks who took office in the early 1360s were ten years into their careers when hostilities with France began again in the early 1370s, as such they lacked the opportunities to build up substantial experiences of fleet raising.

This point can be illustrated by looking back at the careers of John Watenhul and James Kingston. Not only were these men involved in ship requisition over a sustained period, but these officials were also from maritime towns or counties. Kingston was from Hull and very likely familiar with the business of shipping. Watenhul was from the important maritime county of Devon and formed close associations with Devonshire shipowners. The contrast between this representative pair and the sergeants-at-arms who requisitioned vessels in 1359 is startling. These officials had little or no connection to the sea. Rather they were part of the landed military elite. This is not a novel statement and it has been remarked before that earlier in Edward III's reign clerical officials, rather than members of the gentry, fulfilled the most important role in fleet impressments.[115] However, the comparison between those involved in the earlier decades of the 1330s and 1340s with those of the later period certainly suggests that a change took place during and after 1359. The differing experiences of fleet raising before and after 1359 lends weight to the importance of the officials who organised these logistical operations.

In broad terms we have described a three-tier organisational system that operated in various forms. At the top of this pyramid sat the admirals who reacted to requisition orders issued from the centre of government. At this point the admiral either appointed clerks to arrest ships or asked the sheriff to organise the process. In the latter case the sheriff would then have to appoint the clerical officials himself. Alternatively the crown could go straight to the sheriff and sidestep the admiral, although it must be stressed that only in 1340 does this seem to have been the case. This may have been done because of the urgent need for ships in preparation for the Sluys campaign, as such valuable time was saved by authorising the sheriffs to arrest ships without waiting for the admiral to send out the same orders. Alternatively the crown could appoint clerks direct from the Chancery or Exchequer to arrest vessels without the need to involve either the sheriff or the admiral. This being said at some stage in the requisition procedure, particularly when large fleets were organised, it is likely that all three of

[114] Fleets to Gascony were still organised but these were not of the same magnitude as those of the 1340s and 1350s.

[115] G. R. Cushway, 'The lord of the sea', p. 157 and R. A. Kaner, 'The management of the mobilisation of English armies'; both comment on the role played by clerks in the requisition process.

the above officers of the crown were involved. Thus each official had a specific role and responsibilities and it was an efficient way of managing the complex preparations of fleet organisation.

Process of Requisition

The foregoing analysis has shown the types of requisition orders that were issued, what kind of ships were arrested in preparation for an expedition and how the continuity in administrative personnel from the reign of Edward II to Edward III created a cadre of experienced officials that allowed English military ventures to the continent to increase in scale and scope. We now examine the inner workings of the arrest procedure. The general outline of the requisitioning process is easy to reconstruct. Before a campaign was due to begin an order to arrest shipping would be sent out from the king.[116] After receiving these initial orders, teams of clerks, usually accompanied by sergeants-at-arms, would go to selected ports and arrest merchant vessels.[117] Normally, each team would be given a prescribed geographical area to cover. For example, before the 1335 Scottish campaign John de Briggewater was appointed to arrest ships in Dartmouth, while John de Percebrigg operated in the area to the west of the Thames.[118] By examining Percebrigg's account we can see that he spent from 6 January to 4 March 1335 visiting thirteen ports, usually staying at each one for two days, for which he claimed £14 17s in expenses.[119] The time that he stayed at each port is important. It shows that ships were not invariably arrested and forced to remain in port until the departure of the fleet; though this did happen on occasion, as in 1342 and 1386, it was the exception rather than the rule.[120] More commonly

116 For example, *CCR, 1333–37*, pp. 397–98, and *Rot. Scot.* I, pp. 505–06, 309, 311–12.

117 On the role of the sergeants in this process, see R. Partington, 'Edward III's enforcers: the king's sergeants-at-arms in the localities', in *The age of Edward III*, ed. J. Bothwell (York, 2000), pp. 89–106 especially p. 97. But also, see R. M. Hedley, 'The administration of the navy in the reign of Edward III', pp. 60–62.

118 John de Briggewater was a Chancery clerk, comptroller of wool in Somerset and Dorset and keeper of the hospital of St Mary Magdalene outside Southampton and as such was closely connected to maritime counties; see SC8/306/15270; SC8/196/9754; *CPR, 1338–40*, p. 360.

119 E101/19/4.

120 On the Brittany campaign and its problems, see C. L. Lambert, 'An army transport fleet', and Chapter 4 below. On 1386, see E101/40/12. That ships were not forced to stay in port is also evidenced by the list of over 300 ships that refused to serve in the period 1337–40. Given that these ships were allowed to leave port and did not return to the mustering port one must presume that they were free to leave the port once they had been requisitioned. For the list of over 300 vessels, see C47/2/30. If, for example, the land forces were slow to muster, ships could be held up at the port of disembarkation for some time but this was in many respects not the fault of the maritime requisition procedure. Indeed, the maritime component was but one part of a larger logistical operation.

ships were arrested, details of the master and owner were recorded, the crew issued with an advance on their wages and the vessel allowed to complete its business. This was a system built on trust. Its success relied on the fact that some weeks, or even months later, the ships would appear at their ports of embarkation to perform their duty. That they did so regularly and in such large numbers says something about the power of the crown during this period. In many cases clerks or admirals would also have the power to 'elect' mariners to serve on the arrested ships. In 1336 Geoffrey de Say was given powers to impress seamen, as was Thomas Ughtred in the same year.[121] Once arrested the ships were ordered to arrive at the port of embarkation on a specified date to load up with men, horses and equipment, and after loading the ships transported their cargoes to the theatre of war, disembarked, returned to their home ports and were finally paid off and recorded in a payroll.

This description of ship requisition is the accepted version of the procedure, and as was noted this has been described as a 'simple' operation.[122] Yet this brief description of the requisition process ignores the immense organisational skill required to fulfil the crown's demands.[123] For instance, at Portsmouth in October 1342 there were 487 ships waiting to transport the king and his army to Brittany and in 1346 there are likely to have been over 700 waiting for the Crécy army.[124] The sheer size of these fleets and the difficulties of locating individual ships must have created problems for the clerks. Consequently, there must have been a system in operation that allowed requisition officials to accurately record the complete service of the ships. Beyond the bureaucratic process employed by the clerks before a fleet could be raised the crown needed an idea as to the current availability of shipping. To this end, before the administrative phase began a series of consultations were organised between crown officials and local port men, county jurymen and local councils. In addition, sheriffs could undertake a 'census' to discover the availability of ships, as Robert Causton did in 1340.[125]

Once these consultations were concluded the bureaucratic stage of the requisition process could be started. The procedure would have involved three distinct phases with each phase being used to simplify the documentation and make it easier for the clerks to compile those tidy final accounts. First, the ships were arrested in their home ports, or the port they were visiting, and it was here that the first record of their names would have been taken. The second phase of the process occurred when the ships arrived at the port of embarkation. At this stage a second muster would take place which involved ticking off from the first

[121] *Rot. Scot.* I, pp. 404, 416.

