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Maritime Resources and the King's War

This book has set out to investigate the involvement, whether voluntary or unwillingly, of England's maritime communities to the war effort of Edward II and Edward III. The analysis so far has shown the numbers of ships, mariners and ports that were involved in the maritime dimension of the wars. The origins of the participation of so many ports, and their resources, in the wars of the period can be traced back to the campaigns conducted under Edward I, especially those of the 1290s in Scotland and Flanders.[1] Although Edward II's Scottish campaigns were punctuated by long periods of truce the requisitioning of ships continued regularly. But by the time of Edward III's campaigns, particularly those fought on the continent from 1338 onwards, a dramatic change occurred in the organisation and logistics of war. Edward I and Edward II had raised only four fleets for service abroad (the St Sardos fleet has been counted as two), but within four years from 1338 Edward III had already matched this.

What this study has shown is that in terms of ship numbers the scale of the operations from the beginning of Edward III's reign increased dramatically. Edward II's fleet of 284 ships serving in the campaign of 1322 looks rather small as compared with the 675 vessels that Edward III deployed throughout 1342. Change also occurred in the organisation of the fleets. In the Scottish wars ships could be requisitioned and put to sea in relatively small numbers over the course of perhaps a month, which in turn led to large numbers of vessels sailing the seas around Scotland. But there was no requirement for the ships to mass at one particular port and sail out in one large armada. In the preparations for the Scottish campaigns the orders issued for the arrest of ships rarely mention a meeting or embarkation port. The victual ships' destinations were always set because they had to go to either Skinburness or Newcastle. But the military arm of the fleet was usually given no such orders, being normally advised to 'go to sea and attack

[1] A. R. Lewis and T. J. Runyan, *European naval and maritime history, 300–1500* (Bloomington, Ind., 1990), p. 123. Henry III had previously raised a fleet of 288 ships for foreign service and Edward I's 1297 Flanders flotilla numbered some 305 vessels. Such fleets, however, were not regular occurrences.

the king's enemies', or variants on such phrases.[2] It seems that the military ships, having been placed under the admirals of the north and the south, would usually sail out of their ports and group together in 'county' fleets. Thus, when raised, the ships of Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn would sail up the coast together for extra protection until the admiral gave them specific orders at a later date. What the admirals were handling in the Scottish wars were groups of twenty to forty ships, assembled on an ad hoc basis over a month or two, which all told could add up to 200 or more vessels participating in victual, blockade and naval duties.

It can be seen, therefore, that the role played by the English merchant fleet had changed in two important respects between the Scottish wars of the 1320s and the beginning of the French campaigns in 1338. The numbers of ships deployed had risen dramatically and the organisation and management of these requisitioned fleets had also developed. What Edward III required from 1338 was an organisational structure that allowed his officials to requisition hundreds of ships and place them at one chosen embarkation port all at the same time. That this was achieved on a large scale in 1338, 1340, 1342, 1345, 1346, 1355 and 1359 is testament to the skill of the clerical administrators. As such Edward III's officials were generally successful in raising these large transport fleets, and while it is true that they were exploiting the skeleton of an efficient system already in place from the reigns of Edward I and Edward II, the frequency with which such armadas were raised in the 1330s and 1340s represents a radical departure from the reigns of the previous two kings. Of course, the cumulative experience of the clerical officials was also an important factor in this success. In many ways this latter point is similar to the remilitarisation process that had occurred amongst the landed military class from the 1280s onwards and as the knights and gentry became accustomed to warfare, so too did the clerks.[3] In short, there was a bureaucratic dimension to the remilitarisation process. The question which therefore needs to be asked at this point is how did Edward III achieve this level of support and who, if anyone, benefited from the new organisational procedures that he introduced from 1338–1359?

In order to answer such questions, and assess the overall shipping contributions made to the wars by the English merchant fleet, this chapter will be divided into four sections. We begin with an analysis on the administration of the fleets, including a discussion on three issues that arise from the changes made to the organisation of war by Edward III. Chief among these was the increasing tendency to partly 'privatise' large sections of the war. A discussion

[2] Edward II did operate a policy of blockade between campaigns from 1307 to 1314, and periodically thereafter. But during his campaigns a blockade policy was never attempted, and although he tried to organise combined operations by sea and land these were never successful. Many English shipmasters violated the blockades themselves. See W. Stanford Reid, 'Sea-power in the Anglo-Scottish war', pp. 14–18.

[3] See, for example, A. Ayton, 'Sir Thomas Ughtred and the Edwardian military revolution'; D. Simpkin, *The English aristocracy at war*.

on the 1359 logistical operation follows. We concentrate on the Reims campaign because this is the first royal-led transport fleet that bears detailed scrutiny after the capture of Calais. As such it provides us with the perfect opportunity to examine how the capture of this town affected the transportation of English armies to France. Within this section there is also an analysis of the possible effects the Black Death on the availability of shipping. Second, what proportion of a port's shipping resources was requisitioned for campaigns is assessed. Third, because mariners were also a maritime resource the careers of several shipmasters is sketched and the familial relationships among mariners that are illuminated by the sources are discussed. Finally, there is an investigation into the shipping resources of the ports, crew sizes on board ships and the role of the constable.

Developments in Fleet Organisation

From an organisational perspective Edward III inherited a system of raising a fleet from his father, but he exploited his maritime resources more effectively than any of his predecessors. In Chapter 1 it was argued that Edward III employed nine methods to gather ships for his fleets, whereas his father only utilised four.[4] Although requisition was at the centre of both kings' policy the system they employed varied slightly depending on what the intended expedition's main aim was or how large a fleet was required to transport the awaiting army. For example, in 1342 general arrest orders were issued to the admirals to requisition the flotillas required for that year. They in turn sent officials out to visit ports under their authority. But, in 1346 the admiralties were sub-divided into smaller units with clerks sometimes being given particular ports or 'zones of requisition' in order to raise sufficient ships. There were still two admirals in 1346, but requisition zones did not respect the natural divisions between the admiralties at the River Thames. Because the fleet of 1346 was planned from the outset to be the largest of the reign so far, a more thorough way of exploiting the available maritime resources was required, and as a consequence individual clerks were ordered to concentrate their efforts on smaller geographical areas, although the admirals still held overall authority. Yet, by this stage of the war the administrative and organisational system had already been developed to include mixed fleets; raised partly in the traditional way by requisition and partly by means of private hire.

This privatisation can be traced back to the Scottish campaigns of the mid-1330s. However, it seems that the key moment for this new development was 1336. This was an important year for Edward III for it marked the end of several

[4] Edward II employed the use of requisition, the Cinque Ports, demands to ports to supply ships and on one occasion a direct agreement with port burgesses. The king's ships are not included here because their numbers were only small.

years of intense personal participation in the northern theatre of operations (he was involved in 1341 and 1356, but only for a short raids). As such from the latter part of 1336 the king seems to have left the system of victual supply entirely in the hands of several men. Foremost amongst these were Thomas and William Melcheburn, two shipmasters, shipowners and merchants from King's Lynn. The Melcheburns accounted for what they supplied either directly through the Exchequer or through the receiver at Berwick. The first method was the most important, as it seems to have been a recent development. In many ways a new system was brought into operation in which private merchants, like the Melcheburns, could now work directly with the Exchequer, thus reducing the role of the receiver of Berwick, who sometimes had to source his own supplies independently of the government.[5] Private merchants had supplied armies before but not on this scale and not over a sustained period. No longer were general purveyance writs issued for campaigns in Scotland and by this stage of his northern war, Edward III seems to have decided to hold on to what he had so far gained, through the employment of contract armies and garrisons, which in turn were supplied by merchants who could utilise their own private contacts in the markets. This 'private' system of supply has been regarded as unsuccessful, but this conclusion was based on evidence concerning Manentius Francis, a foreign merchant, who faced problems, and who probably did not have the 'market contacts' that the Melcheburns had developed throughout their long careers as shipmasters/owners and merchants.[6] Indeed, during this period we do not find regular complaints by the Melcheburns about lack of payment by the Exchequer. In fact the main problem with the supply operation was the distribution of the victuals from Newcastle and Berwick to the garrisons, not the collection and dispatch of supplies from the counties to the depots. On the other hand, the victual arrangements for royal armies (and the forces of Edward's lieutenants who campaigned in France) after 1338 still relied on purveyance. It was not, therefore, that this intrusive way of raising supplies ceased to operate; it was just transferred to what Edward thought was the more important theatre of his

[5] By 1338 the receiver generally worked directly with the merchants to supply his needs. The days of the receiver having to travel sometimes vast distances to source his own supplies had ceased. On the role of the receiver in the earlier period, see D. Cornell, 'English castle garrisons', pp. 65–66.

[6] Citing the failures of Manentius Francis, C. Candy, 'The Scottish wars of Edward III', p. 259 states that 'private supply was not successful'. In addition, D. S. Bachrach, ('Military logistics', pp. 429–30) notes that private supply could not work effectively in conjunction with general purveyance owing to one method depriving the other of available transportation: yet, the Melcheburns and the de la Poles of Hull supplied English armies with general purveyance concurrently and the clerks employed by the crown did not impede their work. However, these two sets of merchants usually relied on sea transportation rather than overland travel. In addition the Melcheburns owned four ships and the Poles owned at least two. As such it was easier for such men to organise transportation rather than merchants who relied on hiring ships.

wars. This system was, however, modified in the sense that particular clerks, such as William Dunstaple, were usually placed at the head of purveyance teams, who worked in close co-operation with the sheriffs of the counties. They consequently tended to act more favourably towards the local population, which in turn lessened tensions between Edward III's government and the political community. This increasing use of a more privatised system of supply partly explains the lack of available evidence on purveyance during the campaigns conducted in 1350s. It seems reasonable to assume that throughout the 1350s, due to political considerations, the crown favoured supply on a more privatised basis, which in turn gives the impression that far less effort was made by the government in securing victuals for its armies. Yet, it is beyond doubt that at the outset of the 1359 expedition, for example, Edward's forces were sufficiently well supplied.[7] Indeed, it seems reasonable to assume that the capture of Calais altered the arrangements for the collection of victuals. Forces arriving at Calais could now take foodstuffs out of the town's well-stocked storehouses, which no doubt would have been provisioned with extra provender in the preceding months before the invasion.[8] This operation was probably managed through merchants and the receiver at Calais rather than through general purveyance orders. This method of supply had the advantage of reducing friction between the king and his subjects, while at the same time maintaining popular support for the war.

Privatisation of the victualling dimension of the war effort was taken to its next logical stage after the Breton campaign of 1342 and during the expedition of 1345 and those of the 1350s. During this period it gradually became common for a proportion of the land-based forces to arrange their own transportation by means of private hire agreements between retinue captains and ship owners/masters. This had advantages for all parties involved in the wars. The king benefited because he and his administrative staff were now freed from the burdensome task of requisitioning large fleets.[9] They still did this for the king's lieutenants serving in Gascony and Brittany, but the task was made easier by only having to arrest ships from one particular admiralty and the flotillas were much smaller than those assembled for the royal fleets. Indeed, from 1345, when the king required multiple transport fleets for himself and his lieutenants, it is probable that one of the two admiralties was reserved for the retinue captains'

7 For evidence on the size of the supply train in 1359, see Y. H. Haarari, 'Strategy and supply', p. 316.

8 See, for example, S. J. Burley, 'The victualling of Calais', pp. 52–55 for a discussion of how these supplies might have been managed. It is worthy of note that in 1355 and 1359 Edward's immediate destination was Calais, where supplies would have been stockpiled waiting for his arrival.

9 This new development in many ways mirrored the indenture system, which it has been noted freed the crown from burdensome financial and bureaucratic procedures. In short by shifting the onus of recruitment, and fleet raising, on to the captains the government saved itself valuable resources. On the suggestion that this eased bureaucratic pressure off the government, see M. Strickland and R. Hardy, *The great warbow*, p. 199.

private arrangements. Thus, in 1345 the fleet that transported Henry of Grosmont to Gascony included only a small number of vessels from the northern admiralty. Furthermore, in 1355 and 1359 very few ships from the southern ports are recorded on the payrolls drawn up by royal administration. The retinue captains also benefited from this system because they could now arrange their own transportation, thereby reducing the time they spent waiting at the port of embarkation because they were able to agree first hand with the shipmaster the exact date of arrival and departure. For the crown this had the added bonus of reducing the supply needs of large numbers of men waiting at the ports. The ship owners/masters were also favoured by this new approach because they would not be forced to stay under arrest for lengthy periods in the port of embarkation. They would know exactly the intended length of their service and they would still be paid their wages up-front by the captain. Just how important this could be is indicated by the circumstances of 1342, when over 140 ships were held under arrest for over two months before sailing to Brittany while they waited for the army to gather. The advantage in transferring some of the burden to the magnates had been steadily recognised from the Scottish wars of 1334 and 1335, when it became their responsibility to honour the contracts they had made with the crown: to find the number of men they had agreed to serve with, and to ensure that the men raised in this way were sufficiently equipped. This took away many burdensome recruitment tasks from the royal officers and the royal household.[10] It would seem, therefore, that after 1342, and when multiple transport fleets were requisitioned, all the participants involved in the privatisation of the royal transport armadas gained from this development. Of course, there was an element of trust built into the system, in that the captains relied upon the crown to pay them for organising their own transport arrangements.

However, it is probable that the *regard* payment, which in part was rendered to the retinue captains in advance of a campaign, was intended to cover the added costs that were incurred when they were obliged to make their own shipping arrangements. It is noteworthy that *regard* as a system of up-front payment was introduced in 1345, which coincides exactly with the year that also saw the introduction of the new method of raising a fleet.[11] *Regard* was a quarterly payment of 100 marks that each retinue captain received for every thirty men-at-arms in his retinue, and it is argued here that part of it was offered to enable him to arrange his men's maritime transportation requirements. In the period covered by this book it was normal for a shipowner to charge 2s for transporting a horseman and 6d for a footman; however, to hire a single craft would cost one mark for

[10] See C. Candy, 'The Scottish wars of Edward III', p. 154.

[11] *Regard* was a flexible way of increasing payments to soldiers serving in expeditions without actually altering the daily wage rates. For example, in the 1370s *regard* was doubled so that the crown did not have to continue with horse compensation payments, which it has been already noted were administratively expensive to produce and imperfect, see A. Ayton, 'English armies in the fourteenth century', pp. 24–25.

both the outward and return voyage.[12] But it was more expensive to hire shipping for transporting horses and men to a theatre of war. For instance, in 1343 Jack Faukes and his companion paid 20s to charter a vessel for a single journey, and then had to expend a further sum, at least half a mark, on hiring boats to take them out to the waiting ship at Dover, and another small boat at Wissant.[13] Therefore, the issue to a retinue captain of 100 marks, for the transportation of thirty men-at-arms, seems to be a sum of the right order for his transportation requirements.[14] The connection between the payment of *regard* to retinue captains and the need to compensate them for the shipping of their horses is further indicated by the fact that *regard* was not generally paid for service in Scotland.[15] Of course *regard* was not issued solely for shipping requirements as some soldiers still had their transportation provided for them. Nevertheless, the introduction of this payment was surely in response to the extra burdens of war that the crown was increasingly transferring to the gentry in this period.

In addition to the logistical problems faced by Edward III during the 1342 Brittany campaign, and the experimentation on the organisation of war that occurred throughout the early 1340s, the capture of Calais in 1347 was also another driver towards the privatisation of war during this period. Control of Calais now meant that the king no longer had to transport an army in one large fleet. His forces could now arrive at a continental port, safe in English hands, over a period of several weeks. This meant the crown did not have to raise huge transport fleets, but could instead requisition smaller number of vessels in the traditional way, while a selection of the retinue captains (usually from the royal household) organised their own shipping. Only through having a safe port in Northern France was such a system possible.[16] Edward still paid directly for the

[12] M. C. Hill, 'Jack Faukes, king's messenger, and his return journey to Avignon in 1343', *EHR* 58 (1942), pp. 19–30, p. 24.

[13] *Ibid*.

[14] By using the information contained in the account of Faukes it is possible to suggest that it would cost 3 marks to transport each man-at-arms and his horses. Therefore, to transport thirty men-at-arms it would come to roughly 90 marks. Indeed, in the 1390s the future Henry IV paid 22s 4d to transport eleven horses from Dover to Calais, see S. Rose, *The medieval sea*, p. 98.

[15] On the system of regard and the date it was introduced, see A. Ayton, *Knights and warhorses*, pp. 110–14. This introduction of *regard* also affected the practice of drafting the indentures of war, which generally became more precise in their language during the French war, see *Private indentures for life service in peace and war, 1278–1476*, Camden fifth series, 3, ed. M. Jones and S. Walker (London, 1994), pp. 21–22. Captains serving in campaigns in Scotland, such as Richard II's in 1385, did not usually receive *regard* payments. This was surely because the captains had no need to organise shipping for campaigns in Scotland. On the 1385 campaign, see N. B. Lewis, 'The last medieval summons of the English feudal levy, 13 June 1385', *EHR* 73 (1958), pp. 1–26.

