

# THE BETRAYAL OF ARCHBISHOP SCROPE

BY PETER McNIVEN, M.A.

## I

THE northern rising against Henry IV in May 1405 was, in its potential consequence, probably the most serious threat to the king's throne in the whole of his troubled reign. And yet the facts of the rebellion, as they are related in modern works, are always surprisingly obscure. The names of the leading participants—Archbishop Scrope of York, the earl of Northumberland, the earl Marshal, and Lord Bardolf—are well enough known; but their motives and the respective roles they played never seem to have been critically studied. The aspect of the rebellion which is best known, however, is the surrender and “betrayal” of Archbishop Scrope after he had led a rebel army of peasants and citizens out of York on to the nearby Shipton Moor. The dramatic nature of this incident, recognized both by the chroniclers and by Shakespeare,<sup>1</sup> together with the fact that Scrope, in spite of his spiritual office, was subsequently executed at Henry's command, has drawn a passing attention to the archbishop which if anything serves to obscure the broader issue. Scrope is usually dismissed either as a misguided idealist with no understanding of political realities, or simply as just another rebel, in spite of the apparently incongruous nature of his conduct in 1405. At the same time, the involvement of Scrope in the rising has led to a concentration on his role in the rebellion among the mainly ecclesiastical contemporary chroniclers which almost certainly distorts the true picture of the events of 1405. Because of this emphasis on the archbishop, at least three issues remain in doubt. How much connection was there between Scrope's York insurrection and the other rebels whom nearly all writers acknowledge to have risen at the same time? Was Scrope the real instigator or leader of the rising, or merely the figure who happens to have received the greatest prominence? What were the motives of the rebels, and what was the general aim of their

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part II, Act iv.

rebellion? On the last question, for instance, the issue is bound to be confused by the fact that, to a medieval clerical writer, an ecclesiastic who meets his death at the hands of the secular authorities is almost by definition a martyr, and it therefore becomes necessary to prove that the cause for which he fell was a just one. If these problems could be solved, we should be better able to account for Scrope's unexpected presence on Shipton Moor, and to decide whether he was, as the popular tradition claims, the victim of a dishonourable betrayal which deprived him at least of an immediate victory. Even if every question cannot be satisfactorily answered, an examination of the evidence available—most of it in readily accessible printed sources—does at least, it will be suggested, provide material from which it is possible to reconstruct some conception of the rebels' plan of campaign and of what actually happened in Yorkshire in May 1405.

We may begin by considering whether this was in fact a single co-ordinated rebellion. This may seem a superfluous exercise—it is most unlikely, in practice, that two separate insurrections should have broken out in Yorkshire at the same time, and historians have usually taken the rebels' unity for granted. The clerical bias of the chroniclers, however, tends to lead them to make the issue unnecessarily obscure. The *Continuatio Eulogii* (a Canterbury chronicle), treats the rising of Scrope and Mowbray as an entity in itself, and there is nothing which positively suggests that the king's subsequent march north to deal with Northumberland's strongholds was connected with the York rising.<sup>1</sup> The *Historia Anglicana* (by Thomas Walsingham of St. Albans) mentions the rebellion of both "pairs" of rebels simultaneously, but merely says that when Scrope rose he hoped for assistance from Northumberland.<sup>2</sup> It will be seen that there may be far more truth in this vague statement than meets the eye. Walsingham's fuller account in the *Annales Henrici Quarti* is even less informative in saying that the king had heard that "Archiepiscopus Eboracensis et Comes Mares-

<sup>1</sup> *Eulogium Historiarum*, ed. F. S. Haydon, Rolls Series (1858-63), iii (*Continuatio Eulogii*), 405-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Historia Anglicana*, ed. H. T. Riley, Rolls Series (1863-4), ii. 268-9.

callus, ex una parte, et Comes Northumbriae et Dominum de Bardolf, ex altera parte, congregassent exercitus ”<sup>1</sup>—which could still imply that the two risings were independent of one another. And the two purely clerical eulogies of Scrope, those published in the “ Lives of the Archbishops of York ” and the “ Proceedings against Scrope ”<sup>2</sup> do not mention any other rebel at all.

But there are indications elsewhere that the two movements were part of a single great conspiracy. The official indictment of the rebels, the “ Record and Process ” issued at the parliament of 1406, says that Northumberland was conspiring with Scrope and the earl Marshal.<sup>3</sup> In a letter to the council on 28 May, the king told them that the earl of Northumberland, the earl Marshal, and Bardolf had risen in the north.<sup>4</sup> But the main evidence is provided by John Hardyng. Hardyng’s partisan views and lack of scruples are notorious ; but the fact remains that he was probably in a better position than any other contemporary chronicler to narrate the events of the northern troubles, and there are numerous instances where there would seem to be nothing to be gained by misrepresenting the facts. Hardyng states in the “ Yorkist ” version of his chronicle that Northumberland was determined to rise against Henry again, and that he enlisted the help of the three lords whom we know to have risen in 1405.<sup>5</sup> He goes on, as we shall see presently, to give a fair indication of the rebels’ joint plan of action. The “ Lancastrian ” chronicle is considerably less explicit, but in connecting the royalists’ fear of the earl of Northumberland with their attitude to Scrope’s York assembly<sup>6</sup> there is a similar implication. Hardyng provides a further indication that the risings were linked when he notes that there were some of Northumberland’s men with Scrope at York.<sup>7</sup> Research into this question supports the view that one of the indications of a connection between the two

<sup>1</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti in Johannis de Trokelow . . . Chronica et Annales*, ed. H. T. Riley, Rolls Series (1866), p. 407.

<sup>2</sup> *The Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops*, ed. J. Raine, Rolls Series (1879-94), ii. 429-32 ; iii. 288-91. <sup>3</sup> *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, iii. 605.

<sup>4</sup> *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England*, ed. Sir N. H. Nicolas (1834-7), i. 264.

<sup>5</sup> *The Chronicle of John Hardyng*, ed. H. Ellis, (1812), p. 362.

<sup>6</sup> B. M., Lansdowne MS. 204.

<sup>7</sup> Hardyng, p. 362.

risings is the fact that men who might be expected to be serving with one leader are found among the supporters of another. Two of the more prominent rebels from the Yorkshire gentry serving with Scrope—Sir William Plumpton and Robert Percy—both had definite Percy connections.<sup>1</sup> They may well have been present in a deliberately co-ordinating capacity. Four of Northumberland's minor officials—Nicholas Hall, parker of Spofforth,<sup>2</sup> Thomas Cattall and Robert White, foresters of the same estate,<sup>3</sup> and John Marshal, parker of Healaugh,<sup>4</sup> are all mentioned as having risen with Scrope or Mowbray. It seems probable that geographical factors led certain of the supporters of a general rebellion to join the rising at the "centre" of recruitment nearest to their homes rather than where their own lord was in command.

More complex is the problem of the leadership and purpose of the rebellion. For the authors of the "Lives of the Archbishops" and the "Proceedings against Scrope", the leader was unquestionably the archbishop, who is almost as obviously in complete command in the *Continuatio Eulogii*. The *Historia Anglicana* gives him a less definite but still dominant role, while the *Annales Henrici Quarti*, in its failure to establish any suggestion of co-ordination, may be regarded as giving each leader equal prominence. On the other hand, the "Record and

<sup>1</sup> Plumpton was Scrope's nephew by the marriage of the latter's sister Isabella to Robert, William's father (*Plumpton Correspondence*, ed. T. Stapleton, Camden Society (1839), p. xxiv). He held the manor of Steton of Northumberland's manor of Spofforth among other lands in that region (*Cal. Fine Rolls, 1405-1413*, p. 77), and had served with the earl in Scotland in 1384 (P.R.O. E101/40, no. 5—retinue roll of the earl of Northumberland for the Scottish war, 7 Richard II). Percy held lands in Potto in Cleveland and the manor of Ryton and lands in Kirby Misperton, Amotherby, Swinton, Rounton, Levisham and Wrelton in the Malton area. In addition, he had estates in Wrawby, Kettleby, and Glanford Brigg in north-east Lincolnshire. (P.R.O. E357/16, m. 22—Escheators' Accounts, 6-7 Henry IV.) His principal interests were in the North Riding, where he acted as a collector of taxes and aids on various occasions (*Cal. Fine Rolls, 1399-1405*, pp. 115, 148, 190, 257, 286). He must have been subjected to pressure from his powerful neighbour Northumberland and from his associates among the Yorkshire gentry, which eventually led him to throw in his lot with them—there is no suggestion of any previous link with Scrope.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1405-1408*, pp. 41, 44, 54, 169.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 78, 169.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 35.

Process ” and Hardyng, sources which have certain claims to greater credibility, not least of which is their freedom from clerical prejudice, emphasize that Northumberland was the instigator and organizer of the whole scheme. An examination of the possible motives of the principals should shed some light on this issue, as well as other aspects of the rebellion ; and we may look first at the man whose dramatic last days have given him a place of prominence in both contemporary and modern accounts of the rising which it has already been suggested may not have been altogether deserved. Was the rising of 1405 “ the conspiracy led by Archbishop Scrope ”,<sup>1</sup> or was it the earl of Northumberland who was the “ central organiser ”,<sup>2</sup> or in the words of Hall the “ chieftain and supreme governor of the army ”?<sup>3</sup>

Until his brief hour of fame in May 1405 the archbishop appears as an obscure and colourless figure. Richard Scrope was the third son of Henry, Lord Scrope of Masham, who had distinguished himself in foreign wars before returning home to serve Richard II in parliament and council.<sup>4</sup> His son’s elevation to the second highest position in the English church may have owed as much to family influence as to his more spiritual qualities. Born in 1346, Scrope had studied at Oxford and Cambridge, and later became chancellor of the latter university. In 1382 he went to Rome to become an auditor of the sacred palace.<sup>5</sup> Here his abilities may have impressed the Pope, and it was probably this, in connection with the growing prestige of his family at home, which now made his promotion rapid. In 1383 he was dean of Chichester ; in 1386 he became bishop of Coventry and Lichfield ; and finally, in 1398, he was consecrated archbishop of York and appointed as a papal legate.<sup>6</sup>

So far Scrope’s career seems to have been, while steadily successful, completely uneventful as regards the participation in state business to which certain of the episcopate were accustomed.