[122] See, for example, C. Allmand, *The hundred years war*, p. 88.

[123] One recent commentator on the impressments of merchant ships has described the system as 'a relatively straightforward procedure; it was simple and efficient'. See P. Reid, *By fire and sword: the rise and fall of English supremacy at arms, 1314–1485* (London, 2007), p. 79.

[124] C. Lambert, 'An army transport fleet', p. 83, and Chapter 3 below.

[125] See, for example, G. R. Cushway, 'Lord of the sea', pp. 158–59.

document the names of the masters who had appeared. This would have been necessary as for a variety of reasons not all the ships arrested would make it to the muster.[126] Similarly, another check would take place at the disembarkation point. At this stage a new document would be compiled in the form of a list of ships that had honoured their arrest orders. The second phase would therefore provide the start and completion dates of a particular ship's service. The last phase of the procedure involved transferring the information gathered during the two previous stages, now conveniently in one long ship list, into the final payrolls with the service dates and pay details of the ships' crew. Only when the third stage was completed could the clerks submit the final documentation to the Exchequer. The task now is to chart this process, using surviving documents, thereby linking these three distinct phases together.

By examining an Exchequer account of unknown date we can see the first of the three requisition stages.[127] The date of the document is problematic because the description of who compiled the account and when they did so is largely missing.[128] Although an exact date is difficult to establish, that is less important than the fact that it corresponds well to the first of the three stages outlined above. For example, it contains the name of the port in which the arrest took place, the name of the ship, and crucially, its tunnage. This last point is important because the initial arrest order usually stipulated that ships of only forty tuns

[126] For example, such a problem blighted Sir Walter de Mauny on two occasions. During the period 1337–40, 311 ships refused to go on the king's service under Walter, and later, during the preparations for the 1342 Brittany campaign, his passage was also delayed because some of the ships which were part of his transport fleet failed to appear at the port of embarkation. See C47/2/30, mm.1–2 and 1d, 2d. For the Brittany fleet, see C. L. Lambert, 'An army transport fleet', p. 52.

[127] E101/17/35.

[128] The handwriting of the source suggests that it is from the latter part of the reign of Edward II or the early years of Edward III's reign. In addition, when we compare the account to the 1322 Wardrobe payroll, none of the ships from the account appear in the *vadia nautarum*. Nor are they included in Richard Ferriby's Wardrobe accounts of 1334–36. Further, when they are compared to another account that consists of ships from the southwest ports (E101/19/26, mm. 3–4) none of the ships can be located in that document either. One of the ships, however, is listed in a payroll relating to the St Sardos campaign. The ship and master appear in the particulars of Walter de Oterhampton, receiver of ships and victuals at Portsmouth (E101/17/3). The ship is the *Godyer* of Teignmouth, commanded by William Kayn (*ibid*., m. 6d). In Oterhampton's account the detail on the ship is of course more comprehensive and we are told that it had a crew of one constable, twenty-seven mariners and served for fifty-four days at a cost of £17 11s. But this is the only ship out of the undated document that is visible in any account relating to royal campaigns of the early 1320s. These comparisons suggest the list is connected with neither the 1322 campaign nor the St Sardos expedition, and will it be taken to represent a list of arrested ships in the late 1327. Because of the lack of Wardrobe documentation relating to the 1327 Weardale campaign difficulties are encountered when trying to compare sources. On the reasons for the lack of evidence, see N. B. Lewis, 'The summons of the English feudal levy: 5 April 1327', in *Essays in medieval history presented to Bertie Wilkinson*, ed. T. A. Sandquist and M. R. Powicke (Toronto, 1969), pp. 236–49.

burthen and above should be requisitioned. The master is also recorded, and importantly, the mainpernor or guarantor. This is another feature of the document that points to it being part of the first phase of the process of requisition. It seems probable that at this stage the shipmaster was given the 'king's shilling'. This is similar to the way in which retinue captains received advance payments before their service.[129] Having received such a payment the master could issue himself and his crew their first instalment of wages, thus increasing the chances that they would honour their arrest orders and appear at the port of embarkation. But, just in case, a mainpernor was recorded who was in effect guaranteeing that the ships would turn up at the muster port. This had a twofold purpose. First, the mainpernor would be a locally influential person whose authority the shipmasters would not wish to question; perhaps they were shipowners. Secondly, if the ship failed to appear the crown could redeem its initial payment.

The document, therefore, fills all the criteria for the first stage of the requisition process: port name, ship name, tunnage, master's name and a mainpernor. The format of the individual lines in the document is: '*navis que dictus Godyer de C dolia un magister William Kayn per manus Henry Cornwall*'. In another Chancery Miscellanea document, it is possible to see the process of money recovery from shipowners and mainpernors who had guaranteed that vessels would appear at the port of embarkation. It lists the names of over three hundred ships which refused to go on service with Walter Mauny during the Low Countries campaigns of 1337–40.[130] In some cases the name of the owner of the vessel, as well as that of the master, is recorded and in other cases the name of the mainpernor is listed with the ship and master. For example, one ship from Whitby, simply described as *Une Nief* and commanded by William Page, also has the name of the mainpernor, Thomas Complin, listed next to him. Under the port of Hull, the ship *Mighel* is described as being commanded by William de Wende

[129] See A. Ayton, *Knights and warhorses*, pp. 141–42. This '*prest*' payment would usually be the first quarter payment. Indeed, in June 1336 the ships arrested for service in North Wales refused to set out until they had been prepaid their wages and the king ordered the earl of Arundel to pay the ships' crews a reward. See *Foedera*, II, ii, p. 941. In addition, Bartholomew Garlek, mariner, was placed under arrest in July 1339 for taking his wages but failing to turn up at the port of embarkation, and as a punishment he was released to work in the Tower of London (*CCR, 1339–41*, p. 246). Furthermore, certain mariners operating ships of Bayonne were paid their wages prior to the Crécy campaign, and again there were problems as some of them failed to appear at the embarkation point (*CPR, 1345–48*, p. 109). The arrangements for the St Sardos campaign involved the royal clerks producing a note of the ships' names, home ports and crew sizes so as to receive their first quarter wages: see R. A. Kaner, 'The management of the mobilisation of English armies', p. 85. And in 1360 Matthew Torkeseye issued a *prest* payment of 60s to the crew of the *Newseintemarye* for their wages (E101/27/16).