[16] Although the English possessed Bordeaux the length of the crossing to that port meant fleets, as a rule, sailed as one at the same time.

county levies' transport needs, and those of his lieutenants.[17] Another advantage of partly privatising the fleet-raising system was that it seemed to promote a greater willingness on the part of shipowners to have their vessels requisitioned, or rather hired, for service. It has already been noted that Edward I and Edward II sometimes met with refusals from shipmasters to serve in their fleets. Indeed, this problem afflicted some of Edward III's expeditions, particularly between 1337 and 1340, when hundreds of vessels failed to serve under Walter de Mauny.[18] This problem had wholly disappeared by the time of the 1345 campaign, which saw the development of the partial privatisation model of fleet building. This reduced the friction between the government and the port communities, which, in turn, encouraged a more rapid response by shipowners in allowing their vessels to be requisitioned.[19]

If we now discuss these naval 'privatisation' initiatives within a broader perspective it would seem that 1342, 1347 and 1359 are the three key points in the development of this system. In 1342 the crown had attempted to organise a ferry system mainly through the existing Wardrobe apparatus. That this brought problems is not surprising for not only was Edington required to record the complex *vadia guerre* section of his accounts, and thus manage the land-based army, but he also took on the responsibility of organising the *vadia nautarum* and the administration of a huge naval operation. This had not been an issue in previous expeditions such as 1338, because of their relatively modest size. Furthermore, Edward had also negotiated with the Low Countries princes months before the expedition began. These alliances provided troops that the Wardrobe did not need to record and a safe harbour in which the English could arrive at their leisure. Although in 1342 some of Edington's burden had been taken away by making John Kermond responsible for the retinues waiting at Plymouth, it was nevertheless an enormous and complex undertaking for the Wardrobe to manage. In fact the Breton expedition of 1342 is notable for many 'new' developments in the organisation and conduct of war. For example, the mixed retinue structure (the same number of men-at-arms and mounted archers in each captain's retinue) of the army provided the blueprint for many of the future French expeditions.[20]

Of course privatisation may well have been further developed during the preparations for the 1345 expedition, but the loss of the Wardrobe accounts renders a full investigation of this campaign impossible. What we do know is that the payments issued to arresting officials and the mariners of Bayonne in 1345 totalling £238 1s 6d was rather small for a fleet that would have needed to

[17] For example, there is evidence that archers were still being arrayed in 1345 for the Flanders expedition, see *CPR, 1343–45*, p. 516.

[18] C47/2/30.

[19] C. J. Rogers, *War cruel and sharp*, p. 295 notes how the fleets of 1355 were raised quickly: two months from planning to sailing, although bad weather delayed the voyage for months.

[20] See A. Ayton, *Knights and warhorses*, p. 14.

transport the army Edward had under his command in that year, suggesting that an element of privatisation may have been involved in the 1345 campaign.[21] Nevertheless, as a consequence of the issues that presented themselves in 1342, we see in the organisation of the siege of Calais in 1347, the next well-documented campaign, a new approach taken by the Wardrobe in the organisation of large campaigns. This essentially meant that during the siege the administrative organisation of the war was divided into three separate areas. First, Walter Wetwang, the keeper of the Wardrobe, seems to have managed the bureaucracy surrounding the land-based retinues. Second, his colleague William Huggate organised a separate ferry fleet that was used from June to September in order to in order to deliver reinforcements to the siege and repatriate casualties. Third, the two admirals, John Howard and John Montgomery, accounted separately with the Exchequer in England for the flotillas they raised to blockade Calais.[22] This in effect eased the administrative burden on the Wardrobe. The success of this operation certainly made an impact and seems to have added to the spirit of administrative experimentation that was evident during the 1340s.[23] By 1359, the next royal-led expedition for which we have detailed surviving documentation, we find evidence of a system in place in which naval logistical organisation was divided into distinctive administrative areas; partly privatised fleets organised by retinue captains and the traditional Wardrobe administered armadas, in short a hybrid bureaucratic process. Although at first glance it may look like this should have been the other way round, in that the king's transport fleets would be raised by the traditional method, because he had the bureaucratic apparatus with him in the form of the Wardrobe, the crown sought to ease the burden on the Wardrobe and the simplest way of doing this was to transfer some of the responsibility for transportation arrangements directly to the retinue captains. This also had the added bonus of creating fewer complaints through parliament from representatives of the merchant classes. These lessons had been learnt through 1342 and 1343 with added impetus provided by the siege of Calais in 1347. By 1359 a new transportation system was in place that had been developed over the preceding expeditions.

However, the experiments in the organisation of the maritime dimension of Edward III's French war, described above, should not be seen in isolation, and from the inception of the indenture system potential was always there for the kings to partly privatise areas of their war effort. In 1336 and 1337, Henry of Lancaster and the earl of Warwick led the Scottish war with armies raised by exploiting existing recruitment networks, paid for by the crown, and supplied by merchants using their own methods and contacts in the markets, and in 1346

[21] E101/390/12, fols 2r–3r.

[22] Evidence for the ferry fleet is recorded in E101/390/12. The admirals accounts of 1347 are listed in E101/21/36, m. 4; E101/25/24.

[23] A. Ayton, *Knights and warhorses*, pp. 96–120 describes the experiments that took place in the 1340s.

English forces operating in Gascony and Normandy had large contingents that were raised through the exploitation of retinue captains' military recruitment ties. At the same time the transport fleets had been added to the list of elements in the Edwardian military machine that could be raised through the private initiative of the king's companions in arms.

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The partial privatisation of fleet raising creates problems for the historian wishing to analyse how the kingdom's maritime resources were utilised during expeditions from 1345 onwards. The Reims campaign of 1359–60 perfectly exemplifies this problem. As such this expedition is important in a number of respects. First, this was only the second major campaign in the north of France after the capture of Calais and it highlights the way in which the control of that port affected the organisation of transport fleets. Second, it is the only major royal campaign after 1342 for which we have full Wardrobe accounts and related Exchequer evidence. Third, given that it occurred in the post-Black Death period, it provides an excellent opportunity to examine how the maritime resources of the king were affected by this calamitous event.

It has already been suggested that the capture of Calais allowed Edward to prepare his continental expeditions differently. Though of course, this was only true for those campaigns that were launched through this port: expeditions such as those of Crécy or Agincourt, which required a landing in hostile territory, were still transported in one large armada. Any major campaign channelled through Calais had the advantage transferring more of the burden to those serving in the army. Edward's martial reputation at this stage allowed him such an option, as many men were more than willing to fight under his banner. Support for Edward's French war escalated from 1345 onwards on a wave of enthusiasm generated by Henry of Grosmont's expeditions in Aquitaine, Edward III's victory at Crècy and the Black Prince at Poitiers. This, coupled with the lure of potential booty and fame, meant that retinue captains were willing to take on extra responsibilities when it came to campaigning. Of course, as this analysis has shown, Edward did not entirely neglect his side of the bargain: he provided a large fleet that transported a section of the land army and large numbers of horses from the retinues awaiting passage to Calais in 1359. By controlling Calais the king could now requisition smaller flotillas that were used on a ferry system basis in order to freight armies to northern France. It is worthy of note that the army of 1369 led by John of Gaunt and the 1370 force led by Robert Knolles were transported in relays from the south east of England to Calais or northern France, and this trend continued into the following century, except in rare occasions such as 1415.[24]

[24] J. Sumption, *Divided houses*, pp. 36, 73.

The major strategic option that the capture of Calais gave to Edward was the ability to deploy smaller transport fleets. Indeed, the Calais-bound transport fleets of the 1360s and 1370s generally numbered 300 ships, whereas the armadas of the 1340s and 1350s had ranged between 403 and 747 vessels.[25] It must be noted, however, that there has been criticism of the crown's ability to organise transport fleets after the resumption of the war in 1369.[26] The main point to arise from this view is that the accumulated expertise that Edward's officials had gained over the last three decades had been lost, and that after nearly ten years of peace the new clerks and government officials who had entered service did not possess the same detailed knowledge as their predecessors had in the early stages of the war, which in turn created problems in the fleet-raising procedures. As we have seen above in Chapter 1 it was noted that in the 1330s and 1340s there was continuity of officials involved in organising naval forces, while in the 1350s, 1360s and 1370s, although relatively stable, there was a remarkable lack of continuity at the sharp end of the administration (the level of high Wardrobe and Exchequer officials). Even more striking was the substitution of sergeants-at-arms for clerks in the organisation of fleets, dealt with in Chapter 1.

The task of raising a fleet might also have become more difficult because of structural changes in English shipping by the third quarter of the century. In short it is possible that officials found it difficult to find sufficient numbers of ships.[27] While this may be a possibility, without performing a systematic survey of English shipping in this decade it would be impossible to draw firm conclusions on this issue. It is true that in the 1370s ports that had never been called upon to provide ships did so, but this should not be taken as evidence of a decline in ports elsewhere in the kingdom. Over the course of several decades a port's economic wellbeing would undoubtedly ebb and flow, but whilst some towns declined others certainly prospered.[28] Further because some of these 'new' ports were situated in Gascony their involvement in shipping provision probably

[25] See, for example, J. Sherborne, 'Shipping and manpower', p. 170. Sherborne notes that the two fleets raised in 1369 numbered between 180 and 250 ships, and one fleet in 1373 only numbered 157 vessels. It is important to note that the capture of Calais allowed such fleets to be raised. As such it is not that the crown failed to raise larger fleets than it had done some twenty years previously, only that the king by this stage of the war did not require armadas of the size that operated during the first twenty years of the conflict with France.

[26] See, for example, J. Sumption, *Divided houses*, pp. 130–45. Sumption draws attention to the problems during the summer of 1372 when he suggests that the English crown failed to organise its fleets on time owing to a shortage of ships, which he blames partly on the Black Death.

[27] See, for example, G. R. Cushway, 'The lord of the sea', pp. 359–65.

[28] The ports of Plymouth and Dartmouth developed because of the war in this period, whereas Great Yarmouth declined, see W. R. Childs, 'Devon's overseas trade in the late middle ages', *The new maritime history of Devon: from early times to the late eighteenth century*, vol. 1, ed. M. Duffy et al. (Exeter, 1992), pp. 79–89; A. Saul, 'Great Yarmouth in the hundred years war'.

owed more to the fact that, after 1360, the duchy of Aquitaine became more involved in the warfare through the interest of the Black Prince and John of Gaunt.[29] That some decline occurred is likely and the Black Death and the war would undoubtedly have played a role in this. We shall return shortly to the post-plague economy. Yet in the face of any supposed decline it is important to stress large fleets were raised in 1359, and throughout the 1370s and 1380s.[30] For example, Gaunt's campaigns in France, Portugal and Spain and Robert Knolles' expedition of 1370 all required sizeable fleets of over 200 ships.[31] Moreover, in the latter part of Edward III's reign there was a lack of direct involvement by the king in military affairs, which must have had an effect on the organisation of war. Finally, in the 1380s English policy gradually shifted in the direction of Spain and Portugal and the mood in Richard II's court was for general peace with France. As such English naval policy altered from one of deployment of large transport fleets to one of smaller proactive naval patrols.

In addition to all the above, a further explanation for the seeming weaknesses in the organisation of war can be found in the changing nature of the French conflict after 1369. In the period 1338–59 Edward had deployed rapidly moving armies in France as an invader with few territorial acquisitions, especially in northern France, to defend. On the resumption of hostilities in 1369 Edward found himself increasingly fighting a defensive war for the protection of the lands that he gained as a result of the treaty of Brétigny in 1360. Many of the military problems now faced by the English were also related to a reinvigorated French army. Under Charles V the French had adopted new strategic and tactical approaches to the conflict. The most important of these was that they usually declined the opportunity to engage English armies in direct battle, choosing instead to harry the flanks and rear of invading English forces whilst disrupting lines of communication and supply. Added to this the French now favoured a piecemeal approach to regaining territory whereby they tempted local lords back into their allegiance or sent smaller, better equipped, forces into areas where no substantial English army was operating to regain castles and towns. This created a domino effect in some areas and French lords nominally loyal to Edward III chose to move closer to the French king. In addition to this a new series of fiscal and military reforms were initiated, which in effect created a small standing French army directly under the command of the king.[32] As such in the early 1370s Edward became reactive to French assaults and this had the effect of making his fleet preparations appear haphazard as he first turned one way and then the other in response to news from the front.

29 The ports were located along the Gironde River, see BL, Add MS 37494, fols 17v–36v.

30 Although it is true that these latter fleets contained larger numbers of hired foreign vessels than the armadas of the 1330s and 1340s.

31 BL, Add MS 37494, fols, 17r–36v; E101/28/24;E101/29/1; E101/29/36; E101/30/24.

32 See, for example, J. Sumption, *Divided houses*, who discusses these French reforms throughout.

Between 1369 and 1372, therefore, the English lost the initiative which they had enjoyed in the earlier phase of the conflict. It is also likely that the problems faced by Edward III in raising his fleets during the period 1369–72 relate squarely to the timescales involved. To take the example of 1372. In this year, and because of a renewed French assault on English territory in France, Edward planned to sail to that kingdom and engage the French in battle. Yet the king only began to requisition vessels towards the end of March when he intended to sail in July. This, as noted in Chapter 3, did not give the officials sufficient time to organise these fleets. Finally, after 1369 many of the famous commanders that had helped create the impression that English arms were unassailable were either dead or incapacitated through illness or old age, and many of the men who replaced them in naval matters such as Ralph Spigurnell, Robert Ashton and Philip Courtenay were simply not of the same calibre as men such as John Montgomery, Guy Brian and Robert Morley. Further, the French, in admirals such as Jean de Vienne, found capable commanders in an age when the English were lacking similar men. Fleet raising after 1350 cannot be viewed in administrative vacuum, or even as a mere element of a broader war effort. Mobilisation of war was highly sensitive to changes in the available resources and the effects of the Black Death after 1348 could have impacted significantly on the availability of both shipping and manpower.

The impact of mortality due to the Black Death of 1348 could have affected Edward's fleet preparations, and it is possible that the resulting deaths from the disease among the seafarer communities left severe shortages of manpower in this sector of society. Indeed, once recent commentator argues that when in 1377 the Castilians captured thirty-nine English ships the loss of this number of vessels would be 'felt by requisitioning officers for years to come'.[33] The Black Death must have had some impact on maritime resources as port towns were the first to feel the effects of this disease. Cramped conditions and the on board presence of rats usually meant ships' companies became infected before spreading the illness into the ports. Nevertheless, most of the research centred on the Black Death has tended to concentrate on villages and urban populations in general rather than the maritime communities in particular. However, most studies seem to suggest that anywhere between 25 and 50 per cent of the population suffered death during 1348–49.[34] Yet the picture was more complex than these figures

[33] *Ibid*., p. 239.

[34] C. Platt, *King death: the Black Death and its aftermath in late medieval England* (London, 1996), pp. 9–10; J. L. Bolton, *The medieval English economy, 1150–1500* (London, 1980), p. 61; R. Horrox, ed. and trans., *The Black Death* (Manchester, 1994), pp. 230, 235, 238; C. Phillpotts, 'Plague and reconstruction: bishops Edington and Wykeham at Highclere, 1346–1404', *Fourteenth century England*, I, ed. N. Saul (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 115–29, p. 119; S. Inwood, *A history of London* (London, 1998), pp. 114–15; M. M. Postan, *The medieval economy and society* (London, 1975), pp. 33, 41. C. Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, appendix 1, p. 262 suggests that the pre-Black Death population of Southampton would have been 2,500–2,800 with the post plague population reaching 1,600; so roughly a 40–50% reduction in the towns

show. For example estimates of mortality greatly vary between communities, with some towns suffering high mortality rates, while others escaped relatively unscathed. In addition, research has also shown that, in most cases, the survivors of the disease were in their early twenties or thirties, which aided a swift recovery.[35]

One way of establishing how the plague affected the raising of a fleet is to calculate, where the evidence permits, the pre-Black Death mean tunnage and crew sizes of transport fleets and to compare them to those fleets requisitioned after the plague, to see if there is any significant fall in the size of both ships and crews. Of the 446 ships involved in transport operations pre 1348, for which we have both tunnage and crew sizes, we can calculate a total tunnage of 41,347.[36] This gives us a mean of 92.7 tuns for each vessel. The total numbers of mariners serving on these ships was 16,294 (102 of the ships only come with the master's name so an average of 29 has been applied to these which is calculated from the crew numbers we do know) giving an average crew size of 36.5.[37] Tunnage figures are more frequently available after 1348 giving greater scope for comparison with pre-plague conditions. When the same methodology is applied to post-1348 fleets, out of 659 vessels with tunnages we find a total of 34,696 tuns, which average of 53 tuns per ship, and an average crew size of sixteen.[38] On this evidence the plague seems to have encouraged the operation of a large fleet of small ships. Nevertheless, factors other than the Black Death may have played a part in reducing the size of English vessels and it has been argued that the collapse in the Bordeaux wine trade in the second half of the fourteenth century was more responsible for a reduction in the tunnage of the English merchant marine than any other factor.[39]

We must be very cautious here, however, because the post-Black Death tunnage figures are heavily reliant on the 1359 Reims campaign, an unusual fleet that even during the process of requisition was not to include any ships of over

population. However, he notes that the post plague population figures based on the 1377 poll tax are not a totally accurate reflection of the town's population due to the war and other factors; G. H. Martin, 'The borough and the merchant community of Ipswich, 1317–1422' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 1955), p. 181 notes that in Ipswich the Black Death did not 'sweep away all the rulers of the town'.