<sup>1</sup> E. F. Jacob, *The Fifteenth Century, 1399-1485* (1961), p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> C. Oman, *The History of England . . . 1377-1485* (1906), p. 194.

<sup>3</sup> *Hall’s Chronicle* (1809), p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> J. H. Wylie, *History of England under Henry IV* (1884-98), ii. 198.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 200.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 201-3.

If we accept the account of his personality given by the chronicles, he was primarily a churchman and scholar, and while there is no particular reason to believe that he was the spotless saint whom subsequent eulogizers claim him to have been, it seems probable that he was at least more solicitous than most of his fellows in performing the duties of his office. But in 1399 Scrope inevitably became involved in the revolution. It has been said that Scrope here showed himself to be a fervent supporter of the usurping Henry. Wylie maintains that "he was a leading member of the Commission for dethroning Richard, he obtained the renunciation from the fallen king personally in the Tower, read it to the Parliament at Westminster, conducted Henry to the vacant throne and helped to place the Crown upon his head".<sup>1</sup> But this seems a false interpretation. In fact, the commission was officially headed by Scrope and the bishop of Hereford, as the two principal members, and these two were jointly entrusted with the task of announcing Richard's abdication to the assembly. The idea may simply have been to include two "neutral" prelates on the commission rather than the avowedly partisan Arundel. Scrope assisted Arundel in leading the king to the throne, but the ceremony was probably only performed thus to make it clear that Henry had the support of the Church rather than merely that of his friend and ally.<sup>2</sup> He certainly did not assist in the actual crowning.<sup>3</sup> It is quite likely that he held no strong views about the usurpation. He probably agreed, as did the majority of people of any consequence, with the dethroning of Richard, and was prepared to play an appropriate part in the formalities of the revolution. But there is nothing to suggest that Scrope was motivated by definite political opinions.<sup>4</sup>

In 1402, however, events began to occur which have led to the propagation of charges, rumours and theories about the archbishop by contemporary and modern historians. In that

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Wylie, *History of England under Henry IV* (1884-98), ii. p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> See *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 416-17, 423.

<sup>3</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, pp. 295-6.

<sup>4</sup> There has never been any serious attempt to prove that Scrope actually opposed the usurpation; although Hall (p. 28) maintains that Scrope's later actions were due in part to a desire to avenge the death of his "brother", the earl of Wiltshire, who was in fact a member of the family of Scrope of Bolton.

year, Scrope's brother John married Elizabeth, widow of Sir Thomas Percy, the younger brother of the earl of Northumberland. From this point, Wylie says, Scrope "must be regarded as a pronounced partisan of the Percies".<sup>1</sup> This "deduction" simply does not, or at any rate need not, follow. And the instance which Wylie quotes as "evidence" is both inaccurate and irrelevant. "When the Friars were sowing disaffection . . .", he continues, "he . . . displayed his sympathy with the seditious teachings of the 'Prophecy' by giving emphasis to the miracles wrought at the grave of its reputed author at Bridlington".<sup>2</sup> When we look at the passage in the *Annales Henrici Quarti*, however, from which this is obviously derived, it is clear that the friars who were "sowing disaffection" at this time were not involved in the events in question. It was actually at the command of the Pope that publicity was given to St. John of Bridlington, and the "translation" of his body was attended by the bishops of Durham and Carlisle—the other two northern prelates—and other clergy besides Scrope.<sup>3</sup> Quite apart from this, there is no reason to suppose that the Percies ever had any connection with the seditious friars of 1402, or, indeed, that they were in a rebellious frame of mind at all in that year. In 1403, however, the charges are renewed with a little more plausibility. According to Hardyng, the Percies were counselled by Scrope and "other holy men".<sup>4</sup> There is no evidence as to what Scrope was doing at the time of this rebellion, and in the light of subsequent events one might be tempted to infer that he at least sympathized with the rebels. But nothing positive can be said about his role in 1403. There is no suggestion that he came under suspicion at any time; a fact which, as suspicions of this nature fell upon such as Arundel, who was surely completely innocent, seems the nearest thing to a positive indication that he was not involved.

We next hear of Scrope in connection with the conflict between parliament and the clergy, more specifically the Coventry parliament of 1404. There the archbishop followed Arundel's example in opposing oppression of the clergy,<sup>5</sup> but this was only to be expected of any prelate in the circumstances, and would not

<sup>1</sup> Wylie, ii. 210.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 388.

<sup>4</sup> Hardyng, p. 351.

<sup>5</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, pp. 391-3.

have been considered to have had any special relevance if Scrope had not risen the following year. At Easter 1405, according to Wylie, Scrope had "attended a council in London, and supported the efforts of Lord Bardolf in refusing any more money grants on the old bad footing".<sup>1</sup> This appears to be an entirely imaginary incident which is in fact a mixture of pure guesswork and a clumsy misreading of Hardyng ;

The lordes in counsaill then emong, Hight hym [Northumberland] to help the sixte yere at the Pasche,<sup>2</sup>

is not really likely to mean that the rebels' plot was worked out at a council meeting. There is not one definite piece of evidence, in fact, to suggest that Scrope was likely to rebel. Perfectly natural acts such as opposition to excessive clerical taxation cannot be used as evidence even though, in retrospect, they appear to fit the case. From all the knowledge that we possess, Scrope's rebellion probably came as a complete surprise. The fact that Scrope was not mentioned in the king's letter to the council may suggest that even at this late stage Henry did not know that the archbishop was with the rebels. Yet he must have had his reasons for rising. Broadly speaking, there seem to be two possible motives for his rebellion. Either he possessed genuine and independent religious or political grievances, or he had become the tool or partisan of one or other of the lay rebels.

The "traditional" view of the 1405 rising is that it was inspired by Scrope himself, and that the key to the whole rebellion lies in the manifesto which Scrope is said to have published at York. What, then, did this manifesto say, and could it have served as a convincing justification for the 1405 rising?

There seems no reason to doubt that the version of the manifesto in the *Annales Henrici Quarti*, which Walsingham claims to have translated from the original "barbaric" English, was indeed the genuine document.<sup>3</sup> Supporting information is provided by the chronicles and a document entitled "Hae fuerunt causae quare decollatus est archiepiscopus Ricardus Scrope".<sup>4</sup> These accounts purport to tell us of grievances

<sup>1</sup> Wylie, ii. 211.    <sup>2</sup> Hardyng, p. 362.    <sup>3</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, pp. 403-5.

<sup>4</sup> *Historians of the Church of York*, ii. 299-300.



which were grave enough to drive a hitherto politically neutral archbishop into taking up arms against his temporal master.

It comes as no great surprise that one of the principal complaints concerned the king's treatment of the Church and the clergy. The manifesto proclaimed that the rebels intended to remove the intolerable burdens which had fallen upon the clergy, and to correct wrongs and abuses which were prevalent in the Church.<sup>1</sup> And the "Lives of the Archbishops of York" makes Scrope's religious grievances the sole cause of the rebellion. After the battle of Shrewsbury, we are told, the laws and liberties of the Church were infringed and ecclesiastics were ill-treated. Henry repeatedly ignored Scrope's demands that these abuses should cease, until the archbishop's threat to excommunicate the king caused the final rift between them.<sup>2</sup>

As far as the taxation and "persecution" of the Church were concerned, Scrope did have some sort of a case. In these years of financial shortage, it was only to be expected that certain people would cast envious eyes upon the comparatively unexploited wealth of the Church. In 1404, the Commons in the so-called "unlearned" parliament which met at Coventry were distinctly hostile to the clergy. When the parliament proposed to alienate the temporalities of the Church to the king's use for one year, Archbishop Arundel delivered such a stinging rebuke, in which he was backed by Scrope, that the clergy managed to escape the dreaded imposition.<sup>3</sup> But there is no suggestion that Scrope played any sort of leading role in these exchanges. Similarly, on the question of the granting of money by the convocations, there is little which marks out Scrope's attitude as less co-operative than that of his colleague. True, in March 1404 the king ordered him to hold a convocation for the purpose of raising a subsidy,<sup>4</sup> and in May a similar order was issued requiring the northern convocation to meet by 24 June,<sup>5</sup> which suggests either that the first order had not been obeyed, or that no

<sup>1</sup> "ordinandum pro importabilibus oneribus quae currunt in omnes status cleri" (*Annales Henrici Quarti*, pp. 403-4).

<sup>2</sup> *Historians of the Church of York*, ii. 431-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, pp. 391-3.