[130] C47/2/30, mm. 1–2, 1d-2d. Mauny was involved in maritime affairs because he launched an attack on the island of Cadzand in 1337. In 1338 he was appointed admiral of northern fleet. For his appointment as admiral, see *CPR, 1338–40*, p. 70. For Mauny's attack on Cadzand, see *Chroniques de Froissart*, ed. S. Luce (Paris, 1869), vol. 1, pp. 213–14.

but being owned (*seignior*) by Michael Tinnok.[131] This list of defaulters was probably drawn up on Mauny's authority to facilitate the recovery of prepaid wages from the owners and mainpernors of these vessels. It also provides a definitive list of the masters, who would no doubt be apprehended on their return to port.

The original arrest list played an important part in the second phase of the requisition process and these documents would be taken to the embarkation port and the ships would be 'ticked off' by the clerks.[132] Those vessels from the stage-one ship list that appeared would then be recorded on another much longer roll. It would be longer because this second stage ship list would include all the vessels arrested from every port. This list would therefore combine the details of dozens of individual arrest lists compiled at the start of the requisition process (like those discussed above) into one more manageable document. The simplest way to compile such records would be to expect that on arrival each master would appear before the clerks and state his name and that of his ship. He would then be located on the first list and ticked off so as to be recorded on the second. This verification process would also provide the start date for the crew's service.[133] This procedure would be repeated at the port of disembarkation, thus providing a finish date for the ship's service. A third stage ship list would then be written up.[134]

The question to be answered at this point is can we find a document that links the first phase of the requisition process to the second? Careful scrutiny of surviving ship lists reveals two good candidates. Both are to be found in the

[131] C47/2/30, m 1.

[132] In fact the requisition of ships in this period would have generated a mass of supporting documentary evidence, which would have been discarded after the final payrolls had been compiled because it no longer served a purpose. However, these documents could prove to be useful in cases where there was a failure by shipmasters to turn up at embarkation or after they had deserted during a campaign. These early lists could therefore be used as identification markers to facilitate the punishment of offenders. It was from such early documentation within the requisition process that Walter Mauny would have identified the hundreds of ships that failed to appear between 1337 and 1340; and presumably William Edington also used such early documentation in 1342 to identify and punish the deserters during the 1342 Brittany campaign. See C47/2/30; *CCR, 1343–46*, pp. 128–32. In effect what we are seeing in the surviving sources is only a fraction of what was compiled when ships were requisitioned for service. See M. T. Clanchy, *From memory to written record* (London, 1979), Chapter 2, which gives a lucid description of the proliferation of records that could result from just one order issued from the centre of government.

[133] Although at first glance this procedure seems open to fraud it is in fact quite the opposite. For if a master was to appear at the embarkation billet and claim he was about to transport troops over to the continent, with the avowed purpose of claiming wages for doing nothing, he would also have to be ticked off at the disembarkation point, which means that he would have to sail to France anyway.

[134] The task of unloading the men, horses and supplies at the point of disembarkation was likely to have been an ordered process with the ships unloading in small groups throughout the day. This would, therefore, make the task of recording the ships and masters' names much easier.

Chancery Miscellanea bundles.[135] One of them is a list of shipmasters who were to receive payment for transporting the king and Walter de Mauny to Brittany in October 1342.[136] This document records the names of 330 ships and masters. The ships are grouped in ports but the port names are not used as subheadings; they simply follow the names of the ship and master. The document records no pay details at all, which may appear curious, because it was William Edington, treasurer of the Wardrobe, who compiled the roll. The explanation is however quite straightforward. This second stage ship roll had been compiled from the original first-stage requisition lists, and the records taken of the ships at the point of disembarkation that had completed their required service.[137] This second-stage ship list has kept the original ports and the vessels from them grouped together because it has been compiled from the original arrest lists, which record ships according to ports. But there are no dates of service or pay details recorded because these are only included in the final payroll, compiled from the second-phase ship list. If we compare the second-stage ship roll to Edington's final *vadia marinariorum* accounts the order of the ports and ships is more or less the same. In addition, the same anomalies appear in both the second-stage list and the final Wardrobe book. Henry Goldeneye, master of the *Godyer* of Rye, is repeated twice in both documents.[138] This suggests that the second-stage ship roll and the Wardrobe accounts are related to each other with one being used to compile the other. Alternatively, there are also differences between them. Eighteen ships from Dover in the *vadia marinariorum* are listed as coming from Sandwich on the Chancery Miscellanea roll.[139] However, this difference can be explained by re-examining the document from the first phase of the arrest process. For instance, under the port heading of Teignmouth, two ships are recorded which are not from that port. One is from Drogheda and the other from Lyme Regis.[140] These ships would seem to have been arrested whilst trading at Teignmouth. This could create confusion when this first stage document was used as the template for the second- and third-phaserecords. Thus, those eighteen ships from Dover had probably been arrested at Sandwich and

[135] C47/2/25, no. 15; C47/2/35.

[136] C47/2/35.

[137] The Chancery Miscellanea list was certainly compiled before the Wardrobe accounts were drawn up. A comparison between the two documents shows this. For example, when the Chancery list is compared with the Wardrobe accounts forty-eight ships are absent from the Chancery roll. When these are compared to the 230 ships that deserted the king outside of Brest and Vannes we find that only six are listed as deserter ships, which means that the majority of the ships cannot have been docked pay as a result of their actions. The fact that there are forty-eight more ships in the Wardrobe accounts means that these vessels must have been added to the final accounts after the Chancery roll had been written up.

[138] E36/204, p. 229; C47/2/35, m. 2.

[139] E36/204, p. 225; C47/2/35, m. 2.