35 P. Ziegler, *The Black Death* (Harmondsworth, 1969), p. 169.

36 These figures should be seen as the low-end estimate of tunnage owing to the nature of the evidence. See, for example, R. W. Unger, 'The tonnage of Europe's merchant fleets, 1300–1800', *American Neptune* 52 (1992), pp. 247–61, pp. 254–55 and Table 2, p. 260, in which Unger suggests that in total the English merchant marine was at least 70,000 tons.

37 E101/17/35; E101/19/14; E101/19/22; E101/19/39; E101/21/7; E101/21/10; E101/21/12; E101/25/24; BL, Add MS 7967.

38 E101/26/37; E101/26/38; E101/27/22; E101/27/23; E101/27/24; E101/27/25; E101/27/36; E101/29/1.

39 R. W. Unger, 'The tonnage of Europe's merchant fleets', p.255.

76 tuns.[40] The ships that participated in this transport armada were smaller in tunnage than would normally be expected. Of the 411 ships for which size is recorded, 186 (45%) were between ten and nineteen tuns, while 117 (28%) were between twenty and thirty-nine tuns, and 69 (17%) ships were between forty and one hundred tuns. Only thirty-nine (9%) ships in the Reims fleet were greater than 100 tuns. Indeed, if we look at the post Black Death tunnage figures in general (including the Reims transport fleet) 202 (31%) ships were between ten and twenty tuns, 205 (31.1%) between twenty-one and forty tuns, 151 (23%) fell in the forty-one to one hundred tun category and one-hundred-and-one (15%) were over 100 tuns. When we examine the tunnage figures for the pre-Black Death ships then we find different results. There were 167 (37%) ships of more than one hundred tuns, while 189 (42.3%) of the 446 ships from before 1348 were between forty and one hundred tuns, 86 (19.2%) fell between twenty-one and forty tuns while only four were less than 20 tuns. It can be seen that from 1359, as compared with the period 1338–35, more vessels seem to be requisitioned for service that were between ten and forty tuns. In addition to this numerous vessels from the Reims fleet would, perhaps, appear in later fleets. It may be however that only the larger vessels from the Reims fleet were requisitioned in later fleets. Ipswich, for example supplied 105 ships to the fleets between 1324 and 1373 and of the twelve ships they provided in 1359 only four went onto to serve in future fleets, and none of these vessels was under 70 tuns.[41] This suggests that only the larger vessels from 1359 were targeted for service in later fleets.

Therefore, although it seems, on the surface, that the ships were becoming smaller in the middle of the fourteenth century, closer examination reveals that it is the unusually small tunnages of the vessels engaged in the Reims transport fleet that bring the mean tunnage figure down. How representative of the English merchant fleet were these 1359 ships is difficult to answer. The ships that transported the Black Prince to Gascony in 1355 were, on average, 60 tuns burthen. If we examine the 125 ships that participated in the 1338 fleet, that we have tunnage figures for, we arrive at a mean of 28 tuns.[42] Looking forward to

[40] *Foedera*, III, I, p. 412.

[41] C47/2/30, m. 2; C47/2/35; E36/204; *Norwell*; BL, Add MS 7967, fols 98v, 99r; BL, Stowe MS 553 fol. 77r; BL, Add MS 37494, fols 19d, 24v; E372/179, m. 44; E101/16/40; E101/18/3; E101/18/31; E101/19/32; E101/20/34; E101/21/7; E101/25/24, nos 6–10; E101/26/18, m. 1; E101/26/38, m. 2; E101/27/25, m. 2; E101/29/1, m. 1.

[42] Although the ships from this fleet are recorded in the Wardrobe book of William Norwell there are some Exchequer particulars that are linked into the Wardrobe system for this fleet, which do provide tunnage figures, see E101/21/7; E101/21/10; E101/21/12. In addition, a reduction in the population would not automatically lead to smaller ships. Building and paying for a vessel required a considerable outlay of valuable capital and it is more likely that a shipowner would continue to use the ships he currently possessed but allow smaller crews to operate them. For example, in 1336 the Exchequer provided £666 13s 4d in order to build the *Philippe* (the mast alone came to £10, see M. Prestwich, *Armies and warfare*, p. 267). Furthermore, in 1422 the barge *Marie Bretton* was sold to John Tendryng for £40, a significant

the fleets that sailed after 1359, we know that 593 vessels served in 1369, 1370 and 1373. Of these 593 ships we know the tunnage figures for 208 vessels and of these, 78 ships (37%) were under 40 tuns.[43] Indeed, it has been pointed out that there was no dramatic fall in ship size in the fourteenth century and throughout this period eighy-one per cent of ships in the Anglo-Gascon wine trade were of less than 100 tuns but sixteen per cent were between 150 and 200 tuns.[44] Hull was certainly re-engaging ships of over 100 tuns in its wine trade with Bordeaux in the later fourteenth century and in 1385 nine ships from Hull were sent to Bordeaux with a total tunnage of 1,261.[45]

The crew sizes certainly seem to have decreased during the post plague period; however, the overall mean is also affected by the unusually small crew attachments that served in the Reims transport fleet. And although there had been a reduction in the volume of trade that exceeded that of the population after the Black Death, it seems that, if anything, the same ships were being operated but by smaller crews. Why the Reims transport ships were smaller than usual is intriguing. Perhaps the simplest explanation lies in the fact that after the capture of Calais in 1347 any expedition using the port as a disembarkation point did not require large ships because of the narrow sea crossing between southern England and Calais.[46] That this was in the mind of the organisers of the 1359 expedition is evidenced by the fact that the requisition officers were specifically ordered not to arrest ships over 76 tuns.[47] It was also cheaper for the crown to requisition and employ smaller vessels, with smaller crews, on a 'ferry system' basis, whereby the ships would make more than one crossing. Looking further forward, the Black Death does not seem to have had any adverse effects on the transport fleets sailing in the 1370s, for which the English merchant fleet was still providing large vessels. This can be seen by examining the flotilla that transported John of Gaunt from Sandwich to France between April and September 1373, a fleet that averaged 77 tuns per ship.[48] Although far from perfect, the evidence suggests that perhaps the only significant effect of the Black Death on merchant shipping was to reduce the size of crews.[49]

sum, and it is likely that this ship would have cost considerably more to build from new, see W. J. Carpenter Turner, 'The building of the *GraceDieu*, *Valentine* and *Falconer*', p. 70.

43 BL, Add MS 37494, fols 17v–41v; E101/29/36; E101/30/28.

44 . W. Unger, *The ship in the medieval economy, 600–1600* (London, 1980), p. 163; W. R. Childs, *The trade and shipping of Hull*, p. 23.

45 W. R. Childs, *The trade and shipping of Hull*, p. 23.

46 It must also be noted that tunnage figures are notoriously difficult to interpret, see F. C. Lane, 'Tonnage, medieval and modern', *EcHR* 17 (1964), pp. 213–33, pp. 216–18.

47 *Foedera*, III, I, p. 412.

48 BL, Add MS 37494, fols 17v–24v. Although this account contains the names of more ships, only 112 have their tunnages recorded with them. The total tunnage from these 112 vessels was 8,643.

49 The custom accounts rarely provide the size of individual ships and generally only give an indication as to what they carried. For example, E122/56/24 records thirty-seven ships from

Port Resources

So far throughout this book we have analysed, and assessed, the contributions made by the merchant fleet to the wars of Edward II and Edward III between 1320 and 1360. However, in order to fully understand the totality of the service provided by the merchant marine it is necessary to calculate how many of the ships that served in the forty years covered by this study were individual vessels. Table 4.1 shows how many ships served throughout the Scottish and French wars, but this table does not take account of those ships that served more than once. Indeed, there are many ships, commanded by the same men, and from the same port, that served in more than one fleet. These should, therefore, only be counted once when trying to assess the true overall shipping contribution made by the English merchant marine to naval operations between 1320 and 1360.

Table 4.1 Total number of ships in operation, 1322–1360

Total number of ships	4,299
Ships from south	2,231
Ships from north	2,009
Total number of mariners	96,276
Mariners from south	38,688
Mariners from north	35,824
Total number of English and Welsh Ports	195
Foreign Ports (including Irish)	14

Note: The difference between numbers of mariners from the two admiralties and the overall total is because only the known number of mariners has been included. What affects the overall total is the 30,000 mariners that are estimated to have served in the Scottish campaigns, but where it is possible we can say that 8,138 mariners operated ships from the northern ports, while 6,116 manned vessels from the southern ports during the Scottish wars. The main issue with the Scottish ships lies with the 1333 expedition, and the victual ships, which are rarely given crew sizes. In addition the details for the numbers of mariners contain information relating to the diplomatic and seneschal fleets, noted in Table 3.3. Therefore, only the crew sizes, which the sources provide, are listed in the two mariners' sections of the table, while the overall number includes the estimation of the missing crews. There are fifty-nine foreign ships that served from 1320 to 1360. The table includes the data from the 1346 fleet, even though these cannot be compared with any source. The inclusion of these 'un-comparable ships' aims to show what the potential maximum number of ships was that served in both Scotland and France. In addition, there are more ships that can than be placed into a specific admiralty that cannot have the three identifiers applied to them. For example, some ships that served in the 1333 Scottish campaign have one identifier missing but can nonetheless be placed into an admiralty; these have been included in the table.

London which freighted a total of 286 tuns and 92 pipes of wine: and E122/57/10 details 191 ships which freighted 743 sacks of wool and 456 tuns, 12 pipes of wine out of Hull in one year. As such it is difficult to calculate the sizes of ships from the majority of the custom accounts. See also W. R. Childs, *The custom accounts of Hull, 1453–1490* (Leeds, 1986), p. xxi.

Table 4.2 Total number of individual english ships in operation, 1322–1360

Known individual ships	4,065
Southern vessels	2,142
Northern vessels	1,923

Note: In total 188 masters served more than once in the service of the crown. Of these 188 men, forty-four served more than twice. In total these men accounted for 478 separate voyages from 1322 to 1359. However, only 303 individual ships were used for these 478 voyages because 175 of the ships were used on more than one occasion. For example, a particular master might have participated in five expeditions, but only operated three different ships over these five campaigns. Thus although in Table 4.1 these vessels would be counted five times in Table 4.2 they are only counted three times. Therefore, the table has deducted these 'double-counted' vessels from the previous figures given in Table 4.1. As such there are 175 ships (or rather voyages) in Table 4.1 that have not been included in Table 4.2. Eighty-nine of these extra voyages were carried out by ships from the southern admiralty. But the table still includes those ships that are 'un-comparable', such as the 1346 Crécy fleet. Finally, it is likely that over 100 ships that sailed in 1342 did so in more than one fleet. Table 4.2 does not take account of these because of the nature of the evidence on the earl of Northampton's fleet (in that we have no details for 145 vessels that transported the earl).

As noted above, Table 4.1 lists the overall number of vessels that served throughout the Scottish and French wars, whereas Table 4.2 records the number of individual ships that actually served between 1320 and 1360 in naval operations. But there are slight problems with this figure. For example, the 747 ships that served as transport vessels in 1346 have been included even though we cannot compare these to any other ships because they are recorded in the sources without the names of the masters that operated them. In addition, there are other ships that cannot be compared using the following methodology, such as the thirteen vessels that transported Ralph Stafford to Gascony in 1345.[50] Nevertheless, it is important to include these 'un-comparable' ships because to exclude them completely would certainly lead to a gross underestimation of the contribution of the English merchant fleet to the maritime war during this period. The methodology used to determine unique ships involves matching three identifiers of information (port name, ship name, master's name) that the sources consistently provide. If the master of the same ship, from the same port can be seen serving in more than one fleet during 1320–60, for the purposes of Table 4.2 the vessel is only counted as one ship and not several. Of course, this methodology could still suffer from issues relating to double counting and conflation. Consequently, Appendix 2 below provides more detail on the strengths and weaknesses of this approach. Consultation of Appendix 2, coupled with the figures given in Table 4.2, shows that it would be possible to argue that at any time the king had access to probably 2,000–3,000 ships throughout the kingdom. It has been argued previously that the southern admiralty usually produced twice as many ships as the north.[51] However, a systematic survey of the available sources

[50] E101/25/3. This is because none of the vessels or their masters are named.

[51] G. R. Cushway, 'The lord of the sea', p. 179.

does not hold this to be entirely correct. Nevertheless, if we take account of the 'missing' fleets of 1345, 1355 and 1359 the southern admiralty may have produced more ships. Even if they did, however, it is unlikely that in the period 1320–60 any southern admiralty port supplied more ships than ports such as Hull, King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth.[52] Only the southern ports of Dartmouth and Winchelsea could compete with these three ports form the northern admiralty.

Table 4.2 shows that thousands of ships were engaged in military expeditions during this period. Yet, what the figure in this table represents is overall totals; what it fails to show is what proportion of a port's shipping resources it was likely to commit to the war effort in this period. This is an important consideration to take into account. For example, Great Yarmouth supplied the largest number of ships to the expeditions between 1320 and 1360. Yet other ports that provided fewer vessels may have actually contributed proportionally more of their maritime resources to the war effort, and as such may have suffered more than the larger ports. One way of addressing this issue is to take a sample using custom accounts from three ports to see how many home port ships sailed from that port in a year, and then compare the findings with the naval sources to see what proportion of their resources these ports were likely to have committed to the war effort.

The three ports that are analysed below are Great Yarmouth, Dover and Exeter. Exeter is the ideal place to begin the analysis owing to the exceptional survival of a detailed set of local port custom accounts. These documents not only record the international trade in commodities that were subject to national customs, such as wool and wine, but also include evidence for coastal trade that is invisible in the national custom accounts.[53] By examining the records that date from 1315 to 1321 it is possible to say that 311 ships docked in Exeter. A

[52] Between 1320 and 1360 the three east coast ports of Hull, King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth contributed 17% of all the 4,065 individual ships that participated in the expeditions. This should not be seen as too remarkable because in the 1204 subsidy Hull contributed a total sum of £344 14s 4d, making it the most important port in the north-east, while the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk contained some of the richest tax vills in the kingdom and, along with the counties on the Welsh borders, had the greatest concentration of markets, thus making East Anglia a major centre for trade. Moreover, the east coast ports were also the dominant trading centres for the majority of England's wool and cloth trade during the fourteenth century. They continued to be the main centres of export and import for these commodities until the rise of London in the fifteenth century. See B. Waites, 'The medieval ports and trade of north-east Yorkshire', *MM* 63 (1977), pp. 137–49, p. 139; B. M. S. Campbell and K. Bartley, *England on the eve of the Black Death: an atlas of lay lordship, land and wealth, 1300–49* (Manchester, 2006), pp. 302, 306, 310–12, 324–35, 343; M. Bonney, 'The English medieval wool and cloth trade: new approaches for the local historian', *The Local Historian*, 22 (February, 1992), pp. 18–40, pp. 27–35.

[53] The best guide to the accounts are to be found in M. Kowaleski, *Local markets and regional trade in medieval Exeter* (Cambridge, 1995), and *idem*, *Local custom accounts of the port of Exeter, 1266–1321* (Exeter, 1993). It will be the latter book, which contains full transcriptions of the accounts, which will be used as the foundation for this ports contributions.

third (100) during this period were from Teignmouth, Exmouth or Exeter.[54] However, when we apply the three-identifier methodology used elsewhere in this book this number of ships can be reduced to seventy.[55] Nevertheless, this is still an average of fourteen ships per year. This number of ships represents only a fraction of the port's maritime resources because in the period 1302–20, 107 Exeter ships were listed in the local accounts, while nearly a quarter of all the 641 ships that docked in Exeter between 1266 and 1321 originated from that port.[56] Furthermore, the numbers of Exeter ships visible in the accounts is variable. For example, between 1316 and 1317 eighteen out of the forty-seven ships (38%) that were recorded through the accounts were Exeter vessels, compared with twenty-five of the seventy-one ships (35%) in 1319–20.

If we now turn to the navy accounts that relate to Exeter, Exmouth and Teignmouth we can see that the largest number of ships that these ports supplied to any one expedition were the sixteen vessels of 1342.[57] The custom accounts show us that between 1266 and 1321, a fifty-five year period, Exeter possessed some seventy-five individual ships. Compare this with evidence recorded in the naval sources between 1320 and 1360, a similar time period, and we can see that Exeter supplied eight-nine individual vessels to the naval operations during those years. So, accepting the limitations of the exercise, it would seem that over a considerable length of time Exeter was committing perhaps 20 to 30 per cent of its available shipping, rising to 50 per cent in 1342. This being said not all Exeter ships would be requisitioned owing to their small size (fishing boats for example), as such the impact might have been greater than these figures suggest.