<sup>4</sup> *Foedera*, ed. T. Rymer, viii. 353.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 355.

grant had been made. On the other hand, after a grant had been voted in the following November, the convocation was recalled only a month later, and granted another "tenth" in January 1405 with comparatively little resistance.<sup>1</sup> If there was any genuine "national" movement against the abuse of the rights and privileges of the Church, its leader was Arundel rather than Scrope. When dealing with most of the contemporary sources, it must be remembered that men who were concerned to prove that Scrope died a martyr's death were almost bound to maintain that he was the leading figure in opposing every imaginable abuse of the Church in these years.

Scrope's complaints about finance and taxation, however, were not all related to the "sufferings" of the Church. The York schedule protests about unbearable taxes, subsidies, extortions and oppressions, which were ruining "those who should be the supporters of the state".<sup>2</sup> According to *Giles' Chronicle*, Scrope declared that the king's exactions were crippling every class of the people,<sup>3</sup> and both these sources mention in particular the pressures put upon the merchants. In the *Continuatio Eulogii* Scrope makes special mention of the fact that the latter class were suffering as a result of excessive customs duties and forced loans.<sup>4</sup> Here we also find a general demand that taxes should be reduced and that "payment should be made for victuals"<sup>5</sup>—presumably referring to food purveyed for the royal household.

It cannot be denied that taxation, especially in the previous year, had been unusually heavy.<sup>6</sup> But just as the Percies had shown scant consideration for Henry's financial plight up to the time of their rebellion in 1403, so Scrope now pretended to be blind to the economic burdens which beset the king. But he had enough of a case to be convincing. The particular reference to the merchants' troubles was doubtless an open invitation for men of that class—who must have formed a fair proportion of the

<sup>1</sup> Wylie, i. 481.

<sup>2</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 404.

<sup>3</sup> *Incerti Scriptoris Chronicon Angliae*, ed. J. A. Giles (1848) (known as *Giles' Chronicle*), p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> "depauperatio mercatorum, in quibus esse deberent substantiales divitiae regni" (*Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 405). <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 405-6. <sup>6</sup> See Wylie, i. 481.

citizen body of York—to join him. Once armed with the indisputable fact of high taxation, Scrope, by claiming to see both the cause of the exactions and the means for their remedy, had a powerful propaganda weapon in his hands.

Then there are complaints of a more political nature. There are vague charges that the nobility were being ill-treated, and that serious dissensions were arising among the magnates of the realm. In the York schedule and the *Continuatio Eulogii* Scrope proposes more specifically that the heirs of nobles should be “restored to their rightful inheritances and honours”.<sup>1</sup> All this seems completely meaningless unless such cryptic remarks are correlated with the charge in the “Proceedings against Scrope” that “many dissensions reigned between the lords, and particularly between the Lord Neville (the earl of Westmorland) and the earl Marshal”. It was Scrope’s intention to solve such problems.<sup>2</sup> The truth of the matter seems to be that this article is framed not to cover any general state of baronial discontent, but for the sole benefit of Scrope’s main ally at York, the earl Marshal, whose significance in the rising will be considered presently.

Then follow the complaints—common to most rebels and “reformers” who claim that they do not actually intend to depose the king—against Henry’s personal advisers and household. In the *Continuatio Eulogii*<sup>3</sup> and the “Causes for Scrope’s execution”,<sup>4</sup> it is maintained that Scrope wished to remove avaricious and greedy counsellors from about Henry’s person. At the best of times, this well-worn charge is always difficult to take seriously, unless there is strong positive evidence of corruption at court. The case here, however, it made the more specious by the fact that Henry had already made considerable concessions on this very issue. In the parliament of early 1404, the Commons had asked for the dismissal of the king’s confessor

<sup>1</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 404; “haeredibus nobilium restituantur haereditates integrae et honores . . .” (*Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 406).

<sup>2</sup> “multae brigae regnant inter dominos . . .” (*Historians of the Church of York*, iii. 288).

<sup>3</sup> *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 406.

<sup>4</sup> “cupidi et avari et ambitiosi, qui volunt dicere et facere quae regi placent, et non Deo” (*Historians of the Church of York*, ii. 305).

and three other members of the household. On 9 February, three of these men came before the parliament, and Henry agreed to dismiss them, and promised that in future he would not retain in his service any person who should incur the displeasure of his people. A demand at the same time that foreigners should be dismissed from the court was similarly accepted.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to imagine what more Henry could have done without compromising his dignity and status as king.

Another complaint stresses the need for good and effective parliaments. In the *Continuatio Eulogii* Scrope demands that men "juris periti" should be elected to parliament, and that knights and burgesses should be properly elected, instead of being, in effect, merely royal nominees.<sup>2</sup> The demand for "free" parliaments is also found in the York schedule.<sup>3</sup> According to *Giles' Chronicle* Scrope wanted an unbiased parliament to remedy the many wrongs which had been committed in the realm.<sup>4</sup> The York schedule<sup>5</sup> and the *Continuatio Eulogii* add the further demand that parliaments should in future be held in London, as this was the "locus . . . magis publicus"<sup>6</sup> where the demands of the people were most likely to receive a fair hearing.

This allegation of parliamentary corruption and ineffectiveness seems the least tenable of all Scrope's charges, and its inclusion in the schedule is almost enough in itself to arouse doubts as to the sincerity of the composer of the document. True, the demand for men learned in the law to be returned, almost certainly a reference to the "unlearned parliament" of 1404, was not without some justification. But if the parliaments of 1404 were composed of royal nominees, their members can scarcely be said to have done their duty to their master. Within the very real limitations of the times, these parliaments were as "independent" and "public-spirited" as any medieval parliaments could reasonably be expected to be. And the last parliament but one had, incidentally, been held in London.<sup>7</sup> That

<sup>1</sup> Wylie, i. 410-11.

<sup>2</sup> "quod milites . . . et burgenses . . . eligantur, et non per Regem assignentur" (*Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 406).

<sup>3</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 403.

<sup>4</sup> "Parliamentum indifferenter, ubi conquirentes suae offensionis remedium poterint obtinere" (*Giles' Chronicle*, p. 44).

<sup>5</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 403.

<sup>6</sup> *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 406.

<sup>7</sup> *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 522.

Scrope succeeded in propagating unquestioned what can only be regarded as naive nonsense can only suggest that the political awareness of his intended audience was not particularly high.

Finally, Scrope suggested that the internal troubles of England were the main reason for the county's external difficulties—particularly the Welsh rebellion. He maintained that if his plans were put into practice, England would be in a better position to deal with external foes, who are mentioned—again perhaps significantly—as a particular menace to the merchant classes. The archbishop claimed to have positive information that the Welsh had promised to make peace if England returned to good rule.<sup>1</sup> Here again, however, the charge that Henry was responsible for the Welsh rebellion was at the very least not proven.

Scrope's York manifesto was in many respects a skilfully composed piece of propaganda. Its tone is moderate and almost "respectable"—the kind of programme, in fact, which one might expect from a man of God who possessed a firm understanding of the economic, social and political issues of the times, and who was proposing a scheme to effect a court revolution which would offend none but the sinful oppressors of the realm. But there were serious flaws in Scrope's arguments. Only on the issue of taxation, and to a limited extent on the question of Church abuses, did the archbishop have anything approaching a valid case. More significant than the fact that there seems to be little justification for several of these charges, however, is the fact that even if they had held considerably more substance, they seem hardly sufficient to have aroused a man such as Scrope to have acted as he did on his own initiative. One of the most suspicious aspects of the whole affair, as it is represented by the chronicles, is that the crude method which Scrope apparently intended to use to bring about his "revolution" was not in keeping either with the popular image of his character or with the alleged aims and principles of the movement. The serious and scholarly nature attributed to the archbishop hardly suggests that he was the type of person who, after a lifetime of apparently

<sup>1</sup> "habemus informationem et . . . promissionem ipsorum qui nunc rebellant in Wallia, quod erunt cordati et hilares sub gubernatione Regis Angliae" (*Annales Henrici Quarti*, pp. 404-5).

exemplary political neutrality, would suddenly organize, on his own initiative, a military insurrection with the aim of bringing about an idealistically-inspired revolution. The strongest arguments against the idea that this was Scrope's own rebellion are not to be found so much in the weaknesses of the wording of the manifesto, but in the military and political absurdities of his position. That Scrope raised his own army is not disputed. What he intended to do with it is another matter. The York citizens, whatever their shortcomings as a fighting force, were armed, and it can only be assumed that Scrope was prepared to use force. But whom was he to fight? The king whose government he professed himself to have risen to reform? Without speculating any further on the innumerable anomalies in Scrope's actions as they are related by the chronicles, however, one thing is patently obvious. Scrope could never have achieved anything with the "forces" which he raised in and around York. On the one hand, it was inconceivable that these rebels could have imposed their will upon Henry by peaceful means; on the other, they were quite inadequate in themselves to overcome him or his "evil advisers" by force. Considered as a separate rebellion, Scrope's rising simply does not make sense. In view of the fact that there was another rising in the north, which strong circumstantial evidence suggests was linked with that at York, it seems the obvious course to consider whether Scrope's rising was merely a part of this insurrection, and whether the most prominent figure in the latter rising, the earl of Northumberland, was the active leader of a single, greater conspiracy.

The relative lack of attention given to Northumberland's activities during the northern disturbances of 1405 in contemporary accounts is as incongruous as the prominent role alleged to have been played by Scrope. For Northumberland, with his vast and concentrated territorial power and local influence, was the only one of the four principal rebels who obviously possessed the resources to launch a full-scale northern rising.