[140] E101/17/35. See also Chapter 4, pp. 174–83 below for a more detailed analysis of how the trading patterns of ships could complicate the requisition process.

recorded as such on the first stage roll. Because the second stage ship list is formed by ticking off from the first-stage roll, the mistake had made its way into every stage of the process, except the final payroll, which had to be sent to the Exchequer for audit and would usually be accompanied by supporting documentation compiled throughout the requisition process. It is likely that at some point this supporting documentation had illuminated errors in the original first-stage ship lists, which were then rectified on the final payroll. Similarly, tunnage figures of ships could make their way into the final accounts simply because they were recorded at every stage of the process. So, for example, the payroll that records the ships that transported the Black Prince to Gascony in the 1360s has a record of each individual ship's tunnage.[141]

The final stage of the process was for the clerks to compile the payroll, which would then be submitted to the Exchequer for audit. By using the first stage ship lists as the basis for the second stage roll, which now recorded the vessels that had actually embarked and disembarked the troops, they would have simplified their task of compiling the final pay accounts. At this point the clerks would have a start date and an end date for each ship, as well as an accurate list of those ships that had completed their service. At the end of the second stage the first phase lists of arrested vessels would be relegated to a secondary purpose and the clerks would retire to their offices to compile the payroll from the second-stage ship lists. This is not to say that other documentation would not play its part. For example, the Brittany second stage roll does not contain all the vessels that are recorded in the final Wardrobe accounts: and forty-eight ships' crews are recorded wages in the Wardrobe book that are not enrolled on the second stage list. But throughout such a complicated and large-scale process other rolls would have been generated which obviously included the extra ships added to the final wage accounts. Indeed, during the requisition process for the 1338 Low Countries campaign several sets of particulars were compiled concurrently with the Wardrobe accounts.[142] In fact, Norwell used them to compile his final records, but he simplified the information that they contained when he incorporated the ships recorded on them into his Wardrobe accounts. For example, John Watenhul compiled one of these related Exchequer particulars for the ships gathered at Sandwich.[143] The account records the wages paid to 130 ships from thirty-five ports, and it includes the exact dates of service. Yet when these vessels appear in the Wardrobe records Norwell only provides the number of days each ship served.

[141] E101/29/1. In the preparations for the 1338 Flanders campaign several Exchequer documents were drawn up concurrently with the Wardrobe accounts, while the former records the tunnages of the vessels the latter does not, see E101/21/10; E101/21/12. Tunnages were recorded more regularly in the 1380s because of the system of tuntight. This was when shipowners received 3s 4d per tun for every quarter year served.

[142] E101/21/7; E101/21/10; E101/21/12; E101/21/21.

[143] E101/21/7, mm. 2–3.

The discussion above has shown the complex bureaucratic process that underpinned the raising of a supply or transport fleet. What we now turn to is an examination of this process in action so we can fully appreciate its sophistication. In order to do this the maritime logistical preparations for the 1346 expedition will be investigated because it was during this campaign that the procedure arguably reached its apogee.

England's maritime resources were undoubtedly at their greatest stretch and made their largest contribution to Edward III's wars during the Crécy/Calais expeditions of 1346–47. That the 1346 invasion was achieved at all highlights the robustness of the system by this stage in Edward III's wars. Suggestions that the English merchant fleet could not produce armadas of the magnitude fielded in 1346 are wide of the mark, and as the evidence in Tables 3.3 and 4.1 shows, Edward had large reserves of ships and seafarers to call upon.[144] The main issue was not so much the absolute number of ships available as the capacity to requisition and dispatch them, in good order, to an embarkation port with sufficient speed so as not to disrupt the timetable for the planned campaign. This managerial and organisational problem dogged Edward's preparations in the build-up to the 1346 expedition. In the face of it he raised his largest ever transport fleet over a period of several months between the autumn of 1345 and the spring of 1346, a period during which storms lashed the English coast and further altered his plans. His officials, now experts in ship requisition, managed to make ready a substantial fleet by June 1346.

The Crécy transport fleet marks a dramatic departure in size and scale compared to the previous continental ventures of Edward III. Although the 1346 transport armada was only 100 or so ships larger than the Brittany fleet of 1342–43 there was a major organisational difference between the two expeditions. Whereas in 1346 a single fleet was divided between two ports ready to transport the largest army of the reign, the Brittany campaign occurred over a year and involved three quite separate transport flotillas. The earlier expeditions to the Low Countries in 1338–40 were also formed into two fleets, requiring the mobilisation of armadas of up to 400 ships at a time. By comparison in 1346 a further 350 vessels were arrested. That the admirals and their staff achieved

[144] J. Sumption, *Trial by battle*, p. 492, who when commenting on the fleet of 1346 states that 'to transport in one crossing the enlarged army that was now envisaged would have at least required 1,500 ships, which was probably more than the entire English merchant marine could furnish'. Also, see J. S. Kepler, 'The effects of the battle of Sluys', p. 77, who stated that the Crécy fleet would 'denude the entire country of shipping'. In fact Kepler seriously underestimates the size of the English merchant marine and he also argues that acts of piracy committed by a handful of vessels could hamper the crown when it was raising a fleet because these vessels were at sea and not in their home ports waiting requisition (*ibid.*, p. 73). This statement is based on the assumption that if sixty or so vessels were at sea Edward would struggle to locate more ships. These two accounts greatly underestimate the size of the English merchant marine.

this shows how ship requisition had evolved under Edward III into an effective system.[145]

The book of foreign receipts compiled by Walter Wetwang shows how the admirals and their staff went about the work of raising the largest single transport fleet of the fourteenth century. The whole coast of England was divided into small units. There were still two admiralties but these were further subdivided and formed into distinct areas. Although the admirals still held overall authority within their administrative areas, the sub-divisions within the admiralties allowed the clerks to be more efficient when it came to finding and requisitioning ships. Thus, the new zones of requisition did not respect the normal divide between those ports north of the Thames and those south and west of the Thames. The result of this was that some sections of the coast were divided into three geographical areas. One zone was to cover the ports between King's Lynn and Berwick, one involved the ports situated in London, Kent and Sussex, while the third encompassed those ports between London and Lyme Regis. The vessels arrested in these last two 'zones' would normally be requisitioned among the ships prepared by the southern admiral and although he seems to have retained overall administrative authority he was freed from searching these three areas.[146] This short analysis of the 1346 expedition highlights how advanced the mobilisation of maritime resources for military campaigns had become by 1346. As noted the fact that over 700 vessels were eventually assembled for the Crécy expedition owes much to the cumulative experiences of the clerical officials who organised these logistical enterprises.

So far this chapter has explored the processes and some of the bureaucratic workings involved in raising a fleet. This procedure had developed over several decades into an efficient system, which under Edward III was in continuous use for the greatest part of his reign.[147] The historiography of requisition is right to suggest that individual teams of clerks were sent to ports to arrest ships of a certain size, which were then sent to the ports of embarkation and loaded with men, equipment and horses for transportation to a theatre of war. Yet the

[145] Although the gathering ships were organised to be in two ports during 1346 this was probably more to do with the available harbour facilities rather than the division of the process into two individual parts. There would have been major logistical problems, if 747 vessels had been holed up in one port; however, it is certainly true that this number of ships formed one large fleet in the vicinity of the Isle of Wight in July.

[146] C76/23, mm. 20–21; *Foedera*, III, i, p. 66; E101/390/12, fols 3r, 3v, 7r, 7v, 8r; E403/366, mm. 42–44. These arrangements were not entirely novel by 1346 and in the early years of Edawrd III's reign the coast had been divided into small 'zones' so as to make the work of the officials much easier. For example, in order to requisition a fleet in 1336 the coastline was separated into five areas, see for example, G. R. Cushway, 'The lord of the sea', pp. 155–57.