In addition to these issues the Custom accounts are also notoriously difficult to use when trying to quantify the numbers of home port ships. For example, an examination of Great Yarmouth's accounts will only reveal those ships trading in that port. As such any Great Yarmouth vessel trading elsewhere will be included in another port's accounts.[58] Unfortunately, the huge task of collating all the existing custom accounts in a database, so that the overall shipping capacity of a particular port would be revealed in its entirety, is beyond the scope of this present book. Nevertheless some remarks can be given on the topic. For example, between 1320 and 1321 of the thirty ships visible in the custom records relating to Great Yarmouth half were from other ports, while in the period 1321 to 1322

54 In the naval accounts these latter two ports are usually connected to Exeter and as such it is impossible to distinguish these from the accounts.

55 *Ibid*., pp. 130–201.

56 M. Kowaleski, *Local markets*, table 6.3, p. 240 and *idem*, *Local custom accounts*, table 1, pp. 14–16. Kowaleski states that of the 641 vessels that were recorded only 302 were individual.

57 E36/204, p. 238.

58 For the difficulties of using the custom accounts, see M. M. Postan, *Medieval trade and finance*, pp. 355–56; M. Rorke, 'English and Scottish overseas trade, 1300–1600', *EcHR*, 49 (2006), pp. 265–288, pp. 266–67.

only three ships out of eleven were from other ports.[59] But these figures do not reveal the true capacity of Great Yarmouth's shipping. From 16 April 1323 to 1 February 1325 of the 116 ships that visited Boston 15 per cent were from Great Yarmouth.[60] Moreover, in the period 1320–21, 4 per cent of the ships docking in Exeter were from Great Yarmouth.[61] Indeed, the men of Great Yarmouth themselves stated that they had ninety great ships in this period and sixty-five of these were engaged in the wine trade at Bordeaux.[62] In fact a comparison with consecutive transport fleets containing ships from Great Yarmouth shows that it is likely that this port had at least 150 ships available at any one time. For example, only three ships out of the sixty-one vessels that participated in the 1338 transport fleet had sailed in the previous flotilla of 1337 when twenty Great Yarmouth ships transported the bishop of Lincoln to the Low Countries.[63] As such, if we were to say that between 1320 and 1325 Great Yarmouth had access to 150 ships at any one time, and the most they contributed to a single campaign was the sixty-one vessels they supplied in 1338, it could be said that at the most this port supplied 40 per cent of its available shipping to one campaign.[64]

A similar comparison between Sandwich and Dover also shows the problems of accounting for the movements of shipping. From 1320 to 1323 thirty-eight ships were recorded through the Sandwich customs, yet thirteen (34%) of these were Dover ships, while only three were home port vessels.[65] Taken further, Dover supplied thirty-one ships for naval and transportation purposes between 1320 and 1360 and the most they contributed to any one campaign was nineteen ships in 1342.[66] Consequently, are we to assume that in 1342 Dover committed all its available resources to the war effort? It is probable that it did not, and while Edward's officers were arresting ships many of Dover's vessels were either at sea or trading in other ports. Indeed, what this short discussion reveals is that ships

59 E122/148/23; E122/148/24; E122/148/25.

60 E122/6/16; E122/6/17; E122/6/18.

61 M. Kowaleski, *Local customs*, pp. 186–201.

62 A. Saul, 'Great Yarmouth', p. 108.

63 E101/20/16; *Norwell*, pp. 379–82.

64 For the 1342 expedition Great Yarmouth supplied thirty-three ships, while at the siege of Calais it contributed fourteen; it supplied fifty-four ships in 1359. In all it would seem fairly conclusive that Great Yarmouth had at least 150 ships regularly in, or around, its port that the requisition officials could access. Indeed, we should consider the fact that if as many as sixty-five ships were involved in continental trade then many of Great Yarmouth's vessels would not be in their home port at times of requisition. For Great Yarmouth's naval service, see: E101/16/40; E101/18/3; E101/19/2; E101/19/6; E101/20/1; E101/20/4; E101/20/16; E101/21/4; E101/21/10; E101/22/25; E101/25/9; E101/25/24, nos, 17–30; E101/26/38; E101/27/22; E101/27/25; C47/2/25, no. 15; C47/2/35; BL, Add MS 7967, fols 96r, 98r 98v; BL, Stowe MS 553, fols 77r, 77v; E372/179, m. 44; *Norwell*, pp. 379–82; E36/204, pp. 234–35, 240; *CCR 1321–24*, p. 90; *CCR, 1339–41*, p. 143; *CCR, 1343–46*, pp. 12–32; *CPR, 1327–30*, pp. 10, 104.

65 E122/124/24; E122/124/25.

66 For Dover's involvement in the maritime expeditions, see E101/16/34, no. 17; E101/19/22, m. 3v; E101/19/38, m. 7; E101/19/39, m. 3; E36/204, p. 225.

were rarely recorded through their home port's custom accounts and that in any evaluation of a port's shipping resources we should take account of the numerous 'invisible' ships that participated in coastal trade and the trade in non-customable commodities.[67] Nevertheless, what the figures also reveal is that ports like Exeter, which supplied eighty-nine individual ships to the wars between 1320 and 1360, were on average contributing perhaps 25 to 40 per cent of their available shipping to any one expedition.[68] Thus, although Great Yarmouth supplied the largest number of ships to the campaigns, it was nevertheless providing only the same number of vessel in proportion to its wealth and shipping resources as smaller ports.

The movement of shipping from port to port, and the likelihood that vessels were requisitioned away from home, whilst loading or discharging cargo, or else looking for freight, raises the question of disruption to trade caused by the war effort. At this point it must be kept in mind that the sources are not complete enough to calculate the shipment of goods from one port to another for the reason that after the national custom had been paid any coastal trading enterprise, apart form the odd exceptions, is generally unavailable. As such we are rarely left with detailed comparative material. This latter point would be crucial if, like Exeter, the majority of trade carried out by English ports was coastal. Nevertheless, if ten ships from one port were requisitioned whilst trading in another town would this arrest result in loss of revenue for the shipowner and those merchants who had cargo to deliver or pick up? In the custom accounts relating to Sandwich we have already seen how thirteen Dover vessels were present at Sandwich between 1320 and 1323. If they were arrested in Sandwich what would be the likely financial result of the loss of trade? That such cases happened is made clear by the evidence pertaining to the 1342 Brittany campaign. In 1342 the sources show

[67] See, for example, M. Kowaleski, *Local markets*, Chapter 6, which shows that 70% of Exeter's trade was coastal. Although Kowaleski does suggest that Exeter may have been unusual in this regard due to its large hinterland she does nonetheless say that such figures for coastal trade have implications for other port towns (pp. 5, 33); R. H. Britnell, *Growth and Decline in Colchester, 1300–1525* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 70, who argues that most of Hythe's trade was coastal. W. R. Childs, 'Devon's overseas trade', p. 84 suggests that Dartmouth and Plymouth may have been heavily involved in coastal trade. Finally a large proportion of trade carried on through Norwich and other East Anglian ports was probably coastal, see P. Dunn, 'After the Black Death', pp. 3, 196–258; M. Rorke, 'English and Scottish overseas trade', pp. 267–68 who notes that 'not all exports were customable, and the records make it difficult, if not impossible, to discern certain trades'. This is also a possible explanation as to why it is assumed that the majority of the export trade in England was in the hands of foreign merchants, when it is in fact more likely that these individuals were recorded in the accounts of a particular port rather than that port's own merchants, who were in fact trading elsewhere, and as such recorded through other towns' custom records. On the dominance of foreign merchants, see N. S. B. Gras, *The early English customs system* (Cambridge, 1918), pp. 110–11.

[68] Exeter's naval contribution is recorded on, E101/17/3 m. 6b; E101/17/24 m. 4; E101/17/35; E101/19/16, mm. 3, 4, 6; E101/1938, m. 3; E101/19/39, m. 2; E101/25/9; E101/27/24, m. 1; E372/179, m. 43; E372/187, m. 43; BL, Add MS 7967, fol. 97v; *Norwell*, p. 371; E36/204, p. 238.

that early in the requisition process eighteen ships from Dover were mistakenly recorded as coming from Sandwich.[69] Only when the final accounts were prepared was this mistake rectified. From the point of view of this discussion, however, that eighteen ships from Dover were arrested while visiting Sandwich could have unduly affected that port's trade in a variety of ways. It is difficult to know how large these vessels were and what cargo they would have carried. This being so if we consider that these ships could have freighted nearly 1,000 lasts of herring, or 1,500 tuns of wine, we can see the possible effects that ship requisition could have on a port's trading enterprise.[70] Indeed, similar loss of trade is highlighted by examining other ports. On 22 October 1377, two ships from King's Lynn exported from Boston 192 sacks of wool, sixty-eight cloves of wool and ninety-four sarplars of wool, raising the spectre of significant lost earnings. In custom alone these two cargos were worth £511 1s 9d.[71]

Accepting that it is certain that it happened, and that evidence is uneven, vessels that were arrested away from their home ports were likely to be found in nearer rather than distant ports. In 1327 out of thirty-one ships that were arrested in Devonshire only three were from ports outside of that county. The closest port that a ship came from that was outside Devon was Lyme Regis in Dorset, while the vessel that was arrested furthest away from its home port was the *Mariote* of Drogheda commanded by James de Cunigham.[72] Moreover, as far as we can tell, there is no indication that the farther away from its home port a ship was when requisitioned the larger it would be because the *Mariote* was recorded as a ship of 50 tuns, which is not overly large for the period. The major problem, however, of understanding this issue is that even if a ship was arrested at another port, in the final documentation that was submitted at the Exchequer it would be listed under its home port rather than the port of arrest.

Yet a cautionary note needs to be struck in relation to the effect of ship requisition on the conduct of trade, for it is likely that in the majority of cases when a ship was arrested it was given plenty of time to make its intended journey. In Chapter 1 it was shown that when a vessel was requisitioned the crew were given an up-front payment in order to guarantee their appearance at the port of embarkation. In all cases the date of the muster was usually at least two to six months after the ship's arrest, and with rare exceptions, it would seem

[69] E36/204, p. 225; C47/2/35, m. 2. See, Chapter 1 above for a discussion on this.

[70] The 1,000 lasts of herrings or the 1,500 tuns of wine are taken from two ships that freighted such goods from Exeter in 1310/11. They have merely been chosen to highlight the possible amounts of goods freighted by ships, see M. Kowaleski, *Local custom accounts*, pp. 118, 119.

[71] S. H. Rigby, ed. *The overseas trade of Boston in the reign of Richard II* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 11, 12. A clove was a measure of wool that weighed seven pounds, whilst a sack of wool weighed 364 pounds or the fleeces of roughly 260 sheep, see M. Kowaleski, *The hanever's accounts of the earldom and duchy of Cornwall, 1287–1356* (Exeter, 2001), pp. 324, 326.

[72] E101/17/35.

that, the ship's crew would be given plenty of time to complete their trading voyage. Indeed, if the master was not the owner, or had no shares in the vessel, he may have found the notion of gaining an up-front payment from a king's clerk an attractive offer. In fact the success of the requisitioning procedure can be partly explained by suggesting that in some cases the shipowner was forced into providing his ship for a payment his crew received while trading in another port. Although in this period a shipmaster could be the owner of a vessel, or could have shares in the ship he commanded, it was increasingly the case that during the fourteenth century shipmasters were becoming hired hands who usually had no commercial connection with the vessel they commanded. In short, because in some cases the crew had no stake in the cargo they were freighting, payment by the crown did not result in any loss to them and the crew may have been eager to enlist the ship.[73]

Another important issue relating to the effects that requisition would have had on the economy of local ports concerns the time of year when ships were arrested. This is an important issue because in this period shipowners never challenged the king's right to requisition ships; rather their complaints concerned the length of time they remained under arrest.[74] It was the case that the preparation for most of the fleets that sailed in the fourteenth century began in the months of April, May and June, with the expectation that they would transport the army in July.[75] When it is considered that a third (32%) of all the voyages that transported goods shipped by Norwich merchants in the period 1377 to 1399 were undertaken in the months of June, July and August it is understandable why shipowners and merchants vented frustration at the requisition process.[76]

The crown must have been aware of these issues and the requisition process was in part designed to minimise as much as possible the effects of these problems by sending clerks out to meet with shipowners in the months preceding a campaign. This was done so that the king would know how many ships were available for requisition.[77] However, this also allowed the shipowners to know when a vessel was likely to be requisitioned, whilst also allowing them to choose which ships should be supplied to the crown. This gave them the opportunity to discuss amongst themselves the best way of meeting the demands of the king. This meant they would be able to place local concerns at the heart of these discussions. It may be that merchants choose for requisition vessels that were owned by only one person and they offered compensation to the owner for providing this ship. Alternatively a ship owned by several people may be offered because the burden, or rather costs, of requisition were spread across several individuals. Moreover, because charter-parties were likely to be agreed in advance, knowledge

73 R. Ward, *The world of the medieval shipmaster*, Chapter 3.

74 J. Sherborne, 'The English Navy', p. 165.

75 See above Chapter 3.

76 P. Dunn, 'After the Black Death' , Table 3, p. 198.

77 See Chapter 1 pp. 19–25.

of when a ship was going to be in the service of the king meant that vessels were not hired out to merchants at times when they would not be available. In short, the consultations between the crown and shipowners would allow the latter to have some form of control over which ships were arrested, and at the same time they would know not to conclude hire agreements during these periods. Knowledge of the time when a campaign was to be launched would also allow merchants to plan ahead for the difficulties that may occur due to lack of carrying capacity. Although this would not avoid the disruption to trade that requisitioning undoubtedly had, it at least shows that the process was managed so that as least confusion as possible would be created. Consequently, in the period 1324–60 although ship requisition undoubtedly affected a port's trading capacity a well-managed and careful process would seek to limit this.

It is undeniable, however, that as the war progressed requisition must have had an impact on a port's trade. In the 1370s the Commons in parliament stated on numerous occasions that the requisition of ships had a negative impact on trade and shipping.[78] In 1382, and probably in response to these complaints, Richard II enrolled a statute forbidding shipment of denizen goods in foreign ships.[79] What effect such measures had is difficult to say. In assessing these claims, however, we have to take account of the possibility that the Commons was conflating several issues. For example, since 1348 England had not only been at war but also suffered the effects of the Black Death. Moreover, it is known that in the period 1340–60 the export of wool underwent large fluctuations in prices and volume of exports.[80] Of course some of this was offset by the rise in English cloth exports, but in the second half of the fourteenth century the Bordeaux wine trade also collapsed.[81] In addition we have to take account of the various schemes that the crown implemented in the period 1338–53 in order to control various aspects of the wool trade, and through this taxation. It is also worth bearing in mind that, on occasions, contemporaries could fail to see the connection between economics, warfare and politics as well as modern governments. The reform of the wool trade implemented in the 1350s by William Edington produced some remarkable results in terms of profits for the crown, but while contemporaries saw this as good government planning this success owed more to the general improvements in European trade.[82] It is worthy of note that between 1324 and 1359, the period which saw the greatest burdens placed on the merchant fleet, the merchants in parliament rarely complained about the effects of requisition. Indeed, in the vast majority of cases grievances usually centred on the oppressive

78 See, for example, *RP* V, pp 260–61.

79 D. Highes, *Illustrations of Chaucer's England*, p. 134.

80 S. L. Waugh, *England in the reign of Edward III* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 58–75.

81 R. W. Unger, 'The tonnage of Europe's merchant fleets', p. 255.

82 W. M. Ormrod, 'The English crown and the customs', *EHR* 40 (1981), pp. 21–40.

nature of the commissioners of aray and other land related military services.[83] This suggests that it was not until after the resumption of war in 1369–70 that the merchants began to complain about ship requisition. In short the reasons for a possible reduction in shipping in the 1370s are more complex than the complaints about requisition mentioned by the Commons.

It is within this complex jigsaw of shipping resources and requisition that we need to take account of the figures presented in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2. Although the numbers of vessels recorded in these tables may seem large it is argued here that the maritime resources of England have hitherto been seriously underestimated. In part this is because previous research has generally relied on the evidence gained from examining the national custom accounts. Yet it has been shown above that in cases such as Exeter the vast majority of a port's trade could be coastal and thus invisible to the national customs. That English merchants found it easier to employ foreign ships to take their merchandise to the continent should come as no surprise because by doing so they automatically eliminated all the risks of losing their vessels to piracy or acts of aggression. This does not mean, however, that they did not own ships, only that they chose to use them in the re-export trade. Indeed, the large numbers of ships engaged in this enterprise should not be underestimated and there was a flourishing inshore trade network between regional capitals and the 'galaxies of minute neighbouring creeks and havens'.[84] Even more important was the trade between regional head ports such as Hull and Newcastle. The fact that this trade is largely hidden does not detract from its potential size. This is borne out by the rare survivals of local port customs accounts, such as those of Exeter, and petitions from merchants. The evidence revealed in such documents provides clues to the complexities of trade in this period and shows that the national custom accounts may be a flawed source for estimating the size of the English merchant fleet. For example, in the mid fourteenth century a group of five merchants, two from England and three from Bordeaux, freighted a cargo of wine in the ship *Gracedieu*. This ship was from London and commanded by one William atte Ponde. While this ship was transporting its cargo of wine from Bordeaux to La Crotoy it called into the port of Eastbourne in Sussex to pick up an English pilot who would sail the ship from Eastbourne to northern France.[85] As such because the ship never unloaded its cargo in England it is possible that it escaped paying any custom. Indeed, many English ship owners were exempt from import charges, and as such their vessels are sometimes invisible to us in the sources.[86] Another intriguing piece

[83] *RP IV*, p. 393.