The career of the earl of Northumberland—the expansion of his territorial and political interests under Richard II, his leading role in helping the present king to usurp Richard's throne, the

rewards and honours subsequently bestowed upon him, and the disillusionment which led him to attempt to overthrow his former friend and ally—need not be dealt with here in any detail.<sup>1</sup> It will suffice to mention that the demands made by the earl and his son “Hotspur” became such that even Henry, lavish benefactor that he had been, was in the long run unable to accommodate them. The most powerful lords in the realm, and yet increasingly frustrated by the knowledge that in the last resort Henry, and not themselves, held control, their greed drove them to advance the claims of the twelve-year-old “legitimate” heir to the throne, the earl of March, on the dubious pretext that Henry’s seizure of the Crown had been effected against their will. This attempt to secure a puppet ruler completely subservient to the Percies’ will ended with Hotspur’s defeat and death at Shrewsbury in 1403. There can be no serious doubt that Northumberland fully supported Hotspur, and the speed with which he disowned his son’s actions and protested his loyalty was merely a matter of personal expediency. Henry was almost certainly under no illusions about the earl’s complicity in the rising, but after a token period of detention and a partial confiscation of his property during which time his northern followers displayed ominous solidarity with their master by refusing to surrender various Percy castles to Henry’s officers,<sup>2</sup> Northumberland was officially acquitted in parliament of any treasonable offence and allowed to go free, ostensibly with hardly a stain on his character.<sup>3</sup> After further rumours of trouble had made it necessary for him to confirm his loyalty in the summer of 1404,<sup>4</sup> Northumberland appears to have returned to normal political life, and began to serve once again on the council.<sup>5</sup>

But it is quite clear, in retrospect, that between 1403 and 1405

<sup>1</sup> See J. M. W. Bean, “Henry IV and the Percies”, *History*, xlv (1959), 212-27, for an outline of these events.

<sup>2</sup> *Royal and Historical Letters during the Reign of Henry IV*, ed. Rev. F. C. Hingeston, Rolls Series (1860-5), i. 206-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 524. Further information on Northumberland’s acquittal is furnished by C. M. Fraser, “Some Durham Documents relating to the Hilary parliament of 1404,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, xxxiv (1961), 192-9.

<sup>4</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 390.

<sup>5</sup> He was reinstated some time in the autumn of 1404 (*Proceedings and Ordinances*, i. 244).

the earl was merely biding his time, waiting until the moment when he had at least restored Henry's trust in his loyalty. He was determined to avenge the defeat of 1403. Northumberland was not the kind of man who could simply receive Henry's forgiveness with gratitude and accept restoration to favour as a trusted servant of the Crown. He could not rest now until the ambition aroused two years earlier had been satisfied. And the motive of revenge had now been added to that of self-seeking greed. The Percy family had suffered a crippling blow with the deaths of two of its three principal members. It would have taken a singularly magnanimous father to have passively accepted the death of a son who had died fighting for a cause in which he too had believed. Of an ambitiously dynastic magnate such as Northumberland, it was to ask the impossible. And this was not the Percies' only loss. More important than the loss of the Welsh privileges and possessions held by Hotspur, which had never really interested the Percies, was the complete termination of all Percy interest in the security of the Scottish border. Their tenure of the wardenships of both marches had given the Percies a double source of strength and potential advancement. They had the military prestige of being in command of the only standing forces in the north, and they were strategically placed to further their personal ambitions towards southern Scotland, with the additional advantage that their troops were paid for out of public funds. Now the marches were held by the earl of Westmorland and the king's son John. As the latter was acknowledged to be under Westmorland's tutelage, the two most coveted posts in the north were held firmly in the grip of Northumberland's greatest rival. Westmorland was no friend of his fellow earl—with some justification—and was certain to do his utmost, especially while the king still retained suspicions of Northumberland, to compensate for his territorial inferiority in the north by making the most of the power which his new duties gave him. The situation in 1404 was an extremely delicate one. Put in its simplest terms, Northumberland still held the upper hand in terms of the loyal manpower which he could command, while Westmorland was the leading figure in maintaining "official" royal interests in the north. This precarious balance of allegiance almost certainly



accounts for Henry's otherwise inexplicable lenience towards Northumberland. The alignment of loyalties in the north was such that to execute, imprison or disinherit Northumberland probably seemed to constitute a more dangerous risk than to allow him unconditional freedom in the hope that he would reform. But Henry's decision was still basically a gamble, which in the event proved a failure. For now that the earl apparently considered that the king's faith in him had been restored, he cynically proceeded to prepare for a second rebellion.

Anyone who is reluctant to accept the hypothesis that the Percies' ultimate aim was to depose the king in favour of a more amenable candidate may conveniently point to the professed aims of the rising as put about by Scrope. But whatever the motives of the latter, it is difficult to believe that Northumberland's ambitions could be any less now than in 1403. If the earl had succeeded in 1405, it is inconceivable that he would have remained subordinate to the king. If this was all he wanted, the position which he held between 1399 and 1403 was all that he could have asked for. His two ultimate aims seem to have been to have a controlling influence in the political government of England, and to have a free hand to pursue his personal policy of expansion in the north. He could never hope to achieve these aims while Henry still held the throne. It would have been a practical impossibility for Henry to have remained king in the event of his defeat. A deposition in favour of the earl of March was surely again the obvious course of action. It is not impossible that Northumberland had some hand in, or at least knew of, the obscure and abortive plot early in 1405 to abduct the young earl of March.<sup>1</sup> In that January, Northumberland excused himself from coming south to attend a council meeting, and while his excuses were on paper quite valid,<sup>2</sup> an alternative explanation is that he was involved in the plot and thought it expedient to remain as far away as possible in case it should fail. Northumberland was never one to risk being in the forefront of losing causes. Even if he had had nothing to do with the conspiracy, it may have

<sup>1</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, pp. 398-9, gives the fullest account of the incident, but without throwing much light upon the motives of those alleged to be involved.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings and Ordinances*, ii. 103-4.

led Northumberland to believe that there would be support for a similar scheme in the summer of 1405.

Northumberland undoubtedly had the motives for rebellion. He also possessed readily available resources. Thousands of men in the north were tenants of the vast Percy lordships in Cumberland, Northumberland and Yorkshire, and many prominent members of the gentry, whether through independent inclination or through expediency resulting from the proximity of their own estates to areas of Percy control or influence, could be relied upon to support the earl. And in the case of the majority of the lesser men who appear to have held positions of responsibility in the rising, and about whom some details are known, there is either positive evidence or a distinct likelihood that they were connected in some way with Northumberland. The four members of the Yorkshire gentry who appear, according to the official record, to have been most active in organizing support for the earl in their county—Sir John Fauconberg, John Fitzrandolf, Sir John Colville and Sir Ralph Hastings—all had some links with the Percies.<sup>1</sup> So, too, had John Percy of Kildale and William

<sup>1</sup> Fauconberg was connected with the Percies through his father, Thomas, Lord Fauconberg, who held the castle and manor of Skelton, in Cleveland, the manors of Marske and Redcar (P.R.O., C137/66 no. 19, m. 2. Chancery Inquisition Post Mortem) and other lands in Yorkshire and Northumberland. From 1391 the latter, who suffered intermittently from insanity, was under the control of the earl of Northumberland, who was largely responsible for administering his estates (*Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1388-1392, p. 513; *Victoria History of Yorkshire, North Riding*, ed. W. Page, (1914-23), ii. 407; *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1399-1402, p. 366). Fitzrandolf, who held the manors of Spennithorne and Newton Piggott, as well as lands in Fearby and Grewelthorpe, near Ripon, and Skipton on Swale, near Thirsk (P.R.O., E357/16, m. 20) was a near neighbour of the earl, and had been associated with several of the latter's other allies as a collector of taxes for the North Riding (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, 1399-1405, pp. 190, 256, 286). Colville had been suspected of complicity with the rebels in 1403 (*Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1401-1405, p. 297). His estates in Yorkshire included lands in Heselton and East Hutton, held of the Percy manor of Topcliffe (*Inquisitions Post Mortem relating to Yorkshire of the Reigns of Henry IV and Henry V*, ed. W. Paley Baildon and J. W. Clay, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series. vol. lix (1918), p. 105; P.R.O. E357/16, m. 20) and the manor of Arnecliffe held of the Fauconbergs (*Yorks. Inquisitions*, p. 105), as well as estates in the Percy barony of Alnwick (*History of Northumberland*, Northumberland County History Committee (1893-1940), i. 177-8). Hastings' family seat was at the castle of Slingsby, and the manor embraced Mowthorpe, near Malton, and Colton, near Thirsk, these being held of the

Lasingby, whose role in the rebellion is not so clearly defined.<sup>1</sup> The two "Percy men" with Scrope at York have already been referred to,<sup>2</sup> and other members of the northern gentry who were working in close conjunction with Northumberland at the time of the revolt included the Cleveland landowner Henry Boynton and William, son of the lesser marcher lord Greystoke.<sup>3</sup> Finally, there was William Clifford, uncle of the young Westmorland magnate John, Lord Clifford, and a firm supporter of the earl, to the point of defying the king in his demands for the surrender of Percy castles during the earl's imprisonment.<sup>4</sup> Clifford had strong family connections with the Percies from 1404, when his nephew married a daughter of Hotspur.<sup>5</sup> These were the men who could draw upon considerable resources of armed manpower on their own estates, and at the same time raise and organize the men of neighbouring Percy estates in their lord's cause and persuade or intimidate the tenants of "neutral" or even loyal landowners of their locality to follow what could be represented as the "general" example. In terms of local influence and potential military power, Northumberland had vastly greater resources in Yorkshire than Scrope, for all his eloquence among

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Mowbray manor of Thirsk (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 1399-1402, p. 428). His possessions in the East Riding included lands in Sutton-in-Holderness held of the archbishop of York's manor of Beverley (P.R.O. C.137/58, no. 50).