[147] C. Lloyd, *The British seaman: a social survey, 1200–1860* (London, 1968), p. 16, states that there was no 'continuity in medieval naval history, no administrative structure and no consistency in policy'. This suggestion is not supported by the evidence. Indeed, there was great continuity in the administrative staff who organised the logistical operations.

mechanics of this procedure and the labour involved in recording the ships' service through three distinct phases has not been appreciated. Each phase produced a ship list that simplified the procedure and made compiling the final payroll much easier. Without such an efficient operation manned by experienced and capable clerks the king would not have been able to realise, or attempt to realise, his ambitions abroad.

This is not to say that this process always operated smoothly and the kings of the period experienced timetable problems when attempting to assemble transport flotillas. Causes of disruption included the refusal of mariners to serve and objections raised by the ports themselves. Preparations for the 1324 St Sardos transport fleet highlight some of these difficulties. For example, the armada of September 1324 was originally set to leave in June of that year. One reason for this delay was the refusal, in June, of shipmasters from Devon, Somerset and Dorset to allow their vessels to be requisitioned.[148]

Furthermore, although in 1324 some of the ships were at the port of embarkation from June onwards, their crews were engaged piecemeal from mid-July to October. Gilbert Saundre, master of the *Godyer* of Dartmouth, was paid wages for himself, one constable and twenty-eight mariners from 12 July to 11 October 1324, while a further six mariners only served from 1 August to 11 October, and eight took wages for no more than 13 days in October. Moreover, Lawrence atte Lane, master of the *Richgayne* of Weymouth, was paid wages for himself and twenty-eight mariners for 92 days; yet from 31 August to 11 October 1324, seven further mariners were admitted to the crew '*pro dupplici eskipammento*'.[149] The evidence shows, therefore, that while the ships waited at the embarkation port for troops to arrive a constant flow of extra seamen were admitted to the ships. This also means that the mariners who joined the waiting ships were not recruited from the vessels' home ports. Indeed, because admirals sometimes worked alongside commissioners of array it is likely that some of the manpower utilised on board the ships was raised from counties with no coastline.[150] But due to the manpower shortages only two-thirds of the ships were sufficiently well manned to enable them to go on active service by July 1324.

*

The analysis above has outlined the procedures used by the crown to raise a fleet and leads us to the conclusion that there were clear efficiency gains by the

148 *CCR, 1323–27*, p. 194.

149 BL, Add MS 7967, fols 94r–98r.

150 On the admirals working alongside the commissions of array, see R. M. Hedley, 'The administration of the navy', pp. 20–33. It was not an urgent requirement that all the men on board a ship should be experienced seamen. As long as there was a master who could navigate and a few other experienced mariners, the rest of the crew were there simply for the muscle power needed to operate a ship. A vessel with only a single mast would require only a small number of experienced men to direct the others on how to operate it.

mid-1340s. Yet, a full understanding of fleet raising is beset with interpretational difficulties, especially with regard to those transport fleets for which we have no surviving documentation. Substantial fleets for France were raised in 1345, 1350, 1355 and 1359, and none has a full set of surviving payrolls relating to mariner service.[151] How can we explain this apparent lacuna in the accounting procedures?

One immediate obvious point of similarity between the 'missing' fleets of the 1340s and 1350s is that they occurred when there were multiple armadas in preparation for the king and his lieutenants. This was a strategy Edward repeatedly employed after the initial Low Countries campaigns, as it stretched French forces and diluted their combat strength at any single point. From a cursory review of the evidence, it seems that when the crown was organising a multi-front assault on France the fleets used directly by the king were subject to different payment procedures from those of the lieutenants sailing at the same time. In 1345 while Edward crossed to the Low Countries, Henry of Grosmont sailed for Gascony. Henry's fleet is fully recorded and paid for in the usual manner yet the king's is not.[152] It was the same in 1355, when the king and Lancaster sailed to northern France and the Black Prince sailed to Gascony.[153] The last mentioned fleet is recorded in the payrolls. This seems to suggest that when there was a need to deploy multiple fleets the arrangement for the payment of the transportation for part of the forces under king was carried out in a different manner from the normal procedure. For example, it is known that in 1359 one fleet out of the six that sailed was paid for by means of private enterprise.[154] On this occasion the retinue captains were given cash payments by the crown with which they hired their own ships for the campaign. It is likely that the new advance payments, such as *regard*, were intended, in part, to cover the costs of hiring ships for their transportation [i.e. the advance payments now included a portion of *regard*].[155] This eased the pressure off the crown by passing the burden of ship provision

[151] Although the fleet of 1345 may have been recorded in the lost Wardrobe accounts of Walter Wetwang the payments that the latter lists in his book of foreign receipts (E101/390/12) are too small to cover the fleet of 1345.

[152] Lancaster's fleet is enrolled on E101/25/9.

[153] The Prince's fleet payrolls are recorded on E101/26/36; E101/26/37; E101/26/38. The payments issued to mariners enrolled on the Issue Rolls (E403/377, mm. 18, 24) probably relate to the first instalments of wages given over to those seamen involved in transporting the troops raised through commissions of array or those retune captains who still had shipping provided for them, as some did in 1359, who formed part of the king's 1355 expedition. It has previously thought that there were three fleets, which all sailed in 1355 commanded by the king, the prince and Lancaster, however, C. J. Rogers, *War cruel and sharp*, p. 293, n. 38 has convincingly argued that Lancaster was actually part of the king's flotilla of that year. So in 1355 there were two fleets and not three.

[154] See A. Ayton, *Knights and warhorses*, appendix 2, pp. 265–71.

[155] On *regard*, see *ibid*., pp. 110–14. It is interesting to note that introduction of *regard* in 1345 coincides exactly with the new fleet-raising procedures, which were adopted after the 1342 Brittany expedition. This is dealt with more thoroughly in Chapter 4 below.

directly on to the serving captains. This system seems to have been in place before the 1359 campaign, as evidenced by the missing payrolls for the royal fleets of 1345 and 1355.

The adoption of this policy can be traced back to the Brittany campaign of 1342. The importance of this particular expedition stems from the fact that it was the first time Edward made war in France relying solely on English and Welsh manpower.[156] In the 1338–40 Low Countries campaigns, Edward's allies controlled large and busy ports in which ships could be docked, hired and organised with ease. In addition, the distance from England to these ports was relatively short and Edward had the luxury of having a safe harbour for disembarkation and territory in which to reside throughout the duration of the campaign. Therefore, the Brittany expedition created different problems for Edward when it came to deploying a fleet, and seems to have been the starting point when Edward and his advisors decided to alter the requisition procedure they had used hitherto for continental campaigns.