[84] G. V. Scammell, 'English merchant shipping', p. 329.

[85] SC8/168/8385.

[86] See, for example, H. Clarke, 'The archaeology, history and architecture of the medieval ports of the east coast of England, with special reference to King's Lynn, Norfolk', in *The archaeology of medieval ships and harbours in northern Europe: papers based on those who*

of evidence relates to a petition of Nicholas Pyk. In the 1330s Pyk sent one of his wine ships from Bordeaux to Normandy. Unfortunately this ship was forced into Southampton by a storm where it was arrested for the king's service. The result of this was that Pyk had to unload his wine in Southampton and re-ship it to Normandy in another vessel.[87] Nicholas Pyk was an influential English merchant and shipowner and what this shows is that many English merchants were involved in a complex network of trade routes that on occasions did not involve landing, or planning to land, cargo in England.[88] As such there were certainly English ships freighting numerous cargoes that escaped the clutches of the custom collectors by virtue of the nature of their business.

What the above evidence highlights is that in fourteenth-century England there existed a trade network that to us is 'invisible' in the surviving sources. We know this trade existed because of the huge size of the supply and transport fleets that were raised. It is likely that the king found the vessels for these armadas from among the large numbers of coastal trading vessels that existed at this time. Evidence of this is easier to see in the Tudor period when such trade became subject to customs, revealing a large a vibrant trade between ports such as Berwick, Newcastle, Hull, Great Yarmouth and London.[89] As one commentator on this trade noted, 'even more remarkable and more eloquent as to the thriving state of English shipping are the figures for coastal traffic which are available from the mid-sixteenth century. How and when this native predominance was established it is impossible to say'.[90] It is argued here that this predominance already existed in the fourteenth century and the evidence for this is the large supply and transport fleets that were raised during this period. Commentators who have underestimated the size of the English merchant fleet are wont to stress its limitations because they have usually relied on previous studies based on the national customs that show that English trade was dominated by foreign shipowners. By doing so they have ignored the military naval sources and evidence from the surviving local port customs; both point to the need for a critical revaluation of this belief. Indeed, in 1372 English merchants themselves stated that in the period 1330–50 English shipping was 'noble and plentiful in all ports'.[91]

presented at an international symposium on boat and ship archaeology at Bremerhaven in 1997, ed. S. McGrail, BAR international series 66 (Greenwich, 1979), pp. 155–66.

87 SC8/168/8385.

88 Pyk was involved in requisitioning ships for the 1338–40 campaigns. His role in maritime affairs was not always honourable and in 1342 several of his ships were involved in the '*Taryte*' affair, although it is unlikely that Pyk directly took part in this incident. He was also influential within the merchant community of London. See, E101/20/39; *CCR, 1341–43*, p. 529; E40/1719.

89 G. V. Scammell, 'English merchant shipping', p. 329.

90 *Ibid*, p. 337.

91 *RP* V, p. 260.

In conclusion, although over a 40-year period the ports examined above contributed hundreds of ships to the expeditions, it is likely that this should be seen as 20 to 40 per cent of their available resources. Moreover, it is also clear that ships were rarely sat in their home ports for long periods, a problem that must have affected ship requisition.[92] As such it is argued here that officials who arrested ships for the crown were probably recording no more than the vessels that the local bailiffs, or town dignitaries, had allocated for such purposes, which amounted to a fair proportion of the port's available shipping resources.[93] Indeed, considering the fact that bailiffs of sea ports were, on occasions, actively involved in ship requisition it is likely that they acted favourably towards their fellow shipowners and that they also placed local considerations above that of national ones.[94] This would have reduced friction between the king and his subjects, but would also have made the arresting officials' work easier owing to the fact that many of that port's ships would simply not be docked waiting to be requisitioned, as most vessels would not spend long periods idle in port. This point is of major significance because it shows that rather than possessing 'no strategic imagination and for years consistently failing to appreciate sea power' Edward III and his ministers had a sound maritime policy based on how they used the resources available to them.[95] In short they ensured that they did not create a situation in which they denuded every port of its shipping. Finally, that ships' crews were given ample time from arrest to appearance at muster suggests that the owners of the vessels could allow for such loss of commercial activity.

92 This point also explains the apparent differences between the two documents relating to the Brittany campaigns (C47/2/35 and E36/204). It will be remembered from the above discussion in Chapter 1 that several ships were recorded as originating from Sandwich in the former account, while in the latter source their home ports had been altered to Dover. As we can see above Dover's ships were by far the most frequent visitors to the port of Sandwich, a fact that could complicate the requisition process. This section in no way reinforces the idea that because many ships were at sea, or in other ports, that the crown would find it difficult to requisition a sufficient number of vessels from a particular port. It has been suggested that if many ships were at sea this would severely reduce the availability of vessels for use by the crown (J. S. Kepler, 'Naval impressment', p. 73). This view, however, underestimates the size of the English merchant marine. In addition, this argument also assumes that the clerks would arrest every single ship they could within any port they visited. Such actions would create political problems for the king and would increase hostility to future ship requisition.

93 This point is emphasised even more when it is remembered that arrest orders were issued weeks before the crown's officials would be able to directly visit a port, thus giving the port's officials plenty of time to organise a proportional contribution of ships to the war effort.

94 For bailiffs involvement in ship requisition, see G. R. Cushway, 'The lord of the sea', p. 158.

95 For the comment that Edward did not understand sea power, see D. Loades, *England's maritime empire*, p. 3.

Shipmaster Service and Mariners

The overall total of 96,276 mariners involved in the operations of the period is obviously an overestimation.[96] Unfortunately, the sources make it impossible to offer a more accurate figure. For example, Great Yarmouth contributed 347 ships to the king's wars in this period and 8,851 mariners manned these vessels. This total, which is more than twice the pre-Black Death population of the town, must conceal a great deal of repeat service.[97] However, what is surprising is that in one fleet in 1342 Great Yarmouth supplied thirty-three ships manned by 924 mariners, which means that in one expedition, at the same point in time, a quarter of all Great Yarmouth's population appears to have sailed on board the town's ships.[98] This is an interesting point, suggesting that either that the town's population was totally wedded to service at sea, or that manpower for the fleets was raised not just from the town but also from the outlying villages and surrounding areas. More likely, however, is that during the preparations for a campaign mariners were arrested through commissions of array alongside the general levies from the areas of the coast designated 'maritime lands' by the crown.[99] This would not have impeded a ship's progress at sea because not all men on board a vessel would have to be experienced seamen. A ship with a single mast only required a small group of skilled mariners who could direct the other crew members to do the work. Thus, what the commissions of array provided is the brute force needed to handle the tackle on board a ship.[100] In relation to the commissions of array having access to manpower from a port's hinterland it is worth bearing in mind that Great Yarmouth was in fairly close proximity to Norwich, a town with an estimated population of 18,000–25,000.[101] Moreover,

96 The total numbers of mariners recorded in Table 4.1 are calculated by adding together all the ships' crews for which data exists. Included are estimations of mariner numbers for the campaigns where we have no such information: for example 1333, for which we have no accurate crew sizes.

97 A. Saul, 'Great Yarmouth and the hundred years war', p. 105 estimates the population before the plague to be 4,500. However, Saul does make the suggestion that the town could have had a population of anywhere up to 10,000 before the Black Death, see A. Saul, 'English towns in the middle ages', *JMH*, 8 (1982), pp. 75–88.

98 E36/204, pp. 234, 235, 240; C47/2/35; *CCR, 1343–46*, pp. 128–32.

99 M. Hughes, 'The fourteenth century French raids on Hampshire and the Isle of Wight' in *Arms, armies and fortifications in the hundred years war*, ed. A. Curry, M. Hughes, pp. 121–43, p. 140 states that the 'maritime land' extended six leagues from the shore.

100 Alternatively the mariners for the ships could be gathered from the surrounding area of the embarkation port, such as seems to have happened during the weeks leading up to the St Sardos campaign. It is known that admirals did sometimes work alongside commissioners of array during the preparations of a campaign and so it is possible that men were arrested for service during the general round up of county levies. On the admirals working alongside commissioners of array, see R. M. Hedley, 'The administration of the navy', pp. 20–33.

101 P. Dunn, 'After the Black Death', pp. 27–30.

in the 1330s Norwich had undergone large scale migration from the rural hinterland into the city, which provides evidence that communities in this period were not static. Finally, many Norwich merchants chose to use Great Yarmouth as the port from which to ship their goods.[102] As such it is not going too far to argue that in this period Norfolk had a mobile population that in parts was quite demographically dense.

It is beyond doubt, therefore, that there is a high proportion of repeat service among the mariner group. Taking this into account perhaps only half the numbers of seafarers recorded in Table 4.1 were in fact individuals. But again, it is worth bearing in mind that there are probably as many as 1,000 ships missing from the extant source evidence. However, we can be more precise in our conclusions concerning the masters. Of the 3,051 masters we know by name, 188 commanded vessels over more than one expedition.[103] What this seems to suggest is that the merchant fleet in the fourteenth century was of a significant size, for otherwise we would expect to find a higher rate of repeat service.[104]

[102] *Ibid*., pp. 193–202.

[103] This number is calculated from Table 4.1.The apparent discrepancy between the total number of masters here and the overall total of ships given in Table 4.2 is because there are many occasions when a master might appear with a particular named ship, but where the name of the port is not provided by the source, so we can name more masters than we can ships. The masters we can not name are from the 747 ships that sailed in the 1346 fleet who cannot be named, neither can 117 from 1342, and there are further 106 ships were the master's name is not recorded. This is calculated by matching the three identifiers discussed earlier. Although these masters served more than once this does not necessarily mean they operated different ships and many commanded the same vessel on more than one occasion. For example, Peter Seaman commanded the *Katerine* on four separate occasions in 1336, 1337, 1338 and 1342. See E101/19/38, m. 3; Norwell, p. 368; E36/204, p. 233. That many masters are unidentifiable is due to the Crécy fleet sources, the absences from the fleet that transported the earl of Northampton to Brittany in 1342, and those ships that are named in the Scottish wars with no master. In addition, there are other payrolls, such as the Black Prince's 1355 transport fleet, which are damaged: *CCR, 1318–23*, p. 660; *CPR, 1321–24*, p. 114; *CPR, 1327–30*; *CPR, 1334–38*, pp. 98; *CCR, 1343–46*, pp. 128–32; BL, Add MS 7976, fols 94r–99v; BL, Stowe MS 553, fols 76v, 77v; BL, Add MS 7967, fols 98r, 99v; BL, Cotton MS, Nero C.VIII, fols 262v, 264r, 265v, 266r, 266v E101/15/36; E101/16/7, m. 11; E101/16/16, m. 6; E101/16/34, no. 17; E101/16/40, roll 1, main roll; E101/17/3, mm. 2, 6d, 7, 8; E101/17/10, m. 1; E101/17/24, m. 4, 4d; E101/17/35; E101/18/3; E101/18/28, m. 2; E101/18/31, m. 1; E101/18/35; E101/18/36; E101/19/3, m. 8; E101/19/4, mm. 4, 5, 7; E101/19/6, m. 1–4, 2d; E101/19/22, mm. 2, 6d; E101/19/28, m. 3; E101/19/32; E101/19/38, mm. 2, 3, 7; E101/19/39, m. 3; E101/20/6; E101/21/7, m. 3; E101/21/10, mm. 2, 3; E101/21/13, m. 3; E101/23/22; E101/25/9; E101/25/24, no. 32; E101/26/38; E101/27/15, m. 2; E101/27/22, mm. 2, 3, 4; E101/27/24; E101/27/25, m. 2; C47/2/25, no.15; C47/2/30, mm. 1d, 2d; C47/2/35; E101/20/4, m. 7; *Rot. Scot*. I, pp. 523, 586.

[104] This small number of repeat servers was in many ways mirrored by the service records of the men-at-arms. A recent examination of the Falkirk campaign of 1298 showed that at the time of that campaign many were 'relative novices in war' and that, on average, it was usual for knights to participate in royal-led expeditions 4.79 times in their whole career in arms, see D. Simpkin, *The English aristocracy at war*, tables 3.1–3.4, pp. 84–90.

Although we cannot be certain how much repetition of service there was in the overall mariner numbers, we can, nonetheless, make firm conclusions by examining the naval careers of some individual masters. Walter atte Lane from Weymouth served on six separate occasions between 1322 and 1338. He operated the *Richgayne* in 1322, when that ship was part of the supply fleet for the Scottish campaign of that year, before commanding the same ship in the transport flotilla that conveyed the earl of Surrey to Gascony in 1325. In 1326 he was employed as master of the *Richegayne* for the last time when that ship was part of the armada that was raised to protect the coast from the threatened invasion of Roger Mortimer and Queen Isabella. He then escaped service for ten years before reappearing as the master of the *Cristiane* in 1337. His final period of service came in 1338 when he again commanded the *Cristiane*.[105] John le Longe of King's Lynn served through four campaigns as master of four different ships. He began his service in the king's wars in 1324 as master of the *Wisest* before going on to serve in 1333 as commander of the *Mariole* during Edward III's siege of Berwick. Two years later he commanded the *Peter* in Edward III's largest Scottish campaign. Longe made his final appearance in 1347 at the siege of Calais as master of the *Seintemarieship*. Consequently, through his naval career Longe participated in two notable sieges that involved combined land and maritime operations. Yet John's career was not without blemish and in 1340 although the ship he was commanding (the *Seintermarieship*) had been requisitioned John failed to appear at the port of embarkation.[106] Robert Tynwhit of Great Yarmouth also had an active naval career.[107] He participated in four campaigns including the battle of Sluys in 1340 and the siege of Calais in 1347. Consequently, within seven years Tynwhit experienced a hard-fought battle at sea and took part in the largest military expedition ever launched in the fourteenth century. The mariner William Fille of Great Yarmouth served five times in the wars of the period. He first appears as master of the *Margrete* a vessel that participated in the diplomatic flotilla that transported the bishop of Lincoln to Dortrecht in 1337. In the following year he participated in the Low Countries army transport fleet as master of the *Cog John*. In that same year he returned to Flanders as commander of the same ship with a cargo of wool. In 1340 he fought at the battle of Sluys as master of the *Margrete*, before going on to command the *Beton*, a vessel that transported part of the king's army to Brittany in 1342. His final period of service came in 1347 when he commanded the *James* during the siege of Calais.[108] This evidence reminds us that just as the knights, esquires and archers of Edward III's armies accumulated military experience during these decades, so too did shipmasters.

[105] *CPR, 1321–24*, p. 114; E101/17/3, m. 3; E101/17/24, m. 4; E101/19/38, m. 3; E101/19/39, m. 3.

[106] E101/18/28, m. 2; E101/18/31, m. 1; E101/19/3, m. 8; E101/25/24, no. 32; C47/2/30, m. 2d.

[107] C47/2/35; E101/21/10, m. 5; E101/22/25, m. 1; E101/25/24/, n. 23.

[108] E101/20/16; E101/21/10, m. 4; E101/22/25, m. 3; E36/204, p. 234; E101/25/24, no. 21.

Beyond the careers of individual shipmasters we are able to perceive familial groups within the port communities contributing their expertise to the Edwardian wars. William and Alan Littlebod of Canterbury, father and son, sailed their two ships, the *Mighel* and the *Peter*, to Scotland in 1322 to deliver victuals to Edward II's army.[109] Roger Hammond, from Romney, and his son, Roger Hammond junior, both sailed in the Brittany transport fleet of 1342.[110] Four members of the Box family, Richard, Henry, Thomas and William, from Great Yarmouth, were active in 1338, 1342, 1347 and 1359. What is also interesting is that none of the Box family commanded the same ships, which implies they were hired hands rather than shipowners.[111]

But two Exchequer accounts, one from 1337 and another dating from 1340, are perhaps the most intriguing documents that highlight familial relationships at sea. The first source records the names of forty men-at-arms, forty archers and fifty mariners that served onboard the *Gracedieu* of King's Lynn from 8 June 1337 to 15 August 1338.[112] This ship was put to sea to search for a Scottish pirate named William Hoth. However, an examination of the names of the mariners vividly illuminates the close relationships that could exist aboard vessels during this period. There is a John, Roger and William Davy amongst the crew, in addition to a Robert and John Cole and a William de Cokesford and a Geoffrey de Cokesford. Indeed seventeen (34%) members of the crew share a surname. A comparison with the men-at-arms reveals seven men with the same surname, while the archer group contains twenty-four men with the same surname. If we take the archers and men-at-arms into account it would not be going too far to suggest that this ship was almost a 'family at sea', with 53 per cent of the people aboard this vessel having some form of familial connection.

The second piece of evidence relates to the forty-five crew members aboard the *Godbefor* of King's Lynn.[113] This source also shows that the crew were closely connected. The master of the vessel was John Halfknight but there was also a Thomas, William and Richard Halfknight aboard. Furthermore, John and Roger Reppes were also crew members as were Geoffrey Hormynglowe senior and John Hormynglowe junior.[114] These are surely members of the same families and it shows that the master of the ship had three family members aboard, as well as two more family groups. This tantalising glimpse at two crew lists shows that mariners operating the ships of the period could be close relatives. This familiarity between members of the crew could be important particularly when we consider that the crew on board the *Godbefor* fought at Sluys. In micro-sociology such small groups that contain members familiar with each other have

109 *CPR, 1321–24*, p. 109.