<sup>1</sup> Percy was a distant relative of Northumberland who held the manor of Kildale and other lands in Langburgh wapentake (*Vict. Hist. Yorks., N. Riding*, ii. 251, 304) and estates at Thornton in Pickering Lythe (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 1392-1396, p. 10). He had latterly been a collector of taxes in the North Riding in conjunction with others who were to assume leadership of the Yorkshire rising (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, 1383-1391, p. 159; 1391-1399, p. 264; 1399-1405, p. 286). Lasingby held extensive possessions in the neighbourhood of Northumberland's Cleveland estates, as well as the manor of Kirk Levington, in Cleveland, which he held by the grant of the earl himself (P.R.O., E357/16, m. 24).

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> Boynton was lord of Acklam, in Cleveland (*Vict. Hist. Yorks. N. Riding*, ii. 428) and also held lands in Roxby, near Thirsk, and Snainton, near Scarborough (*ibid.*) He was associated with Percy of Kildale, Fitzrandolf, and Robert Percy in the collection of the heavy tax granted in the parliament of November 1404 (*Cal. Fine Rolls*, 1399-1405, p. 286). For Greystoke, see Hardyng, p. 363.

<sup>4</sup> *Proceedings and Ordinances*, i. 213-14.

<sup>5</sup> *Northern Chronicle*, p. 282, printed in C. L. Kingsford's *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (1913).

the York citizens, could hope to muster. Furthermore, he held vast estates and several fortified castles in the far northern counties, upon which he could fall back if necessary. Unlike Scrope, therefore, Northumberland had at his disposal all the resources he needed to raise an effective rebel force within a comparatively short time. Any ally in an insurrection with Northumberland could hardly, from a practical point of view, be anything more than a subordinate partner. And it seems impossible to escape the virtual certainty that Scrope was not acting in any sense on his own initiative, but that he was brought into the conspiracy as such a subordinate, and that his most important role was to lend a spurious air of religious mission to the earl's rebellion. How did Scrope come to allow himself to be put in this position? Was it a matter of personal ambition, or of higher principle?

The picture of Scrope as painted by contemporaries portrays a man who was the very antithesis of the ambitious, worldly prelate. It may be argued that Scrope's advance to the heights of ecclesiastical preferment was that of a man of ambition, but it can equally be maintained that the archbishop's intellectual qualifications made him more worthy of his office than some of his colleagues. And even if Scrope had possessed the driving ambition of Northumberland himself, what could he have hoped to gain by rebelling? As far as promotion in office was concerned, one thing only; the archbishopric of Canterbury. But it seems unlikely that Scrope would have risen solely for the material advantage of exchanging archbishoprics; and against the suggestion that he wanted more power in order to put the Church's point of view more effectively may be set the fact that he had seemed quite content in 1404 to follow the lead of Arundel, with whom he appeared to have had no quarrel. Taking into consideration the two assumptions that Scrope does not appear to have been a particularly ambitious person, and that the material rewards in the event of success would probably not have been great, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Scrope had some misguided notion that the rising would serve some worthy purpose. What could this purpose have been?

Family loyalties certainly cannot explain anything in the archbishop's actions. Both branches of the Scrope family, with

one insignificant exception,<sup>1</sup> remained loyal in 1405. Nor can it be positively claimed that Scrope rose because of ties with the Percies. It is arguable that Scrope could not in practice have been as completely non-political as he appears to have been, and that he was both a strong partisan of Northumberland in the revolution of 1399 and a secret supporter in 1403. But none of this can be proved. There is nothing to suggest any more intimate relationship between Scrope and Northumberland than one would expect in the normal course of northern affairs. Could it be, then, that Scrope, far from being a partisan of Henry and Northumberland in 1399, had in fact opposed the usurpation, or at least had reservations, and that Northumberland was able to exploit the archbishop's doubts about the justness of his former actions? Again, there is no evidence to support this possibility except Hardyng's introduction to the "Quarrel" in the "Yorkist" version of his chronicle, which (almost certainly falsely) claims that the Percies rose in 1403 because of a similar desire to right the wrongs they had committed in assisting Henry to seize the throne.

One general suggestion may be worth considering. Did Scrope, although fully aware of the underlying motives of the insurgents, join the rising in the belief that he could change its course? Did he, for instance, really disapprove of the more extreme aims of Northumberland and join in the hope that he could exercise a restraining influence? Did he, believing genuinely in the articles of his manifesto, think that he could turn the rebellion into a movement simply to press for limited reforms? If this was the case, he was seriously mistaken. He could not hope either to capture the leadership of the rebellion from Northumberland, or to impose his will on him. In the event of victory, Scrope's voice would probably have to be heard, but in the last resort he could have done little to prevent the earl from carrying the revolt inexorably to its logical conclusion. Nor could he, in practice, moderate the militant aspect of the rising. To the king rebel armies were rebel armies, whether composed of Percy tenants in support of a greedy and desperate

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey, son of Stephen Scrope of Masham, the archbishop's brother, was pardoned for rebellion in June 1405 (*Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1405-8, p. 19).

king-maker, or comparatively harmless Yorkshire citizens marching ostensibly in a holy and peaceful cause. The presence in the field of Scrope's army must inevitably have made the situation appear more dangerous and have led to the need for more decisive suppression of the revolt. Far from minimizing the military aspect of the rising, Scrope was bound to accentuate it.

All this must of necessity be speculation; and Ramsay's remark that "what Scrope hoped to effect is not easy to divine"<sup>1</sup> still unfortunately holds good. There appear to be two possible general explanations for Scrope's action. The simpler is that, in spite of the lack of positive evidence, he was by 1405, and perhaps to some extent always had been, a political associate of Northumberland. The other is that he had more personal aims, whether these were expressed in his manifesto or were privately held beliefs, which he hoped could be fulfilled within the framework of Northumberland's rebellion.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the truth, however, it is difficult to believe that he was not subordinate to the earl.

The other two lords involved in the rising are represented in most of the sources as being the allies or subordinates of each of the two "major" rebels. Scrope's associate was Thomas Mowbray, earl Marshal. Mowbray was only nineteen, and it is therefore hardly surprising that he does not seem to have taken any significant part in the political intrigue of the early part of the reign. There do not seem to have been any links binding him to any of the other rebels—least of all to Scrope. But a glance at the events of Mowbray's youth suggests that no complex theories of political allegiance need be sought to explain his rebellion. It was almost inevitable that Mowbray would grow up with a bitter hatred of the king.

Mowbray was the son and heir of Thomas Mowbray, earl Marshal of England, and earl of Nottingham, one of the Lords Appellant of 1387-8<sup>3</sup> who had subsequently been restored to

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Ramsay, *Lancaster and York*, (1892), i. 88.

<sup>2</sup> "The absence of private motives for his action is so complete that we may perhaps accept his plea and believe that he had been lured by Northumberland to lend his aid to a mere baronial revolt under the idea that he was serving the best interests of the realm" (Oman, p. 195).

<sup>3</sup> *The Complete Peerage*, ed. H. A. Doubleday and Lord Howard de Walden, etc. (1910-40), ix. 601.

Richard II's favour, and who was rewarded in 1397 with the title of duke of Norfolk.<sup>1</sup> Within a matter of months, however, Norfolk fell foul of Richard as a result of his famous "quarrel" with Henry, duke of Hereford, the future Henry IV.<sup>2</sup> Richard decided that the issue should be settled by a "trial by battle",<sup>3</sup> but his jealousy of Henry's growing prestige led him to cancel the duel at the last minute, subsequently banishing both lords—Norfolk for life.<sup>4</sup> The latter's son, then aged thirteen, was perhaps already a page in the household of Richard's child-queen Isabella.<sup>5</sup> Even if he did not understand the real issues at stake, the young Mowbray must have been influenced by these events to develop hostile feelings towards his father's opponent in the quarrel—and the bitterness was probably increased by Norfolk's premature death in exile only a year later.<sup>6</sup>

But even more significant in the formation of Mowbray's attitude towards Henry must have been the reaction in Isabella's household when this same Henry seized Richard's throne and eventually brought about his death at Pontefract. Mowbray must have lived in an atmosphere charged with the most violent hatred of the usurper. It is difficult to imagine, in fact, where Mowbray would ever have been likely to have heard anything but hostile opinions of the new king. And in spite of Henry's fair and generous treatment of him,<sup>7</sup> the king was unable to prevent Mowbray's interest in political intrigue from being first aroused in the very way which he must have feared. Early in 1405, the duke of York was planning some treason in which the first step was to be the abduction of the earl of March. Mowbray knew of this abortive conspiracy, and admitted as much to the king, successfully petitioning for pardon for his failure to report the matter.<sup>8</sup> But the damage had been done. From this time on, Mowbray appears to have been deliberately seeking trouble. He complained that he had been deprived of his "rightful" office of

<sup>1</sup> *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 355.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 360.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 382-3.    <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 383.

<sup>5</sup> In December 1399, Mowbray was petitioning to be allowed to remain in Isabella's household (*Proceedings and Ordinances*, i. 99-100).

<sup>6</sup> *Complete Peerage*, ix. 604.

<sup>7</sup> By November 1403 Mowbray was in practical possession of virtually the whole of his inheritance (*Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1401-1405, pp. 322, 328).