By analysing 1342 more closely we can see that during this expedition the crown attempted to operate a new system. The army transport fleets for the Brittany campaign sailed in three separate flotillas over an eight-month period. The first to take ship was the force commanded by Walter Mauny that landed in Brest in late March.[157] The earl of Northampton followed in August and finally the king sailed in October. The Brittany campaign is problematic because it is not known whether it was the original intention of the king to sail in one force or to spread the invasion out over three separate campaigns. However, it seems likely that the expedition unfolded as it did because several events conspired to affect the originally intended strategy. One of these was related to the administrative problems this expedition created. Another issue was the incursion of the Scots into northern England while the campaign was being planned. This diverted the king away from his continental project. A third issue related to the increasingly perilous situation in which the Montfortists found themselves by the spring of 1342. This required immediate support from England. Thus, Mauny was sent ahead with as large a force as he could transport in the available ships. After Mauny's truce had ended Charles de Blois again forced the Montfort supporters onto the defensive and it became necessary to send Northampton to their aid. Northampton's fleet had been under requisition for some time while the king waited for more ships to arrive at the embarkation port to take a much larger force, but desperate needs meant desperate measures: Northampton was sent on ahead with all the ships available at the time. These vessels were supposed to return to transport the king yet the sources reveal that at least thirty-one ships did not.[158] Therefore, the king's fleet was further delayed for want of available

156 For a more detailed account of the Brittany fleets and their problems, see C. Lambert, 'An army transport fleet', pp. 7–13.

157 C76/17, m. 44.

158 *CCR, 1341–43*, pp. 621, 651–52, 664, 688, 697–98.

shipping.[159] In addition, the king's personal campaign was disrupted when 230 ships failed to stay on active service throughout the campaign.[160] What seems to have occurred over 1342 is that because the planned fleet was large the king initiated a ferry fleet system that was organised through the Wardrobe, which in turn was disrupted by, amongst other things, the external factors noted above.

Owing to the difficulties which the maritime operations encountered throughout 1342 it seems that Edward changed the methods he employed for raising a transport fleet when multiple flotillas were needed.[161] Thus, in 1345, 1355 and 1359 Edward opted for a system that required certain contingents of the army to arrange their own shipping. It is likely that the war wages owed to retinue captains after the campaign had ceased included some recompense for transportation costs. Those campaigns, such as Henry of Grosmont's of 1345 and the Prince's of 1355, which were small enough to requisition ships in the normal fashion, were raised by means of the 'normal' procedure and paid through the Exchequer system. Although the problems encountered during the Brittany expedition surely played their part in changing the organisation of royal transport fleets it is beyond doubt that another factor was the capture of Calais. From 1347 English possession of Calais meant that in 1355 and 1359, the forces under the command of the king could disembark into a safe harbour. Consequently, any fleet that was to sail to Calais could be prepared at a more leisurely pace by means of private hire arrangements.[162] The major development, therefore, was that maritime transportation for the larger sections of the army, usually under the command of the king, were paid for via private hire and not through the Exchequer, and so they did not generate enrolled particulars. This new organisa-

159 The king had ordered the arrest and the confiscation of these ships for failing to return. However, he later cancelled these orders because of his, 'great need'. See *CCR, 1341–43*, pp. 629–30, 690.

160 *CCR, 1343–46*, pp. 128–32.

161 This is analysed in more detail in Chapter 4 below. It was not the ferry fleet system itself was the wrong methods to employ, more the fact that in 1342 the Wardrobe had to manage the whole operation itself. Further it is important to recognise that the earl of Pembroke and Gloucester were also awaiting transport at Plymouth, so there were multiple fleets in operation in 1342. The earl's fleet was not paid through the Wardrobe accounts. Indeed the St Sardos campaign also sailed in three separate fleets. This view was also taken by J. S. Kepler, 'The effects of the battle of Sluys', pp. 70–77. It has to be noted that Kepler differs in the reasons he gives for the changes implemented after 1343 and he places more emphasis on the changes in the administration and management of officials. Although this is true in some respects Kepler fails to acknowledge that two large fleets (three if we include the 1337 flotilla of 150 ships requisitioned by Bartholomew Burghersh in 1337: see E101/19/39) were raised in 1338 and 1340 and several large armadas had been requisitioned and deployed in Scotland.

162 The king was still obliged to pay for the transportation of the captains who still had their shipping arranged for them, which explains the advances on wages recorded to mariners enrolled on E403/377, mm. 18, 24.

tional procedure explains the absence of payrolls relating to the king's campaigns after the Brittany expedition of 1342.[163]

As we have seen the raising of a transport fleet was an extremely complicated task. It involved a level of administrative skill that was advanced for its time. This system had been evolving since the wars conducted by Edward I, and by 1360 it had been experimented with and manipulated to create an effective and sophisticated operation. The raising of a fleet was also a process that was organised and undertaken by skilled and experienced individuals who saw to it that the crown was adequately supplied with sufficient maritime resources. Considering these points it is unfortunate that this level of expertise still fails to be recognised by historians who concentrate on later periods and who generally argue that it was not until the Tudor period and beyond that great leaps forward in naval administration were made. Although it can still be argued that in the fourteenth century an unbroken line of naval developments and consistent infrastructure failed to be developed, it was also the case that between 1327 and 1359 naval forces were raised in every year, and by the 1330s and 1340s this was generally carried out by the same officials.[164]

The Return Passage

The shipping of soldiers from England's ports to the continent was only half of the operation involved in any campaign. Once the army had completed its task and a victory or truce had resulted the thousands of soldiers who had originally sailed to France had to be safely shipped back to England. As with the outward fleets of 1340, 1345, 1355 and 1359, evidence as to how this was achieved is often absent. We know the service dates of the ships but these only show us the number of days ships were under arrest for, a time which also included the outward passage.[165] Because in this period the average length of time that fleets remained in service was for one month, when the land expeditions could go on for several months, the service dates of the fleet cannot include the time taken for re-passage.[166] We know that outward journeys to France were achieved quickly. In 1342 when the king crossed to Brittany his flagship made the crossing from Portsmouth harbour to Saint Mathieu in only one day, and in 1346 the voyage

163 These new operational changes are discussed in Chapter 4, below

164 The same is also for purveyance in which clerks such as William Dunstable collected victuals over a sustained period.

165 Land forces received their wages from the day they arrived at the embarkation port, see A. Ayton, *Knights and warhorses*, p. 146. It is assumed that the same system was in operation for the naval forces.