110 E36/204, p. 230.

111 *Norwell*, p. 380; E36/204, p. 234; E101/25/24, no. 27; E101/27/22, m. 3.

112 E101/20/28, mm. 1, 1v records the names of the mariners.

113 E101/22/30, mm. 2, 2d records the names of the forty-five mariners.

114 Reppes is located in East Anglia, so it was in the same geographical area as King's Lynn.

been described as being 'special and more than the sum of its individual parts. It has, in particular, a social dynamic which is relatively independent of issues and locations', and that 'it is a requirement for the groups continued existence that there should be strongly held purposes'. This is called 'high morale'.[115] This is an advantageous element to have within any military force, especially in the thick of a battle. Of course the evidence relating to the St Sardos expedition shows that, at least during the preparations for this campaign, mariners were added to the waiting ships while the vessels were away from their home ports.[116] This could, therefore, have diluted the camaraderie aboard these ships as relatively stable crews suddenly had an influx of several new seamen. Yet, a slow trickle of one man here and another man there would not affect the close bonds aboard a ship, and it is likely that in their capacity as trading vessels, when the crown was not concerned about crew sizes, most ships' crews no doubt consisted of family members. In fact overall it is possible to see forty-six familial groupings in the sources of the period, and that is undoubtedly a minimum figure.[117]

This evidence of familial connections in port communities allows some elaboration as to what backgrounds shipmasters in this period may have come from. Although speculative in nature it is likely that many, like William Bacoun (see below), certainly came from families that were involved in the business of shipping, and because of this they were provided with a 'head start' on their contemporaries. Indeed, as the evidence above shows there were many instances of men with common surnames operating out of ports in this period. It is likely that as in the Tudor period men who owned vessels, or had part shares in ships, could

[115] See P. E. Willis, *Learning to labour: how working class kids get working class jobs* (Farnham, 2000), p. 123 and especially pp. 119–126 in which Willis analyses the social psychology of the 'group'.

[116] See, BL, Add MS 7967, fols 94r–99v.

[117] The forty-six includes the family groups noted above that served on the two ships in 1337 and 1340, in addition to the Saundre family from Dartmouth; the Richard family from Brunham; the Bryan family from Southampton; the Swete family from Dartmouth; the Le Bakers from Dartmouth; the Waynflete and Loverick families from Great Yarmouth; the Nesbete family from Hartlepool; the Shipman family from Winchelsea; the Finch family from Winchelsea; the Scots from King's Lynn; the Sauger family from Sidmouth; the Godale family from Hook; the Goldyngs from Hastings; the Passelewe family from Winchelsea; the Folk family from Winchelsea; the Swan family from Winchelsea; the Baitille family from Winchelsea; the Hammond family from Romney, which was larger than just the two Rogers with also a John and Richard; the Barnet family from Seaford; the Campe family from Brightlingsea; the Pacche family from Brightlingsea; the Berwald family from Hull; the de la Pole family from Hull (these were not William and Richard but Ralph and Adam de la Pole who served in Brittany in 1342 and Gascony in 1347 respectively), see: BL, Add MS 7967, fols 94r, 94v, 95r, 96r, 99r, 99v; BL, Cotton MS, Nero C.VIII, fols 265r, 265v, 266r; E101/16/40, main roll; E101/17/3, m. 6; E101/17/24, m. 4d; E101/19/6, mm. 1, 3; E101/19/16, m. 4; E101/19/22, m. 1; E101/19/32; E101/19/38, m. 3; E101/19/39, m. 2; E101/21/7, m.2; E101/21/10, m. 3; E101/25/9; E101/25/20, no. 13; E101/25/24, nos, 3, 37; *Norwell*, pp. 363–86; E36/204, pp. 222, 227, 228, 229, 234, 235; E101/27/25, mm. 1, 2; E101/27/33, m. 1; E372/179, m. 44; *Chronicon anonymi Cantvariensis*, pp. 60–61.

elevate their sons to positions aboard in the hope that they would forge a career in shipping. Alternatively a shipmaster who owned no part of a vessel may have had the opportunity of 'training' one of his sons, brothers, nephews or cousins by introducing this individual to the crew as a ships' boy or a mariner. Unfortunately it is difficult to go into further details, but if the occupations or classes that mariners were drawn from remained relatively stable from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries then it is likely that in this period seafarers were draw from the cloth industry, woodcraft or other manual and trade crafts.[118]

The evidence from the naval sources also suggests that many shipmasters were part of a highly mobile workforce that operated out of several ports during their careers. Richard Priour, for example, operated out of no fewer than three east coast ports during this period. He commanded the *Magdelene* in 1338 and the *Gaynepay* of Ipswich in 1359. But he also sailed from the ports of Whitlowenes and Withernsea.[119] Thomas le Clere sailed out of London, Ipswich and Orford as master of three different ships during his career.[120] While in 1345 and 1347 both Robert and Hugh Stote commanded the same ship, the *Seintemariecog*, on one occasion each but from the two ports of Newcastle and Hull.[121] It seems likely that either the Stotes owned this vessel or the owner preferred to employ members from the same family. The Stotes, however, were not unusual in this regard and Lawrence and Walter atte Lane from Weymouth commanded the *Richegayne* in consecutive years in different fleets.[122] An interesting case in this regard involved Ralph and Robert Goderich. In 1338 Robert took command of the *Mariot* in the port of Colchester and sailed this vessel from 17 June until 20 July. On 21 July Ralph took command of this same ship but in the port of Blackneye and continued to operate it until 2 August.[123] The crew size between these two 'change over's' also remained stable with only two mariners departing the vessel in Blackneye. The fact that mariners operated ships out of several ports during their careers may actually have been commonplace. Indeed, records relating to trade between Ireland and Bristol show that it was not unusual for shipmasters to move between towns during their careers.[124] There were nevertheless many shipmasters who sailed out of the same port throughout their naval

[118] For the Tudor sailor, see G. V. Scammell, 'Manning the English merchant service in the sixteenth century', *MM* 56 (1970), pp. 131–54, pp. 137–38.

[119] *Norwell*, p. 378; E36/204, p. 232; *CCR, 1343–46*, p. 132; E101/27/25, m. 2.

[120] BL, Add MS 7967, fol. 98v; BL, Cotton MS, Nero C.VIII, fol. 265r; E101/25/9.

[121] E101/25/9; E101/25/24, n. 35.

[122] Lawrence commanded the *Richegayne* in 1324 when the ship formed part of the flotilla that transported the king's army to Bordeaux, while Walter operated the same vessels in the following year when the ship freighted supplies to the earl of Surrey who was serving in Gascony, see BL, Add MS 7967, fol. 94r; E101/17/3, m. 7.

[123] E36/203, p. 382; E101/21/12, m. 3. The *Mariot* was recorded as 160 tuns burden and was operated by fifty-eight seafarers with Robert and fifty-six with Ralph.

[124] W. R. Childs, 'Irish merchants and seamen in late medieval England' *Irish historical studies*, 32, no. 125 (May, 2000), pp. 22–43, p. 32.

careers. John Philip served six times in this period and while he did so in three ships he always sailed from Plymouth.[125] This is in line with the findings from local studies which show that shipmasters who moved from port were generally in the minority.[126]

Evidence relating to Exeter also highlights some possibilities about the lives of shipmasters in this period. In 1377 Exeter records show that relatively few shipmasters inhabited the confines of the port and in Exeter only one head of a household was described as a shipmaster.[127] It is difficult to create a picture of how a fourteenth-century shipmaster lived. The sources can suggest that they lived a somewhat itinerant life. This being said the evidence from Exeter should perhaps be treated with caution. We have seen above how shipmaster families operated out of ports over the years covered by this book, and it is likely that they lived in or around the towns they worked from. That they do not appear as heads of households may have more to do with financial considerations rather than the fact that did not reside in ports. The fact that shipmasters were not recorded as heads of households in Exeter may be a trait that is particular to this town.[128] For example, as we shall see men such as John Irp began their careers as shipmaster before being appointed to local port offices and then becoming important men in their own right as evidenced by their appearance on witness lists for various financial dealings. Evidence from Dartmouth certainly argues that shipowners and shipmasters were important figures that occupied town offices and as such were presumably, in many instances, heads of households.[129]

The sources show that many families in port towns gravitated towards a life at sea, no doubt learning their skills from their fathers, brothers, cousins or uncles and putting their accumulated maritime knowledge to good use in the king's wars. However, the dangers of an occupation that involved regular sea service should not be underestimated and there was not only the risk of suffering injury or death at sea, but the home towns of the mariners could suffer devastating raids by the French.[130] That this invaluable service was sometimes not recognised

[125] C47/2/35; E101/19/38, m. 3; E101/19/39, m. 2; E101/24/9 (b), no. 15; E101/25/9.

[126] P. Dunn, 'After the Black Death', p. 196. This is based on an examination of Norwich merchants that operated out of Norfolk and Suffolk ports.

[127] M. Kowaleski, 'The port towns of fourteenth-century Devon', p. 67.

[128] Because Exeter was a port with a large hinterland and some distance upriver from the sea it is likely that it was more attractive to merchants, whereas Dartmouth and Plymouth were seaports with direct access to the sea and as a consequence were more likely to have been inhabited by shipmasters and shipowners.

[129] W. R. Childs, 'Devon's overseas trade in the late middle ages'.

[130] For example, Robert Finch, shipmaster and member of the influential Finch family from Winchelsea, was killed by the French during a raid in 1360 on the port of Winchelsea. Robert had previously served as the master of the *Cog Thomas* in 1338 and as the master of the *Seintemariecog* in 1342. See E101/21/7, m. 2; E36/204, p. 229. For his death, see *Chronicon anonymi Cantvariensis*, p. 61.

by contemporaries should not lessen its importance. Indeed, many medieval writers displayed a discourteous view towards mariners because their occupation could lead them to the horror of dying without confession and a decent Christian burial.[131] Nevertheless, it is increasingly being recognised that medieval seafarers had impressive cognitive abilities as shown by their mental mastery of the information relating to tides and tidal streams or currents.[132] These abilities were put to good use by Edward II and Edward III in their wars.

That the chronicles of the period on occasion treated mariners with disregard can lead to the assumption that seafarers lacked social standing at this time. Nevertheless, many shipmasters did in fact rise to become people of some importance, especially in a local context and there was considerable overlap between tradesmen, burgesses and shipmasters. Ipswich is a case in point. Many burgesses from the town commanded ships in the wars of the period, in addition to running trading enterprises and being involved in the sphere of local government. John Irp, for example, was a shipmaster from Ipswich who in 1324 commanded the ship *Godyer* during the Edward II's St Sardos expeditions. Nevertheless, during the period 1324–44 he also occupied the office of Ipswich town bailiff seventeen times.[133] Irp's career was not always exemplary, however, and in 1324 he was involved in a local scandal when he and several other mariners attacked a ship of Berwick in the port of Ipswich that was under the safe conduct of Robert Umfraville, earl of Angus.[134] After capturing the vessel he and his accomplices divided between themselves the cargo of skins, salmon and tallow. This act does not seem to have affected his career though because in 1331 he was appointed deputy to the king's butler in Ipswich, while in the same period he was also acting as controller of the customs.[135] By 1333 Irp was clearly a man of considerable local standing because not only was he actively involved in loaning significant sums of money to other Ipswich residents, but he was also called upon to witness several grants of lands and rents.[136] By 1338 he seems to have acquired wider significance because in that year queen Phillipa interceded in a dispute on his behalf to ensure that he continued to hold the office of controller of customs

[131] M. Evans, *The death of kings: royal deaths in medieval England* (London, 2003), pp. 96–97, shows the negative ways in which medieval writers could portray the image of the medieval mariner; G. W. Coopland, 'A glimpse of late fourteenth-century ships and seamen', p. 189 describes a more positive medieval portraiture of a seamen. Indeed, Chaucer's shipman was also described as a 'gentil maryneer', see *The works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2nd edn, ed. F. N. Robinson (Oxford, 1957), p. 160.

[132] C. O. Frake, 'Cognitive maps of time and tide among medieval seafarers', *Man*, new series, vol. 20, no. 2 (1985), pp. 254–70.

[133] G. H. Martin, 'The Borough and the Merchant Community of Ipswich', pp. 214–15.

[134] *CPR, 1324–27*, p. 135.

[135] E122/50/20.

[136] E40/3390; E40/3392; C241/104/96, shows Irp loaned £40 to Robert Houell, son of a local knight.

at Ipswich.[137] Throughout his maritime career Irp and those he employed seem to have attracted controversy. In 1339 one of his ships was involved in a piratical attack on several Flemish vessels.[138] This particular incident was bad judgement because Edward III had just concluded expensive and exhaustive treaties of alliances with several Low Countries towns and princes. In 1348, however, Irp's luck finally ran out when he was amongst the many victims of the Black Death.[139]

The Whatfields were another Ipswich family whose members served as shipmasters and town officials. In 1324 John Whatfield participated in the supply fleet sailing to Gascony. During the same decade his brother was a member of the town's government, when in 1328 he occupied the office of bailiff.[140] John de Thornegge of King's Lynn commanded the *Margrete* in 1322 but he also occupied the office of town mayor on six occasions between 1313 and 1331.[141] In addition, men who appear as masters of a particular vessel in one document can be viewed elsewhere as the owner of another ship. John Giboun commanded the *Seintemariecog* in the Flanders expedition of 1338 and then the *Clement* during the Brittany transport fleet of 1342; but he is also named as the owner of the *Alisen*, a ship commanded by John Dame, which participated in the Black Prince's transport flotilla in 1355. There does appear to have been only one person here called John Giboun, because on all the occasions his name appears it is in connection with the port of Sandwich. Clearly Giboun was an important figure in that port.[142] The world of the medieval mariner was obviously complex in the fact that they could own yet not command a vessel when it was requisitioned, preferring instead to employ another man for that role. William Gamelyn from Hooke exemplifies the complexity of a life at sea during a period of intense warfare. In 1336 he commanded the *Welfare* as part of a defence armada against a possible French attack, and he can be seen commanding the same ship in 1337 and 1338. But in 1347 we catch a glimpse of him in his civilian role when he appears as master of the same ship as a trader in Chichester.[143] This short sketch drawing on the naval service records of medieval seamen shows that they and their ships were arrested for a variety of purposes and roles, and that on the whole they were a versatile part of the Edwardian military machine. These men could be masters

137 *CPR*, 1338–40, p. 106.

138 *CPR, 1338–40*, pp. 491–92.

139 G. H. Martin, 'The Borough and the Merchant Community of Ipswich', p. 181.

140 G. H. Martin, 'The borough and the merchant community of Ipswich', p. 180, appendix III, pp. 214–15; E101/16/40, main roll; BL, Add MS 7967, fol. 99r.

141 CPR, 1321–24, p. 134; S. A. Alsford, *The men behind the masque*, appendix 1.

142 E101/21/7, m. 2; E36/204, p. 222; E101/26/37, m. 3. Indeed it is likely that John Giboun had become a royal mariner by 1356 as he appears on a royal ship list dated to that year as the master of the *Robynet* (E101/27/5). In 1342 John was recorded as the owner of the *Clement* in the compensation document, see E101/24/9 (b).

143 E101/19/38, m. 3; E101/19/39, m. 3; E101/21/7, m. 2; E122/190/5, Gamelyn's ship on this occasion freighted a cargo of wine from Bordeaux.

of victual ships on one campaign and by the next they could be in the thick of a major sea battle such as Sluys.

The analysis above highlights the careers of individual shipmasters whose service records are visible in the naval documents. We can, however, analyse the careers of shipmaster/merchants in greater detail. The careers of Thomas Melcheburn from King's Lynn and William Bacoun from Dartmouth highlight the potential successes that could be attained through involvement in the king's wars. We have already disused Thomas Melcheburn's role in the Scottish supply operations and it was his involvement in the northern war that provided the vehicle for him to rise to significant heights within the circle of advisors who surrounded Edward III.[144] Thomas' documented career begins in 1319 when he was given protection by Edward II for 'going by sea and land to divers places with his wares to trade'.[145] The description of Thomas as a king's merchant suggests that by 1319 he was already familiar with ministers in the king's government, whist still actively trading on his own account. In fact there is evidence from a later petition that Thomas sent to the king in December 1319 that he had planned to sell his wares in Bruges, but his ship, the *Godyer*, was attacked en-route to this destination by men from Sluys. As recompense for this act Thomas asked the count of Flanders to pay him £80 in compensation. In 1327 he participated in the Scottish campaign as commander of the *Peter* of King's Lynn.[146] This last piece of evidence is extremely informative for while it is un-doubtable that Thomas personally participated in this expedition to curry favour with the new regime of Queen Isabella, it also highlights the fact that Thomas was a shipman. This suggests that before we see him in the records in 1319 he had previously been a shipmaster. By 1320 Thomas was one of the chamberlains of King's Lynn.[147] His importance in Norfolk's maritime affairs soon brought him to the attention of Edward III's ministers and by the 1330s he was beginning to be of more than local significance, as is shown by his attendance at parliament in December 1330 as a representative of King's Lynn.[148] Nevertheless, even though Thomas was attending parliament he was still actively trading and in 1332, along with his brother William, he was given a protection to travel to and trade in Norway.[149] Indeed, Thomas seems to have developed important connections with Norway and not only did he regularly trade there but he was also appointed by the king

144 See above, pp. 158–59.

145 *CPR, 1317–21*, p. 344.