<sup>8</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 399.

marshal of England,<sup>1</sup> which had been granted in 1399 to Westmorland.<sup>2</sup> In fact, Mowbray could hardly have claimed to exercise the duties of the office when it fell vacant in 1399, and now, while he was still a minor, was hardly the time to make his claim. He also became involved in a dispute of precedence with the earl of Warwick—decided in favour of the latter at a council in March 1405.<sup>3</sup> This judgement, given no doubt in good faith, was taken by the immature and prejudiced youth as a personal slight. Mowbray was likewise probably irritated by being included in a list of lords appointed at about this time to go with the king to serve in Wales,<sup>4</sup> where he would be under Henry's surveillance and away from subversive friends.

There is no evidence that Mowbray obeyed the order. Instead, he was drawn into the plot now being hatched against the king. Mowbray's complaints, which alone were little more than a minor nuisance to Henry, reached the ears of men who were prepared to use him for their own ends. The chief value of Mowbray to the insurgents probably lay in his distinguished name. They perhaps felt that his firm adherence to the cause might induce any lords of wavering loyalty to follow his example. Besides, the presence in the rebels' ranks of a man who was not an obvious Percy adherent may have served to broaden the apparent scope of the rebellion and to have contributed to the impression that this was not simply an attempt to repeat the narrowly personal Percy revolt of 1403. This probably explains why Mowbray was associated with Scrope, with whom he is not known to have had the slightest connection. Both Scrope and Mowbray had an air of "respectability" about them which Northumberland now lacked; and the more "public" role given to them in the raising of the revolt was probably deliberately calculated to draw attention away from the real instigator of the revolt—until success was assured.

The other lord involved was Thomas, Lord Bardolf of Wormegay. Bardolf held lands in several counties in the south-east and midlands,<sup>5</sup> but his main estates and interests were in

<sup>1</sup> *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1399-1401, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Proceedings and Ordinances*, ii. 104.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* i. 252.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1389-1392, p. 119; 1402-1405, pp. 94, 97; *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1405-1408, p. 106.



East Anglia and Lincolnshire.<sup>1</sup> Such family ties as he possessed with the rest of the baronage were two-fold. His mother, Agnes, had married as her second husband Thomas Mortimer, an illegitimate son of the second earl of March,<sup>2</sup> and his daughter Anne was married to Northumberland's faithful lieutenant Sir William Clifford.<sup>3</sup> After Richard II's return from Ireland in 1399, when the invading Henry was carrying all before him, Bardolf joined in the general defection. It seems unnecessary to attempt to account for this desertion, as Wylie does, by maintaining that it was the fact that Bardolf was "under the influence of the Percies"<sup>4</sup> which led him to transfer his allegiance. Bardolf's defection, taken with the subsequent events of his brief career, seems simply to suggest that his only consistent political principle was to attempt to ensure that he was always on the winning side. All that is "known" of him prior to 1405 is furnished by the ominous rumours of the chroniclers. *Giles' Chronicle* makes the unsubstantiated charge that at two unspecified times early in the reign Bardolf had been convicted of treason and had been pardoned by the king.<sup>5</sup> Wylie, who believes that this "treason" was connected with the 1403 rebellion,<sup>6</sup> makes further unproven claims—that Bardolf had in 1404 "doubtless helped to stir up the recent sedition"<sup>7</sup>, referring to the disturbances in Essex in that year, and "there can be little doubt that he was one of those prepared for a rising in the winter of 1404".<sup>8</sup> While there is absolutely no evidence to support these charges, it may be noted that the *Annales Henrici Quarti* says that Bardolf joined Northumberland after having been at variance with the king in two recent councils.<sup>9</sup> It may be implied from these two chronicles that Bardolf had become disaffected for some reason by the early part of 1405, even if he was not involved in the abortive plots of the previous months, and his attitude, like that of Mowbray, may have thus caught the attention of Northumberland. It is not known

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. Close Rolls, 1402-1405*, pp. 95-7.

<sup>2</sup> Wylie, ii. 175.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1405-1408*, pp. 448-9.

<sup>4</sup> Wylie, ii. 175.

<sup>5</sup> *Giles' Chronicle*, p. 42.

<sup>6</sup> Wylie, ii. 175.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 174.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 175—presumably a reference to the "March" plot.

<sup>9</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 402. Bardolf had attended a council early in 1405—the only record of such attendance (*Proceedings and Ordinances*, i. 246).

whether Bardolf had maintained a connection with the Mortimers, but assuming that the latter were to be involved in the revolution, he perhaps thought that his former family ties might stand him in good stead. He was probably an ambitious man who felt that he had no chance of advancing himself under Henry's rule, and was tempted by the prospect of rising to the otherwise unattainable position of one of the leading magnates of the realm.

Neither Mowbray nor Bardolf appears to have made any significant contribution to the organization of the rebellion. They seem merely recruits to the cause, the one an impressionable youth nursing largely imaginary grievances against the king, the other a minor lord motivated by greed for power or material gain. But whereas these two lords doubtless decided to throw in their lot with the earl to serve their own ends, the apparent absence of such coldly personal or political motivations on Scrope's part leads one to wonder whether he was in some way deceived as to the benefits which would accrue from his participation. From Northumberland's point of view Scrope's support was invaluable in that he was both an eminently "respectable" leader who might, by his ecclesiastical standing and his own personality, rally a considerable amount of less obviously partisan support to Northumberland's cause, and a convenient "cover" for the true leader of the rebellion and for the latter's ultimate plans. Whatever Scrope's motives, it seems likely that he had made a distinctly unequal bargain. Just how unequal he was soon to know to his cost.

## II

A plan of campaign now had to be devised. Northumberland should by this time have been under few illusions about the abilities of his adversary, and it is more than likely that his planning took into account the reasons for the failure of the Percy revolt of 1403. It must have been clear from that defeat that delays and lack of co-ordination of forces had played a major part in allowing the incredibly fast-moving Henry to crush his rivals. With this in mind, it seems reasonable to attempt to deduce from the information available what form the military side of the rebellion was intended to take.

It was obvious that the rising, led as it was by a leading northern magnate, should be based in the north. But in at least one important respect it differed considerably from that of 1403. Here there was recruitment over a wide belt of country—from Northumberland through to Yorkshire, Cheshire and the Welsh march—and the forces raised or prepared to rise in these areas were never able to unite before Henry's unexpectedly early arrival. The plan on this occasion seemed to be to collect a considerable force from a comparatively compact region at an early stage in the rising. Hotspur's main recruitment in 1403 had been in Cheshire, some time after he had begun his march from the Scottish border, and Henry was certainly aware of his activities and on the move long before his opponent had any sort of fighting force at his disposal. Also, for the rebellion to have the maximum effect before the king could hope to launch a counter-offensive, the recruiting area needed to be within striking distance of the rest of the country. It may have been for this reason that there seems to have been little or no attempt to raise troops in the "far north" of England. Only a handful of men are definitely recorded as having rebelled in the Percy cause in Northumberland and Cumberland.<sup>1</sup> It is likely that these counties were considered too far distant to make it desirable that the rebellion should begin there. There was no real danger that these counties would oppose Northumberland, who was by far the most powerful landowner in both counties, and there was probably always the knowledge that the Percy tenants and supporters there could be called out to strengthen the rear of the Percy advance if this proved necessary. Lancashire would be expected to be strongly royalist, and this seems in the event to have been the case, but there were no troops stationed there, and it is unlikely that Henry's men in the Palatinate could have been mobilized in time to deal with the formidable forces being prepared in Yorkshire—the chosen centre of the Percy revolt.

The Percy estates in Yorkshire were extensive, and may be very roughly divided into five groups; the northern estates on the

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1405-1408*, pp. 49, 71, 75, 77, 79. Of about 420 rebels whose names are recorded, only about 20 had their origins in these counties.

Cleveland hills, centred around Seamer ; those on the north-western moors in the Settle area ; those around Topcliffe ; those in the centre of the county, perhaps the most important group, comprising principally Spofforth, Healaugh, and Tadcaster ; and the eastern estates lying between Beverley and Bridlington.<sup>1</sup> Presumably in the interests of easier co-ordination, the extreme western and eastern estates do not seem to have figured in the early recruitment of forces, which appears to have been concentrated in the northern and central areas. Apart from considerations of keeping the initial revolt within a compact area, the concentration on these estates was also doubtless due to the fact that Percy's main allies among the Yorkshire gentry held many of their own estates in the Cleveland and Topcliffe regions, while the earl Marshal's main Yorkshire estates, another potentially rich source of manpower, also lay within easy reach. Lying not far east of Topcliffe, too, was a large block of estates around Malton held almost exclusively by these same rebel gentry. Within this area, then, Northumberland and his allies could raise an army which would be stronger, within a very few days of rising, than that which Hotspur led to defeat at Shrewsbury.

Archbishop Scrope's role in this scheme was comparatively simple. He was to raise the men of York (itself within the sphere of influence of the Spofforth and Tadcaster estates) to swell the numbers of the rebel forces with citizens who would be, though far less militarily qualified or equipped than their fellow insurgents, fired with religious enthusiasm for the task in hand. From the strictly military point of view, in fact, Scrope was hardly more important in Northumberland's scheme than the leading members of the Yorkshire gentry.

This, however, might only have been the beginning of the rising. As the rebels headed south, there were several areas of support upon which they could hope to draw. There was to be no attempt to raise Cheshire at the start of the revolt ; after two unsuccessful risings, abortive in 1400 and bloody in 1403, Cheshire could hardly be expected to risk making the first move again.