166 The exception to this was the 1342 Brittany fleet, which operated for two months. However the majority of that fleet left service without permission in November. The army continued to serve until January 1343.

from the Isle of Wight to La Hougue took only one or two days.[167] That sea voyages were not long affairs can be evidenced by the fact that if the weather was fair it was possible to sail from southern England to Corunna in Spain in four days.[168] As such, providing the weather was stable, those ships sailing to both northern and southern France could make the crossing in, at most, several days.

This is not to say that all sources fail to provide evidence as to how some sections of the army were transported back to England. The Low Countries expedition of 1338–39 and the 1359–60 Reims campaign are illuminated by documentary evidence on the return fleets. In both cases the Wardrobe accounts show that re-passage payments were issued so that the retinue captains could transport their horses back to England after the cessation of hostilities.[169] The implication is that the captains themselves also took passage on these ships. But these two campaigns had the advantage of being carried out through allied territories or friendly ports. So, for example, the Low Countries expeditions provided the English with free access to several large ports and the Reims campaign ended with the English army making its way back to the safe environs of Calais. How would an English army be transported back to safety after a campaign in another part of France that was not as firmly entrenched as an ally of the English government? Of course, only one campaign here springs to mind, that of the Brittany invasion of 1342.[170]

The maritime transportation problems relating to the English intervention in Brittany have been discussed above. But the complex issue of the return passage to England raises more areas of confusion. We know from chronicle evidence that the voyage home was perilous with several knights losing their

[167] For 1342, see E36/204, p. 31. The king actually boarded his ship on 16 October but he remained off the coast of England while the rest of the fleet coalesced into one large armada before finally sailing to Brittany on the 25 October. He arrived at St Mathieu on 26 October. However, he did not sail into Brest harbour until 27 October. So Edward was actually at sea for ten days in October, two of which seem to have been the crossing. In 1346 Edward wrote a letter from the Isle of Wight on 7 July, so it is likely that his fleet crossed the Channel at some point after this date. It is known that Edward was still gathering forces on the Isle of Wight during this period, so it is likely that he sailed for France a few days after 7 July. See, for example, *BPR*, III, p. 413, which shows that the Black Prince and his officers were still collecting soldiers during their stay on the Isle of Wight. The passage relates to a plea for respite of debts owed to the Prince by one Thomas de Crue of Chester who stated that he and his brother were commanded to board the Prince's ship by his sergeants-at-arms at the Isle of Wight and that 'he received no wages for his labour at the battle of Crécy, and when his brother was wounded at the battle and he went with him to the hospital to succour him he received no reward'.

[168] W. R. Childs, *Anglo-Castilian trade in the later middle ages* (Manchester, 1978), p. 154.

[169] *Norwell*, pp. 386–87; A. Ayton, *Knights and warhorses*, pp. 268–70.

[170] Campaigns conducted within the bounds of Gascony operated within English controlled lands and English officials directly controlled the port of Bordeaux. The royal led army of 1345 never campaigned directly on French soil and after the Crécy/Calais campaign of 1346–47 the English controlled Calais.

lives in the crossing.[171] This provides proof that there had been some re-passage arrangements for the English and Welsh soldiers serving in the campaign. The king's journey home can be traced with more certainty by following the entries recorded in the Wardrobe accounts. Edward's return voyage took just under three weeks and he sailed via the island of Le Ragg (13 February), Le Blank Sabloini (14 February), Congueste (16 February), Port Crouidum (19 February), then back to Blank Sabloini (23 February). He was at sea on the last day of February before sailing into Melcombe Regis on 1 March 1342.[172] The king, of course, always had transportation by utilising royal ships, but how did the rest of the force make it home?

There are several possibilities as to how this was achieved, some with more credence than others. For instance, the return fleet could have been recorded on a now lost payroll. But this has to be doubtful. Since both Norwell and Farley recorded their re-passage payments through the Wardrobe system, it is likely that Edington would have done the same.[173] The second possibility is that the return flotilla was made up entirely of the defaulters from the previous year, but this seems unlikely because no new requisition orders to form such a large fleet were issued during the winter of 1342–43.[174] It should be noted, however, that some orders contained in the *Close Rolls* state that the 230 ships are to be arrested so that punishment can be issued to them. And there is evidence that some of the ships involved in the return passage were deserters from the previous October and November.[175] In addition, other vessels were in the Brittany area on supply missions and they could also have been involved in the re-passage of sections of the English army. For example, the *Katerine* of Bayonne, commanded by Peter Bernardi de Tholoso, was allowed in January of 1343 to sell merchandise 'for the maintenance of the men about to set out to the king in Brittany, in Peter's galley, in going and returning'.[176] These scattered entries provide slight evidence of small numbers of ships that could have been involved in the transportation of troops back to England after hostilities ceased in early 1343. But the numbers of

[171] *Anonamille*, pp. 17–18; *Knighton*, p. 47; *Melsa*, III, pp. 51–52; *Murimuth*, p. 135.

[172] E36/206, pp. 37–39; *CCR, 1343–46*, p. 97.

[173] *Norwell*, pp. 386–92. On Farley's accounts, see A. Ayton, *Knights and warhorses*, pp. 286–70.

[174] There were 230 ships that had disobeyed the king's orders in 1342 and sailed back to England. Some of these were punished by having their pay deducted and it is possible that many of these were later sent back to Brittany as re-passage vessels.

[175] *CCR, 1341–43*, p. 630. This shows that the *Nicholas*, commanded by John Galay was serving at his own costs for failing to appear at the previous transport fleet and he was to freight the earls of Huntingdon and Arundel to Brittany in January 1343. Yet these reinforcements were cancelled so it is possible that Galay's ship still served but as part of the return fleet of that month. Similar orders were hanging over the head of William Asshendon of Dartmouth, see *CPR, 1340–43*, p. 568; *CCR, 1341–43*, p. 630.

[176] *CCR, 1341–43*, p. 625.

such vessels are inadequate for a satisfactory explanation as to how the English army returned home.

Perhaps the strongest possibility is that the return fleet was paid for out of the coffers of the ducal revenues. It is known that in April 1342 the Montfortists had agreed to supply Edward with £14,600 towards the cost of the English war effort. Moreover, the end of the campaign in 1343 placed the whole of the ducal income in the hands of the English, and the duchess and her son were taken back to England for safe keeping.[177] In addition, many soldiers involved in the Brittany expedition did not return to England but accompanied the earl of Derby to the siege of Algeciras, thus greatly reducing the number of men who required passage.[178] Moreover in addition to going with Derby to Spain many English troops remained in Brittany to man the newly established English garrisons in the duchy. Another issue worth taking into account is that after an expedition the number of horses which required re-passage would be fewer than had initially crossed due to losses in the field while on campaign.[179] Finally, after the truces had been agreed it would have been possible for some soldiers to cross overland to other areas where shipping was more plentiful. In short, of the 3,800 English troops that initially crossed over to Brittany during 1342 perhaps only half required re-passage back from the ports of Brittany. It seems likely that this would have been achieved over a period of several weeks in a piece-meal fashion by ships serving for various reasons and paid for by differing accounting methods.