146 *CPR, 1327–30*, p. 104.

147 Institute of Historical Research, *The manuscripts of the corporation of Southampton and King's Lynn, eleventh report, appendix III* (Historical manuscripts commission, 1887), pp. 213–31. See also S. Alsford, *The men behind the masque: office-holding in East Anglia boroughs, 1272–1460* (1998), appendix, 1, available at http://users.trytel.com/~tristan/towns/mcontent.html (accessed 13 January 2011).

148 *CCR, 1330–33*, p. 177.

149 *CPR, 1330–34*, p. 372.

to search and confiscate any vessels that came from Norway with the intention of trading foodstuffs and arms with the Scots.[150] By 1333 he had been appointed royal custom collector in the port of King's Lynn.[151] It was during this time that Thomas also began building and maintaining royal vessels.[152]

However, it was the Scottish wars from 1333 to 1347 that provided Thomas with the foundation to advance his career. As noted above, after Edward III abandoned his Scottish ambitions and began a war against France in 1337, Thomas and his brother became the lynch pins of a new system devised to supply the king's garrisons in Scotland. In 1336 Edward III more or less privatised the victual operation in the hands of Thomas and his brother William. From this date they accounted directly with the Exchequer in London for the supplies they freighted to the receiver of victuals at Berwick. It was during this period in which they formed a close working partnership with Robert Tonge, who was receiver in the north for many years in the 1330s. Yet, Thomas' influence was no means confined to the northern war and he was actively involved in continental maritime duties. Between 1338 and 1340 he supplied four of his ships to transport diplomatic embassies to the Holy Roman Empire, as well as participating directly in 'difficult business on behalf of the king'.[153] In 1344 he lent the king the sum of £200 and he was appointed the mayor of the wool staple in Bruges.[154] These two events were probably connected. The trust he had gained was proven when in 1344 it was Thomas who collected the king's great crown from the merchants of Germany.[155] His reward came in 1347 when after the capture of Calais Edward III gave to Thomas three inns taken from Wynnocus Doystretwyk, one of the defeated citizens of Calais.[156]

William Bacoun was another shipmaster who played a considerable role in the wars of the 1330s and 1340s. Bacoun was a shipmaster from Dartmouth who was descended from a family of middling significance.[157] By the time William becomes visible in the sources he is already a man of some standing in the town of Dartmouth. This is evidenced by his grant of some land at the waterside in Clifton, Dartmouth, to the abbot and convent of Torre.[158] Although William's family must have had disposable assets in terms of lands and wealth it is beyond

150 *CPR, 1340–43*, p. 212; *CPR, 1348–50*, p. 287.

151 *CPR, 1340–43*, p. 383.

152 *CPR, 1334–38*, p. 403.

153 E101/21/33; *CPR, 1343–45*, p. 556.

154 *CPR, 1343–45*, pp. 43, 156.

155 *Ibid*, p. 251.

156 *CPR, 1345–48*, p. 563.

157 G. R. Cushway, 'The Lord of the Sea', p. 163 argues that Bacoun was a clerk. However, this assertion probably relates to the fact that Cushway was investigating the clerical officials that were involved in ship requisition and Bacoun's role in this work alongside John Watenhul led to the conclusion that Bacoun was also a clerk.

158 R. Freeman, *Dartmouth: a new history of the port and its people* (Dartmouth, 1987), pp. 21, 23. For the grant, see C143/207/20.

doubt that he began his career at sea as a shipmaster. In 1326 he commanded a vessel that was hired by two merchants under the patronage of a royal official named Peter Galliciano. As part of this contract Bacoun was to freight grain to Bordeaux and return and with a cargo of wine.[159] It is important to stress that Galliciano was an experienced diplomat who had participated in several important embassies to France and Spain in this period.[160] Moreover, and perhaps even more relevant for this study, Galliciano also had an additional career as a merchant. It seems that through his contacts in Gascony Galliciano was no stranger to maritime commerce.[161] Importantly for Bacoun his association with this royal official earned him patronage from the crown. In the early 1330s Bacoun was granted a corrody from Plympton Priory.[162] This gave Bacoun the right to food and clothing from priory, which may have been worth up to £3 per year.[163] Such grants of favour from the king, however, did not always ingratiate Bacoun with his fellow Dartmouth residents. In 1333, for example, he was named by John de Tuwynge in a legal proceeding in which Tuwynge claimed that the corrody from Plympton Priory did in fact belong to him by right of family inheritance.[164]

Nevertheless, grants such as these show that by the early 1330s Bacoun was known to and involved with members of the royal administration, a familiarity that earned him grants from the king. These contacts ensured that from the late 1320s Bacoun was granted local offices relating to maritime affairs. In March 1331 Bacoun was awarded the office of deputy to the king's butler for Cornwall.[165] This appointment, in addition to his association with members of the king's court, raised Bacoun to a level of county importance and by the late 1330s he was known to the king's council as a man who could be trusted to deal with naval matters. In 1337 he was appointed by the royal council to take oaths from Dartmouth mariners who were suspected of an act of piracy against a Spanish ship off the coast of Guernsey.[166] In this incident seafarers from several English ports had taken several tuns of white wine from Laurence de Seint Sebastian and distributed the wine across the ports located along the southern coast of

159 *CPR, 1324–1327*, p. 314

160 *CPR, 1324–27*, pp. 88,181; *CPR, 1327–30*, pp. 250, 453. From his service record Galliciano seemed to specialise in Gascon and Spanish affairs.

161 *CPR, 1324–27,* p. 305. It would also seem that one of Peter's relatives (Bertrand Galliciano) who is named as a merchant in the protection issued by the king in September 1326 was involved in trade with Peter.

162 SC8/77/3803.

163 C. G. Lewin, *Pensions and insurance before 1800: A social history* (Edinburgh, 2003), pp. 37–49. This was not an insignificant sum for in 1346 anyone who possessed land worth £10 had to serve as (or provide) an hobelar in the king's army. See A. Ayton and P. Preston, *The battle of Crécy*, p. 177.

164 SC8/77/3803.

165 *CPR, 1330–34*, p. 78.

166 *CPR, 1334–38*, p. 377. The ship was called the *Seinte Martin* of San Sebastian.

England.[167] It was at this stage in his career that Bacoun became involved in military logistics, a role that would dominate much of his time over the coming years. For instance in 1338 he was given powers to requisition ships on behalf of the king from ports located in southwest.[168]

Bacoun's involvement in impressing merchantmen for the kings Low Countries expeditions during 1338 marked the start of a sustained period of involvement in the king's wars; in particular he developed a close association with affairs in Brittany. In 1341, for example, he personally commanded the small fleet of three ships that transported Gawain Corder to Brittany for important diplomatic negotiations.[169] In the following year he was appointed to arrest shipping in the southwest for the king's planned expedition to that same duchy, whilst also heading a commission that was to investigate an act of piracy committed by several Plymouth mariners against a ship of Brittany.[170] In October 1342 he completed his busy duties commanding the *Trinite* of Dartmouth during the English invasion of Brittany.[171] It is beyond doubt that by this stage William had become a shipowner in his own right because we have a rare surviving compensation account which clearly shows he was the owner of three vessels. One of which was the *Trinite*.[172] By 1343 William's service for the crown in maritime issues ensured that he was called upon many times during the increasing naval involvement because of the French war during the 1340s. In 1343 he was appointed to his most significant duty to date when along with John Watenhul he was ordered to investigate the reasons why 230 ships had deserted the king outside Brest and Vannes in the winter of 1342. In fact Bacoun and Watenhul formed a close relationship during the late 1330s and through the 1340s. It is beyond doubt that in addition to owning three ships Bacoun's close association with the king's government must have ensured that he developed into a significant figure in the town of Dartmouth. This was perhaps given more impetus because Dartmouth was a town dominated by shipowners.[173] As such it comes as no surprise to find Bacoun occupying the office of town mayor in this period.[174]

Crew Size and Manning

Another important aspect that relates to mariner service concerns the crew sizes employed aboard ships of the period. If the numbers of mariners that were employed on the same ship in varying expeditions remained relatively stable then

167 SC8/73/3649.
168 *CCR, 1337–39*, p. 339.
169 E101/23/5.
170 *CPR, 1340–43*, p. 540.
171 E101/29/4 (b).
172 *Ibid*.
173 See, for example, W. R. Childs, 'Devon's overseas trade in the late middle ages'.
174 R. Freeman, *Dartmouth*, p. 23.

we could assume that each vessel had an optimum crew size for its operational effectiveness that the crown was keen to maintain. By examining ten 'sample' ships that served throughout this period, and which provide a general spread of geographical locations and participation through several fleets from 1338 to 1359, we can seek to discover whether crew sizes dramatically altered from one fleet to the next. Any significant fluctuations in crew numbers would provide evidence that the requisition process, and mariner recruitment, was in someway haphazard. Conversely, stability in crew sizes would show that the government, and the arresting officials, had a policy that when requisitioning a ship for service the overall numbers of seamen employed aboard would be the exact number that the vessel required for optimum efficiency.[175]

When the ten sample ships are examined it is found that, generally, there is a remarkable stability in crew size. For example, the *Cog Johan* from Gosforth, commanded by Ralph Redberd, sailed in three fleets in 1338, 1340 and 1342, and on each occasion the crew size remained relatively stable. In 1338 twenty-nine mariners operated this ship, while at the battle of Sluys it was manned by twenty-two seamen and in 1342 a total of twenty-eight mariners sailed aboard. Indeed, what is striking about this vessel's manning is that the fleet in which we would expect the largest crew to be aboard, the battle of Sluys in 1340, was in fact the time when the fewest mariners were aboard. Similarly, the *Godbyete* from Hook, commanded by Robert Cole, sailed in three fleets from 1342 to 1345. This vessel first sailed in August 1342 with a complement of ten mariners when it was part of the fleet that freighted the earl of Northampton's force to Brittany. Following this the ship returned to England, with the same number of seamen aboard, to transport the king. But in 1345, when it was involved in the transportation of Henry of Grosmont's army to Bordeaux, eleven mariners worked this ship. As such the crew numbers on board this vessel did not fluctuate dramatically throughout its service, even when the continental destinations were dramatically different.[176] Moreover, even when a ship was utilised through

[175] The ten ships are the *Cog Johan* from Gosford, commanded by Ralph Redberd; the *Nicholas* from Great Yarmouth, commanded by John Norman; the *Gracedieu* from Bristol, commanded by John Seys; the *George* from Boston, commanded by Adam Permay; the *Margrete* from Great Yarmouth, commanded by William Fille; the *Katerine* from London, commanded by William Churchgate; the *Mariote* from Dartmouth, commanded by Richard Baker; the *Godbyete* from Hook, commanded by Robert Cole; the *Margrete* from Great Yarmouth, commanded by Richard Runham and the *Godyer* from Hull, commanded by William Est. See BL, Add Ms 7967, fols 94v–95r; E101/17/3, m. 6b; E101/19/38, m. 3; E101/19/39, m. 2; E101/20/6, m. 1; E101/20/16; E101/21/10, m. 5; E101/22/25, m. 3; E101/25/9; E101/26/38, m. 2; E101/27/23, m. 1; *Norwell*, pp. 363–86; E36/204, pp. 221, 222, 225, 228; 233, 234, 235, 236, 237.

[176] The distance from Portsmouth to Brest is 226 miles, whereas the distance from Portsmouth the Bordeaux is over 414 miles. A ship travelling 1 knot per hour would be able to travel roughly 24–26 miles per day. Thus the journey from Portsmouth to Bordeaux could be achieved in roughly 17 days. However, it must be remembered that these are estimates.

the pre- and post-Black Death periods the effects of the disease do not seem to have drastically altered the numbers of mariners. For instance, the *George* from Boston, commanded by Adam Permay, sailed in 1342, 1355 and 1359. In 1342 it had a crew compliment of forty-six mariners, and in 1355 and 1359 there were thirty-three. In short in some cases the possibility is that the crew simply came along with the ship for wages when it was requisitioned.

The service record of one vessel illustrates the fluctuations in crew numbers that could occur from one expedition to the next. The *Margrete* from Great Yarmouth, commanded by William Fille, participated in the fleet that transported the bishop of Lincoln to the Low Countries in 1337, and three years later was present at the battle of Sluys. Yet in 1337 this ship had a crew of eighty mariners while at the battle of Sluys it was operated by fifty-five seamen.[177] Thus, a vessel could, potentially, have its crew decreased by a third and still remain effective.[178] As such it seems that in this period when the crown requisitioned vessels for its transport fleets the crew sizes aboard generally remained consistent. In fact it is likely that requisitioned vessels kept most of their usual crew on board for both naval and trading voyages.

Another question with regard to ships' crews, which requires investigation is were the numbers of mariners that each ship required to sail it effectively linked to its possible continental destination? We have seen in Chapter 1 that a voyage to northern France would take two to three days, while one to Bordeaux or even Spain could be achieved in less than a week.[179] Did the intended destination, and length of voyage, have an impact on the size of the crew that worked the ships requisitioned for service? For example, if the destination was in northern France would a smaller crew be employed owing to the relative short sea crossing? Considering these latter points it will come as no surprise to learn that the same ships, which in one expedition sailed to northern France, were still employing similar numbers of mariners aboard when they sailed on longer voyages, such

[177] Each of the twenty ships in the fleet that transported the bishop to the Low Countries was manned by eighty seamen. The numbers of mariners on this fleet make it unusual for a diplomatic flotilla. However, it is likely such large numbers of mariners were placed on board because of the delicate nature of the bishop's talks. Moreover, such a well-prepared fleet ensured that the bishop was well protected on his voyage and that he arrived in style, see E101/20/16.

[178] The next greatest fluctuation in crew size occurred on board the *George* of Boston, commanded by Adam Permay when it went from a crew compliment of forty-six mariners to thirty-three from 1342 to 1355. Following this the next greatest change in crew size occurred on the *Godyer* of Hull, commanded by William Est, which went from crew of thirty in 1338 to nineteen in 1342. Following these vessels was the *Gracedieu* of Bristol, commanded by John Seys, when from 1337 to 1338 its crew size was reduced from fifty-three mariners to forty-six. The rest of the ships generally had crew changes of just one to four mariners. The *Katerine* from London, commanded by William Churchgate, for example, went from a crew of eleven mariners in 1342 to fourteen seamen in 1345.

[179] This was not always the case and in 1343 it took Edward three weeks to sail back to England from Brittany, owing to the appalling weather conditions, see E36/204, pp. 37–39.

as from Plymouth to Bordeaux. For example, the *George*, commanded by Adam Permay, as noted above sailed to Brest in 1342 with a crew of forty-six mariners. Yet in 1355 thirty-three mariners sailed the same vessel to Bordeaux showing that in this case there was no need for 'extra' crew members.[180] Indeed, Robert Cole, master of the *Godbyete* of Hook also sailed to Brest in 1342 with a crew compliment of eleven seamen aboard, while in 1345 the same ship was operated by ten mariners when it transported Henry of Grosmont to Bordeaux. Consequently, the conclusion to be drawn from this sample is that regardless of the destination of the intended expedition when the crown requisitioned ships they were usually operated by the same crew numbers, even when longer voyages were anticipated. This, as a corollary, suggests that there was uniformity in crew sizes during ship requisition and that the government probably took advice from shipowners and masters about optimum crew size.

One final point in relation to crew sizes needs to be analysed. Namely, were crew numbers increased for transport fleets, or were the same crew members who were aboard the ship at its time of arrest simply employed in naval duties? It has been suggested that usually one man is needed for every ten tuns. As such a ship of 140 tuns, such as the *Bremen Cog*, would have required fourteen mariners to operate it. This being said, the curators of the *Bremen Cog* argue that a crew of twenty should be viewed as the optimum number of mariners required to man the vessel.[181] Such numbers of mariners employed aboard ships on trading voyages was not uncommon and cogs that operated in the Baltic could have crews of up to forty-five men.[182] In comparison a surviving order from the reign of Edward II shows that for army transportation purposes a 240 tun vessel was expected to have sixty mariners on board, which equates to four seamen per ten tuns.[183] Consequently are we to assume from this order that a ship arrested for transportation purposes was expected to have at least twice the number of mariners aboard than it would have in its trading capacity? By examining the tunnages and crew size ratio it would seem that crew sizes were certainly increased when a ship was requisitioned for transportation purposes. In 1338 the *Rose* of Ravenspur, commanded by Roger de Ravensser, was recorded by the clerks at 120 tuns with a crew compliment of forty-six mariners, which gives this ship a man:ton ratio of roughly 3:1.[184] Similarly, in 1338 the *Laurence* of

[180] The sea crossing to Bordeaux is some 450 miles. If a ship were capable of travelling at one knot per hour this voyage would take roughly two weeks. However, a ship travelling at some four knots per hour would cover a distance of some 100 to 120 miles in twenty-four hours, so it is possible that the journey to Gascony could be made within four to five days and the sea crossing to Brittany could be made in two days. For the possible speed of medieval ships, see M. Prestwich, *Armies and warfare*, p. 273.