<sup>1</sup> J. M. W. Bean, *The Estates of the Percy Family, 1416-1537* (1958), p. 159.

But there must still have been bitterness in the county, and it seems very likely that there would have been support from Cheshire if an overwhelming Yorkshire rebel force had passed that way on a mission of revenge. Mowbray had estates in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire—some men from this area were already with him in Yorkshire<sup>1</sup>—and further enlistment here was a distinct possibility. Then there was the chance of Welsh help. It is possible that the “Tripartite Indenture”, in which Northumberland, Edmund Mortimer the elder, and Owen Glendower agreed to divide the kingdom between them,<sup>2</sup> had been made earlier this year. Even if this was not the case, previous and subsequent events suggest that Northumberland was always on good terms with Glendower in the years of his conflict with the king, and, as Henry was obviously bent on total defeat of the Welsh rebel movement, Owen had nothing to lose and probably much to gain by supporting the earl’s rising. He may have come to some agreement to join forces with Northumberland, or to send a contingent to help him at some stage, but in any case he would be serving the English rebel cause almost equally well if he simply continued with his own campaign and kept the prince of Wales’ forces tied down in his own country. If the latter had decided to try to halt Northumberland’s advance by moving out of Wales, Glendower would probably have automatically become an ally of the earl by taking the opportunity to attack the prince from the rear.

By the time that this stage had been reached, however, the king would almost certainly have arrived on the scene. It is conceivable that a major battle would have taken place somewhere in the north midlands, and it is quite likely that in the probable absence of Prince Henry’s forces Northumberland would have had the upper hand numerically. How the military and political campaign would have developed from here lies still deeper in the realms of speculation. It is more immediately relevant to consider the one great flaw in the plan—a flaw which Northumberland himself saw, and attempted to eradicate. This was the presence in the north of one man who could seriously endanger

<sup>1</sup> Some of these men are dealt with in P.R.O., E357/16, mm. 42-3, where details of their forfeitures and pardons are given.

<sup>2</sup> *Giles’ Chronicle*, pp. 39-42.

the success of the early stages of the revolt—the earl of Westmorland. There was absolutely no doubt where Westmorland's loyalties lay. With his estates beset on all sides by the superior landed power of the greedy and acquisitive Percies, Westmorland's only hope of survival had always been to rely on the protection and support of his royal brother-in-law. There were thus strong ties of mutual interest between the two men which never showed the slightest signs of being severed. Westmorland was of inestimable value to Henry in the north—more especially after the defeat of the 1403 rising. He was the only lord strong and able enough both to protect the king's general interests in the north and to keep future Percy aspirations in check. As warden of the west march and guardian and adviser to the young Prince John, warden of the east march, he was in effective command of all the mobilized royal forces in the north. His own estates were conveniently near to Percy strongholds in Cumberland and Yorkshire. And he had the personal initiative to make good use of the forces now at his disposal. It had been Westmorland, in 1403, who had met and dispersed Northumberland's Yorkshire forces when they were beginning to make a belated southward move in the week after Shrewsbury.<sup>1</sup> Westmorland was dangerous to the rebels in at least two respects. From the military point of view, he could, at the least, harass them from the rear on their southward march, and at the worst, if he were particularly vigilant, he might be able to intervene early enough in the Yorkshire recruiting centres to stamp out the rebellion at source. But perhaps even more important, Westmorland was a figure around whom most of the lesser northern lords and the Yorkshire gentry—most of whom would have had nothing to gain by a Percy victory which would probably only have put them more than ever at the mercy of the overbearing Northumberland—could be rallied to the royal cause. Westmorland seemed to be the one major obstacle to Northumberland's schemes, and the earl decided that he must be eliminated. Some time early in May 1405, Westmorland was visiting Sir Ralph Eure, perhaps at the latter's residence at Witton on the Wear, in Durham,<sup>2</sup> when

<sup>1</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 371.

<sup>2</sup> Wylie, ii. 178.

Northumberland marched by night with 400 men to capture him.<sup>1</sup>

This incident never seems to have received the attention that it deserves. Treated by Walsingham merely as an episode in a personal feud, it seems certain that it was the opening, and most crucial, act of the whole rebellion. The number of men involved—a small army—shows that the enterprise was a very serious one in which there was no room for mistakes. For Westmorland's removal, as has already been suggested, would have swung the balance of military and political power in the north overwhelmingly towards the rebels. The forces on the Scottish march would be rendered at least temporarily impotent. In Westmorland's absence, Prince John would have done his best, but it would surely have been asking too much of a mere youth to expect him to deal with a man of Northumberland's experience. With Westmorland captive and Northumberland the only figure of any consequence in the north, not only would the way be clear for the latter to advance south at will, but there would be every likelihood that some at least of the hitherto loyal lords and gentry of the north would despair of the king's cause and join him.<sup>2</sup> It might also be suggested that Westmorland himself could be a useful bargaining counter in negotiations with the king—although in the event of a Percy victory it would probably be presumptuous to assume that anything as sophisticated as bargaining would have taken place.

Surprise must have been an essential feature of the earl's plans, and it is likely that events were intended to move quickly after the first blow had been struck—news of which would not take long to reach the king. The Yorkshire gentry were probably preparing the men of their areas to rise, while Scrope in York may have already begun his propaganda campaign. The earl Marshal had probably joined him, and Bardolf was probably about to be summoned north. Northumberland's plan appears to have been to wait north of the recruiting areas until the armies were raised and ready to move, and then to come south "picking

<sup>1</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 400.

<sup>2</sup> At least one of them, Eure, would presumably have been in Northumberland's hand if the coup had succeeded.

up " the various forces as he went. The full Yorkshire force would be completed by the union, on Shipton Moor, which lay to the west of York, of the earl's armies with those of Scrope.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that Shipton Moor was both designated as the rebels' final meeting point, and the place where the rebellion was to reach its climax, gives, perhaps, an exaggerated impression of its importance and of the role of Scrope and his York insurgents. In fact, Shipton Moor was probably chosen as the starting point of the military campaign proper for two reasons, one of which was simply that it happened to be situated in the final area of recruitment, within easy reach of the two southernmost centres of support, the Spofforth-Tadcaster estates and the city of York. The second was that it was very likely considered advisable that the York rebels, the most vulnerable militarily of all the Yorkshire forces, should not make their move until the rest of the army was in the field, when they would perform what was probably their main function, that of " filling out " the ranks of the rebels to create a numerically imposing force. It was desirable that they should join the rebellion last, and at a venue as near as possible to their place of origin, in order to minimize the possibility of their being intercepted while still relying on their own devices.

The scheme seemed, in theory, almost foolproof. But Northumberland's vital opening move, upon which so much else depended, met with total disaster. Westmorland had been forewarned of his enemy's approach, and managed to make his escape.<sup>2</sup>

This was as disastrous for Northumberland as the capture of his rival would have been advantageous. Westmorland was now thoroughly alerted, and alarmed both for the king's cause and for his own personal safety. If the insurrection was to proceed as planned, Westmorland would not only be available to deal with the rebels : he would be ready and waiting to strike the moment another move was made. Northumberland had to decide quickly on what he should do now. There were two extreme courses open to him. He might have considered the possibility of attempting to explain away the incident, in order to gain a

<sup>1</sup> Hardyng, p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 400.



breathing space during which suspicion might die down, but there was little that he could have said against the accusations of Westmorland which would have convinced Henry that he was not planning high treason. Besides, the preparations for rebellion were surely too far advanced for any recall of his followers. The alternative was to proceed with the rebellion as if nothing had happened, and, if possible, to eliminate Westmorland early in the proceedings, even though this would mean a delay during which the king might reach the north before Northumberland had time to move on to further potential recruiting grounds. The only chance of success for the revolt, and of Northumberland's survival as a political force in England, lay in carrying on with what had been set in motion as vigorously as possible.

The news of Northumberland's abortive action did not take long to reach the ears of the king. When Robert Waterton, Master of the Horse and a faithful royal servant, was sent north to see Northumberland,<sup>1</sup> it seems certain that his mission was to investigate the incident. That a messenger was sent at all seems to suggest that the king was not yet sure exactly what had happened. But he can have had few doubts about the seriousness of the situation when the earl proceeded to seize Waterton as a hostage.<sup>2</sup> The king had only recently left London on his expedition to deal with the Welsh rebels<sup>3</sup> when he realized that the north was about to rise. He wasted no time. On 22 May, numerous commissions were issued at Hereford to loyalists in Lancashire and the midland counties, ordering them to assemble all the able-bodied men at their disposal.<sup>4</sup> The news of the impending revolts soon reached the capital, and the council wrote to tell Henry that they had dispatched Lord Roos and the chief justice, the Yorkshireman William Gascoigne, to the scene of the disturbances, and that they had raised the sum of 1,000 marks which they would be sending to him to cover his immediate campaign expenses as he diverted his forces northwards.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 605. Waterton was steward of the honours and constable of the castles of Pontefract and Tickhill (R. Somerville, *History of the Duchy of Lancaster*, vol. I, 1265-1603 (1953), pp. 513, 515, 528, 529).

<sup>2</sup> *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 605.

<sup>3</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 407.

<sup>4</sup> *Cal. Patent Rolls*, 1405-1408, p. 66.

<sup>5</sup> *Proceedings and Ordinances*, i. 262-3.