Although we have no evidence relating to the return passage of the main army that fought under the king in 1342, Walter Mauny's expedition conducted in the spring and early summer of that year is fully recorded with a return fleet. Mauny embarked for Brittany at the end of March 1342 in thirty-six ships and the force under his command served until early July 1342. In Edington's Wardrobe book twenty-four of the thirty-six ships that originally transported this small force to Brittany were kept in service until 29 June with a further two vessels serving until 1 July. These twenty-six ships were obviously Mauny's means of returning back to England. Why this fleet is recorded in the final accounts of the campaign, while the king's is not, can only remain in the realms of speculation. However, the small size of Mauny's fleet is the most obvious answer. By examining the orders issued by Edward at the outset of the campaign it is beyond doubt that the king wished all the vessels in his transport fleet to remain on active service until the expedition had ended. But the large number of ships that were ordered to remain under arrest meant that it was unlikely that such a fleet would stay in

177 *Foedera*, II, ii, p. 1198; J. Sumption, *Trial by battle*, p. 390.

178 *Knighton*, p. 47. Knighton's words suggest that the numbers of men who accompanied Lancaster to Spain were substantial, '*et exinde multi Angligene et Francigene transierunt ad Spruciam ad bellum campestre*'.

179 A. Ayton, *Knights and warhorses*, p. 263. For example Northampton's retinue lost thirty-seven horses and Ralph Stafford's forty-two.

Brittany throughout the winter, and once significant numbers of vessels began to desert the king a domino effect seems to have taken place among those that had, initially, remained behind. Perhaps a large part of the explanation as to why the return fleets are not fully recorded lies in the fact that the accounting process in the 1330s and 1340s was not fully standardised. When we consider that the scale and scope of military expeditions had increased more than threefold from 1322 to 1347 it is not surprising that the clerks were still grappling with how to record all this material.

Although return fleets are somewhat difficult to trace the evidence we do have shows beyond doubt that the king provided shipping for both outward and return voyages. For example, the indenture sealed between Henry of Grosmont and the king in 1345 stated that the earl was to have shipping both 'in going and returning at the cost of the king'.[180] This does not say that the king will provide shipping just that he will pay for it. The implication here is that the outward voyage was organised by the king but Lancaster arranged his return transport in Bordeaux and the crown reimbursed him on his return. In addition, the indenture that was sealed between Edward and the Black Prince in 1355 explicitly states that the king will 'provide sufficient shipping for the passage of the prince and all his men, as well as planks, hurdles and all other things necessary for their shipment both going and returning'.[181] Unfortunately, the return wages paid to mariners seem to be mostly absent from the Exchequer evidence, suggesting varying methods of payment were used.[182] It is unfortunate that the earlier return fleets, or payments issued for them, are not recorded. However, the information contained in both Norwell's and Farley's Wardrobe accounts seem to show that some form of re-passage was arranged and perhaps we should

[180] K. Fowler, *The king's lieutenant: Henry of Grosmont first duke of Lancaster* (London, 1969), appendix 1, pp. 222–50.

[181] *BPR*, IV, p. 144–45.

[182] It is possible that the Exchequer clerks in England only recorded and paid the outward fleet simply because this was easier for them to do in England than it was on the continent. And it is also probable that the wages of war paid to commanders after the campaigns that they had been involved in had ended did include money for the re-passage payments that they had arranged and paid for themselves. Thus, the wages of war issued to retinue captains, including *regard* payments, were for the increased costs of campaigning in France, which required the hiring of ships. *Regard* was not normally paid to men serving in Scotland and the provision of *regard* and other bonuses really came to the fore during the continental wars when sea-borne transportation was an added expense to the crown, which it did not incur in the Scottish wars. On *regard* and its development, see A. Ayton, *Knights and warhorses*, pp. 110–14. In the later part of Edward III's reign certain accounts, compiled for the Exchequer, seem to contain more detail about the return passages. For example, E101/29/18, mm. 1–2, records the outward and return passage for John of Gaunt and the Black Prince from 1365 through to 1368 from England to Flanders and England to Gascony. Thirteen ships are recorded manned by 422 mariners and one sergeant-at-arms, two men-at-arms and two archers. Although such high ranking nobles would no doubt be afforded more security in terms of return shipping than the soldiers under their command.

treat Brittany as an anomaly. In short we ought to view the evolving accounting procedures as the main reasons as to why we have 'missing' evidence relating to the return fleets. This explains why in the 1370s and 1380s evidence relating to return passages is more complete because by this stage the recording of return fleets for armies serving on the continent had become standard accounting practice. For example, John of Gaunt's expedition to Normandy in 1369, which came to an overall cost of £74,934 6s 10d, did indeed include the payments for the re-passage of the horses and men back from Calais.[183] This suggests that similar methods had been in place in earlier campaigns.

This chapter has analysed the whole process of fleet requisition in the fourteenth century. It has examined the sources from which the crown secured its ships and the administrative process that was adopted in order to manage this. It shows that the system was complex, but not static. Indeed, in the 1340s there was a series of experiments in the organisation of the process that has left us with gaps in the source material. The analysis of the preparations for the 1346 armada was used as an example to show how sophisticated the fleet-raising operations had become by the mid-part of Edward III's reign. Finally, it also investigated the issue of the return fleets and concluded that the lieutenants serving in France had their outward and return shipping provided for them. On the outward journey the crown supplied the ships, whereas it seems likely that on the return journey the lieutenants organised and paid for these fleets themselves and were later reimbursed by the crown. How soldiers serving in expeditions such as Brittany in 1342 returned home is difficult to explain. It would seem that there are several explanations. It is possible that some men found their own way back, while others remained behind to man the garrisons or travelled further afield. However, it was also pointed out that that the bureaucratic process was still developing and as such perhaps one of the main reasons for the lack evidence lies in some little understood accounting procedure.

[183] J. Sherborne, 'The cost of English warfare with France in the later fourteenth century', *BIHR* 1 (1977), pp. 135–50, p. 136. Gaunt also sailed to Gascony in 1370 and his re-passage payments were paid for him and his soldiers during this campaign, *ibid.*, p. 139.