[181] C. Tipping, 'Cargo handling and the medieval cog', *MM* 80 (1994), pp. 3–15, p. 11.

[182] H. Brand, 'Roundtable reviews of Robin Ward', p. 312.

[183] *CPR, 1321–24*, p. 417.

[184] E101/21/10, m. 2.

Hull, a ship of 40 tuns and commanded by Richard Ulso, had a crew of twenty mariners, giving it a ratio of 2:1.[185] Similar trends are evident even after the Black Death. In 1355 the *Katherine del Milne* of Ipswich, commanded by Robert Waryn had a crew of twenty-one mariners when the ship was recorded at 80 tuns and the *Petre de South Ferriby*, a ship of 40 tuns and commanded by John Page, had a crew of twenty seamen.[186] These findings go some way to explain why in 1342, as noted above, it looks as though the majority of Great Yarmouth's population were serving aboard the thirty-three ships supplied by this port. It is argued here that when ships were arrested for transportation purposes the crews were artificially increased, with the extra mariners being 'pressed' from the area designated as maritime lands.

Although it may seem that crew sizes were increased for transportation duties, whether they were actually doubled remains in the realms of speculation. One example illustrates this point. In 1324 the *Richagayne* from Weymouth commanded by Walter atte Lane sailed to Gascony as part of the St Sardos transport flotilla. While this vessel was in port Nicholas Huggate recorded that he added seven further mariners to the existing crew of twenty-eight, adding that they were done so '*pro dupplici eskipammento*'.[187] Of course, what may have occurred here is that by adding these extra seven men the normal crew that manned this ship on trading voyages was doubled. We are also told that this vessel was 200 tuns burthen. If we consider that at 140 tuns the *Bremen Cog* required twenty mariners in order to operate during a trading voyage it then is unlikely that a larger ship would sail in a transport fleet with a 'double crew' of twenty-eight mariners. The only reasonable conclusion to draw from this evidence is that the term *dupplici eskipammento* did not necessarily equate to an actual doubling of the crew size and was in fact used in some generalised way to denote the fact that the crew had been strengthened from what would have been the ship's normal operating crew size.

It is clear, therefore, that in the preparations for naval logistical expeditions merchant ships had their crew sizes increased. In some cases, such as the ships from Great Yarmouth in 1342, these 'new' members of the crew would have been gathered or 'pressed' into service from the local villages in Norfolk that were within six leagues of the sea coast. At other times, however, seamen would be added while a ship was in another port, giving a more eclectic crew. Why the crown actually increased the numbers of mariners serving in the transport and supply fleets remains difficult to answer. In relation to the supply flotillas sailing to Scotland it seems reasonable to expect that crew levels would be increased so the extra mariners could protect the cargo that they were freighting as well as themselves. But with regard to the transport fleets one would assume that the

185 *Ibid.*

186 E101/26/38, m. 2.

187 BL, Add MS 7967, fols 94r.

opposite would be the case, and in order to freight as many soldiers as possible to the theatre of war ships' crews would actually be decreased. There must have been a reason behind this because by employing more mariners the crown was also increasing the wage bill.

One possible explanation for an increase in the crew may lie in what actually happened at the point of disembarkation. Were mariners, for example, expected to be involved in the process of unloading the vast amounts of supplies, horses, carts, wagons, ammunition and other military equipment? This seems likely for in order to get the army ashore as quickly as possible more hands made light work. Another possibility may lie in what the ships were expected to do after the army had been unloaded. It may have been the case that they were expected to 'shadow' the army for several days, burning and destroying enemy ports and shipping as they sailed along the coast. As such once the soldiers had disembarked large crews would provide the men required to fight naval engagements. This also seems a likely explanation. Indeed, why would the crown go to all the expense of raising a fleet, paying extra seamen, and then simply allow them to sail away after disembarkation? The fact that ships were used for more than just transport duties can be seen in their dates. We have just noted above that a ship, in fine weather, could sail as far as Spain in as little as four days.[188] Yet most transport vessels in this period served for an average of a month. In 1338 each vessel served for an average number of eighteen days, while in 1342 each ship served for forty-four days. These periods of service must mean that after the ships had transported the army they were required to stay on active duty for some time, because while they were paid their wages from the time they arrived in port it is likely that in the majority of cases they only waited for two to three weeks for the arrival of all the troops.[189] Considering that sailing to northern France would take only a matter of days their length of service suggests that they were employed on other business after disembarkation. As such it is argued here that in the past the role of ships in the French war has been greatly underestimated: after unloading their cargoes of men, horses and supplies they took a more active naval role and harried the coast and enemy shipping. Examples of this are not hard to find. In 1346 after the ships had disembarked the army they attacked Norman ports and enemy ships.[190] Indeed, evidence also suggests that English ships may have played a role in the attack on Caen because Bartholomew Burghersh noted in his letter to John Stratford that during the attack on Caen 'the ships came to the mouth of the water that goes up to Caen;

188 See W. R. Childs, *Anglo Castilian trade*, p. 154.

189 The exception to this was the 145 ships' crews that were paid wages in 1342 so they would remain in port; see E372/187, mm. 42, 48. Land soldiers were paid from the day they arrived at the embarkation port so it is possible that ships' crews were also paid in the same manner. On the day that wages commenced, see A. Ayton, *Knights and warhorses*, p. 146.

190 See, for example, N. H. Nicolas, *History of the royal navy*, II, p. 92; *Avesbury*, p. 359.

they have burnt and destroyed some hundred ships up the coast'.[191] Moreover, in 1342 the ship *Edward of* Winchelsea, with John Montgomery the admiral of the western fleet aboard, was clearly employed as a ship of war and was manned by men-at-arms and archers.[192] This vessel appears to have been a command ship for the rest of the fleet that was supposed to remain on active service but which deserted outside Brest and Vannes.[193] It is worth bearing in mind that in 1342, along with the armed ship of Montgomery, the shipowners who were providing vessels in return for pardons did so on the strict understanding that the ships came fully manned with '*gentz armees*' aboard.[194] As such it is likely that English transport ships in the fourteenth century were expected to raid, patrol, intercept enemy shipping and fight as need and opportunity dictated.[195] By providing extra men the king was also ensuring that the ships arrested for his service were adequately protected. This was important because in the period under investigation here shipowners were providing their vessels free of charge and so it may have been expected that the king did his best to ensure that they remained as safe as possible by taking on the extra burden of an increase in the wage costs.[196] After all what the crown required was the continued support of the English merchant marine.[197]

[191] *Murimuth*, pp. 198–200; D. Hughes, *Illustrations of Chaucer's England*, p. 36. For example, the *George* commanded by Robert Salmon was sent back from Caen to Winchelsea, see *CCR, 1346–49*, p. 95.

[192] E101/21/36, mm. 2–4. The men on board were only paid half wages, presumably because they had no horses with them.

[193] It is likely that only a selected number of ships would stay on active service for an agreed length of time and so the end date of service that the clerks had written down at the embarkation point would still be accurate. Indeed, it is likely that the admiral provided accurate days of service for the extra ships that had remained under his command.

[194] SC1/39, nos 15, 81; SC1/40, nos, 10, 12, 19; SC1/41, no. 66.

[195] For a similar suggestion, see G. R. Cushway, 'The lord of the sea', p. 153.

[196] The payment of ton-tight (3s 4d per ton for every three months served) was not officially formalised until 1380. Although the king did on occasion pay compensation to shipowners because their vessel sustained damage in government service this was done so entirely at the king's discretion (E101/24/9 (b) records such compensation payments). In 1301 the crown paid shipowners the impressive sum of 7s per ton this was not followed by Edward II or Edward III. For 1301, see British Museum Add MS 7966 (a), fols 102–03, 130–31.

[197] It is also important to note that ships were raised during campaigns to guard the sea crossing, protect English ports and operate as communication ships. For example, in 1325 the Cinque Ports put to sea a flotilla of twenty-one vessels manned by 1,006 mariners to guard the cost after the earl of Warrenne had sailed to Gascony (E101/17/10). And during the Low Countries expeditions, in response the French assembling a fleet, on 27 September 1338 Edward's home government organised a flotilla under the command of Peter Bard, admiral of the southern fleet, whilst his colleague, Thomas de Drayton, admiral of the north, received similar orders, see *Treaty rolls*, II, *1337–39*, ed. J. Ferguson (London, 1972), pp. 297–98, nos, 844, 845, 847. These requests seem to have been met in part because Thomas de Drayton expended £400 on mariners' and archers' wages, and John Crabbe was issued with a further £52 20d for the payment of wages made to the mariners of the north from 4 April to 12 June

When we examine the crews that operated naval vessels during this period we must not forget the role that the constables performed. This class of person appears regularly in the naval documentation and participated in most fleets. That constables have received little attention in the literature is probably down to the fact that their role is little understood.[198] It is beyond doubt that they had a military function to perform because they usually sailed aboard a large proportion of the ships that formed army transport fleets, but it was unusual for them to appear aboard supply vessels.[199] Further, the destination of the armadas does not seem to have affected whether constables were recruited. Out of the fleet of 148 ships that freighted the earl of Derby to Bordeaux in 1345 forty-eight had constables aboard. Similarly of the 403 ships that transported Edward III's army to Flanders in 1338 313 vessels had a constable as part of the crew, and in the Scottish campaign of 1335 out of a fleet numbering 189 ships eighty-six had a constable aboard.[200] Consequently constables served in all theatres of operations. Further, it has been argued recently that discipline played an important role in the formation of Edwardian armies and 'superimposed regulatory structures had a profound influence on the fabric of armies and how they functioned'.[201] On land such issues were the responsibility of the constable and marshal of the army alongside the retinue captain. It is argued here that the constable aboard a ship played a similar role.

That constables appear with such frequency in military transport ships, and not supply vessels, suggests that they had a military purpose for two main reasons. First, because many men operating the ships may not have been mariners, and were raised through commissions of array, it may have been that the constable's role was to ensure these men were kept in order while they served.[202] Second, they would also ensure that all the ships of the fleet coalesced together and

1339, see E101/21/31; E101/22/8. For evidence of ships being used as communication links, see E101/22/38, which highlights the way the king's ships were used as a communication link during the 1338 and 1340 expeditions.

198 N. A. M. Rodger, *Safeguard of the sea*, pp. 138–39 briefly discusses the role of the constable. See also G. R. Cushway, 'The lord of the sea', p. 140.

199 Crew sizes are rarely recorded for supply ships. However, there were three vessels that freighted supplies to Scotland in 1336 that did have constables on board. These were the *Nicholas* of Bristol commanded by John Trollay; the *Gracedieu* of Bristol commanded by John Selys and the *Rodecogge* of Rosse commanded by John de la Roche, see E101/20/6, mm. 1–5. These vessels did have large crews of 38, 50 and 26 mariners respectively, which suggests that they may have been employed as ships of war after they had freighted the supplies to the depots. The dates of service, which ran from 19 October 1336 to 24 December 1336, certainly point to the fact that they remained on active duty after they had completed their supply role.

200 BL, Cotton MS, Nero C.VIII, fols 264r–265v; E101/19/16; E101/19/22; E101/21/7; E101/21/10; E101/21/12; *Norwell*; E101/25/9.

201 A. Ayton, 'Armies and military communities in fourteenth-century England', *Soldiers, nobles and gentlemen*, pp. 215–99, p. 232.

202 N. H. Nicolas, *History of the royal navy*, vol. I, pp. 401–2. Also argues that constables had a disciplinary role.

that no vessels engaged in piratical activity. In short they were an independent link between the crown and the crew, and although they were certainly below the ship's master in the hierarchical structure, they were directly responsible to the king and not the shipmaster. The importance of their role in such issues is evidenced by the act of piracy that was committed in 1338 by a large section of the transport fleet that had conveyed Edward's forces to Flanders. The fact that these ships did so after the army had disembarked shows that the constable may have remained behind with the land army.[203] Indeed, some of the ships involved in the 1338 incident certainly had constables aboard on the outward journey to Flanders.[204] Finally, it has been suggested that the constable's role may have been to lead the ships' compliments of soldiers.[205] While this is a possibility, if this was the case they would only appear on those vessels that were used as 'ships of war'. That they appear in every transport fleet, and aboard most ships, argues that they had a different purpose. They would not have been responsible for the retinues that were being transported because this was the responsibility of the retinue captain. As such the role of these constables seems to have been similar to the duties of the *ductores* or *centenars* that were placed in charge of armed men arrayed from towns during the early period of the Edwardian wars. That their role was similar to the *ductores* is alluded to in an order issued on 20 June 1372 when the sheriff of Kent was told to make an inquisition with the constables in order to investigate a complaint regarding several instances of extortions committed by mariners and shipmasters. The fact that the sheriff was ordered to work with the constables on this issue shows that they were involved in discipline issues.[206]

The analysis on the constable leads into a discussion on the hierarchies that existed amongst crews in this period. It is clear from legal documents that the master of a ship had certain legal obligations, and indeed rights, above that of the crew.[207] This is not to say that mariners were devoid of privileges and most seafarers on a trading voyage would be allowed some space for carrying small amounts of cargo (whether this was their own merchandise or whether they were acting for someone else is unimportant).[208] Nevertheless, masters certainly had disciplinary authority over the crew which could involve putting a man off ship and imposing fines. It would also be the case that the master of a ship

203 *CPR, 1338–40*, pp. 491–92.

204 For example, the *Nicholas* of Great Yarmouth, commanded by Robert Tynwit, was involved in this act of piracy and on the outward journey this vessel had a constable onboard, see *Ibid*., p. 491; E101/21/10, m. 5.

205 G. R. Cushway, 'The lord of the sea', p. 140.

206 *CCR, 1369–74*, p. 439.

207 See, for example, R. Ward, *The world of the medieval shipmaster*; T. J. Runyan, 'The rolls of Oleron and the admiralty court', pp. 100–4.

208 If mariners chose to take a share of the profits of the cargo, or indeed freighted their own merchandise, they did not usually receive additional wages.

was usually the most skilled mariner aboard, or he may even have had a stake in the vessel he was sailing. Such considerations would naturally lead to the development of a ship hierarchy in which the master held responsibility for the vessels he was in charge of. What blurs this issue is the change that may have occurred when a ship was requisitioned for war into the king's service. The ships' crew would certainly have remained aboard but as we have seen in addition to a number of extra mariners a constable could also be admitted. It would certainly have been the case that the master still retained his normal authority, and this would have been upheld by the admiralty court. Moreover, the constable was always recorded after the shipmaster in all Exchequer and Chancery documents which suggests that he was subordinate to the master of the vessel. Nevertheless, shipboard hierarchies could become blurred when it came to dividing the spoils of war, and it was not unusual in this period that such gains were usually split on an equal share basis amongst the crew, including the master.[209] This being said it is likely that in requisitioned fleets the master had authority over the vessel, whilst the constable's duty was to ensure the behaviour of the 'extra' crew members. Indeed, as with land armies, discipline controls in maritime affairs were employed as a means to cement the men that were 'pressed' into service in order to create working units that could operate under pressure. In short the constable was given temporary power over individuals who would not normally serve on board the ship they were operating so that the naval force did not fracture into undisciplined flotillas during any expedition.

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This chapter has analysed several major issues relevant to the maritime dimension of the wars conducted by Edward II and Edward III. It has discussed the increasing 'privatisation' of the organisation of war from 1336 in Scotland and 1345 in France. However, central to the discussion was an assessment of the potential size of the merchant fleet, and an analysis of the mariners and the crew sizes on board the ships. There it was found that 4,065 individual ships participated in the campaigns of the period. However, this total comes with perhaps a 20 per cent margin of error. The investiagtion of the careers of several mariners led to the conclusion that seamen in the fourteenth century were a versatile and integral component of Edwardian military campaigns. We saw that in some cases men could rise to great heights through involvement in the maritime dimension of the war. This section also examined the possible levels of resources each port was likely to have committed to the campaigns and argued that each port probably contributed at most 50 per cent of its shipping stock to any individual expedition. Further, there was an examination of the crew sizes aboard ships and the

[209] See, for example, R. G. Marsden, *Law and custom*, pp. 36–37. It should be noted that the constable is never mentioned in these arrangements and it is unsure if he was permitted a proportion of any booty from captured prizes.

possible reasons as to why these seem to have been increased. One suggestion was that mariners aided the disembarkation of the army and protected the fleet after the army had gone ashore. In addition the king may have been obliged to at least ensure some degree of safety for the ships his forces were using. Finally the role of the constable was addressed and it was concluded that they were admitted to the crew to perform a disciplinary role similar to that of retinue captains and *ductores*. Indeed, what this book has shown is the often ignored point that the English kings' wars in Scotland, France, the Low Countries, Spain and Portugal were wholly reliant on the English merchant fleet and the men who found employment within it.