Meanwhile, Westmorland, Prince John, Lord Fitzhugh, Eure, and William Fulthorp were at Durham—apparently uncertain as to what the rebels' next move would be. According to Hardyng, their initial plan was to hold Durham castle “for drede . . . of the Erle of Northumberland”. But then Hardyng's master, Sir Robert Umfraville, appeared with a small force from the march and advised them to march south against the rebels there, maintaining that “of the north they nede no more to drede”.<sup>1</sup> If there is anything to be drawn from this cryptic statement, it may be that Umfraville knew that there was no danger of the royalist forces being trapped between the south Yorkshire rebels and any forces of Northumberland's north of Durham. The crucial problem at this point is that of Northumberland's whereabouts; was he north or south of Durham, and what was he doing?

A very significant clue to his movements seems to be provided by the fact that after Waterton had been seized, he was imprisoned first at Warkworth, then at Alnwick, and finally at Berwick.<sup>2</sup> If Waterton was actually kept with the earl all the time, this implies that Northumberland began to move northwards almost as soon as he realized that the first part of his scheme had failed. In the unlikely event of his being south of the royalist leaders while they were at Durham, he must have slipped past them unnoticed soon afterwards. One possible explanation of this apparent complete desertion of his allies at the crucial moment is that he intended to redress the shifted balance of his fortunes by calling in Scottish help. It is certainly true that Northumberland was consorting with certain prominent Scots when he allowed their countrymen to enter and sack Berwick the following month,<sup>3</sup> and that he found asylum in Scotland when he was finally forced to flee the country.<sup>4</sup> But it is most unlikely that he had planned any Scottish intervention at the beginning of the rebellion—when such aid would have been superfluous and a potential embarrassment—and it is hardly likely that he would have been able to obtain Scottish help quickly enough to enable him to recover his advantage if his

<sup>1</sup> B.M. Lansdowne MS. 204.    <sup>2</sup> *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 605.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Northern Chronicle*, p. 283.

allies were unable to hold their own in the meantime. In any case, if Northumberland had intended to bring back assistance from his journey north, either from Scotland or from his Northumberland or Cumberland estates, he would surely have first issued his allies with instructions as to how to act in his absence. And this appears to be precisely what the earl did not do. All the forces which had been required for the first stage of the rebellion were ready or nearly ready to march, and Northumberland's best course of action was surely to collect and lead these forces, or at the very least to delegate his authority. But whatever Northumberland was doing in the days immediately following the failure of the initial coup, it seems unlikely that he even entered Yorkshire. It can only be assumed that once a flaw had appeared in the plan which would have theoretically guaranteed success, the earl panicked, and that in his customary concern to preserve himself at all costs he fled from the scene of rebellion, hoping perhaps that the other rebels might somehow accomplish their purpose without him—after which he might safely return to the forefront—but perhaps at this stage not really caring. He may have hoped that by leaving at this early stage he could disown the rebellion if it failed.

For Scrope in York, however, the insurrection seemed to be proceeding as planned. Unlike the Cleveland and Topcliffe rebels, who had no obvious leader other than Northumberland and who seem to have been awaiting instructions from him, Scrope had probably been issued with very definite orders, as a complete amateur in military matters; and because of his essential inexperience in this field, he was not likely to deviate from these instructions unless he received fresh orders. He appears to have carried on with the preparations for rebellion originally allocated him. On the gates of the city of York and on the doors of the monasteries and churches of the city there appeared Scrope's schedule of articles, proclaiming the archbishop's intentions. At the same time, messages were sent to the clergy of churches in the surrounding area, instructing them to preach Scrope's cause, and his views were quickly spread abroad while the leader himself preached sedition in the Minster.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Continuatio Eulogii*, pp. 405-6; *Historia Anglicana*, ii. 269.

The specious nature of his propaganda has already been noted. But the citizens of York were hardly the most discerning of political observers. When a well-liked archbishop called them to arms with the promise of a lightening of the burdens of taxation, and by his religious protestations gave the movement the air of a minor crusade, the people were readily persuaded. They flocked to join him. The archbishop marched out his army on to Shipton Moor.<sup>1</sup> There is no reason to suppose that Scrope anticipated the date on which he was to join forces with the rest of the rebels. But when he reached the Moor, he found himself alone.<sup>2</sup>

While Scrope had been raising York, Westmorland, Prince John and Lord Fitzhugh, commanding a hurriedly collected army composed of their own men, some of the troops allocated to the prince for the defence of the march,<sup>3</sup> and perhaps some local levies, were making their way to the place which they must by now have discovered was the intended focal point of the Yorkshire rising. At Topcliffe they were confronted with a rebel force estimated in the official record at between 7,000 and 8,000 men.<sup>4</sup> It seems reasonable to assume that this force did not comprise the whole of the intended Percy army. Although they are loosely described as the men of "Topcliffe and Cleveland", it is probable that the rebels from the latter region had not yet moved. There is circumstantial evidence to suggest that they were dealt with separately at a later date.<sup>5</sup> It seems that the Cleveland rebels were still waiting for directions from Northumberland, and it is likely that the same applied to the rebels met by Westmorland at Topcliffe. The earl met these troops at a time when, if they had

<sup>1</sup> *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 406.

<sup>2</sup> Hardyng maintains that Scrope was on the Moor too early "Afore the day assigned that was so" (p. 362), and seems to imply that this was the cause of the rebels' defeat. This inaccuracy may be intended to shift the blame for the rebels' defeat from Northumberland, whose activities at this time are not mentioned.

<sup>3</sup> *Northern Chronicle*, p. 282; *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 405.

<sup>4</sup> *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 604.

<sup>5</sup> Westmorland and Prince John definitely marched north again after delivering Scrope and Mowbray to the king. As the latter marched in person against Northumberland later in June, it seems the most likely explanation that Westmorland had been sent to disperse any remaining gatherings of Percy followers, possibly including the intended force from Cleveland.

marched south immediately, they would have reached Shipton Moor at the appointed time. This coincidence, which may only be due to the fact that the rebels lay on the direct line of Westmorland's march, might lead one to suppose that the Topcliffe rebels at least were about to march to meet Scrope on their own initiative. But against this must be set the fact that they do not seem to have offered much resistance to Westmorland. There is no suggestion in any of the chronicle sources of any military engagement, and the wording of the official record, though somewhat vague, seems to imply that they were dispersed without a fight. In so far as the chroniclers remark upon the size of Westmorland's forces, they seem to be unanimous that these were not large, and it seems reasonable to suppose that if the combined Cleveland and Topcliffe forces had been on the spot (which it is suggested was not the case), they could have attacked Westmorland with a good prospect of victory. Even the Topcliffe men alone, if they had been sufficiently prepared to have been on the point of marching to Shipton Moor, might have been expected to put up some sort of a fight. That they evidently failed to do so seems to suggest that they were still waiting, leaderless, for the coming of Northumberland. Westmorland's appearance may have been sufficient to cause the already anxious commanders of the Topcliffe men to panic, and to allow their men to flee in disorder and themselves to be taken prisoner.

Westmorland then continued his march towards York, where Scrope was still waiting on Shipton Moor. The fact that he was to remain in the field, altogether, for three days,<sup>1</sup> is surely proof that he was waiting for other forces and that he was not attempting to act alone—in which case his "activities" would merely have represented futile and dangerous time-wasting. His celebration of Mass on the Moor, and his address to the people to inform them once again of his intentions,<sup>2</sup> were probably desperate attempts to occupy the minds of his followers and convince them that nothing was amiss. Scrope's most practical and sincere prayer was almost certainly that Northumberland would soon

<sup>1</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 407.

<sup>2</sup> *Historians of the Church of York*, iii. 288; *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 405.

arrive with the rest of the rebels. Instead, he was confronted by Westmorland.

It has been suggested that Westmorland aimed to reach Shipton Moor before Scrope's army reached invincible proportions (a reasonable enough suggestion in itself) but that when he arrived it was too late.<sup>1</sup> This can hardly have been the case. Just how many men Scrope had is not known. One account says 20,000,<sup>2</sup> and even if it were only about half that figure, as is much more plausibly stated by the official record,<sup>3</sup> Westmorland may have been outnumbered. But beyond this sheer weight of numbers, Scrope's army probably had little to recommend it. It included a number of Yorkshire gentry who could no doubt muster a small following of competent fighting men; and it seems that there were some of the earl of Northumberland's men present too<sup>4</sup>—perhaps Scrope's recruiting had extended as far as the Spofforth and Tadcaster estates. But if we are to believe the chronicles, the bulk of the army was composed of peasants and townspeople who were almost certainly not equipped with either the weapons or the experience required to deal with Westmorland's troops. Scrope, for all his exhortations to his followers to fight for the cause, must have realized that he could not give battle. It is odd that the chroniclers who emphasize the "popular" composition of Scrope's army fail to realize that by its very nature it could not have been the militarily formidable force which they describe.

There was no sign from Scrope's side that he was prepared to engage Westmorland. As for the earl, if he had indeed been taken aback by sheer numbers at first sight, he must quickly have realized that the rebels would be no match for his army. But even in a desperate fight against the odds, Scrope's army would at least inflict losses, and delay Westmorland's progress, and the earl had no intention of fighting unless he was forced to. For some time he hesitated. Then he sent a messenger across to the archbishop to ask him his intentions.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Historia Anglicana*, ii. 269.

<sup>2</sup> Hardyng, p. 362.

<sup>3</sup> The "Record and Process" gives the numbers as between eight and nine thousand (*Rot. Parl.*, iii. 604-5).

<sup>4</sup> Hardyng, p. 362.

<sup>5</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 405.

Scrope was already virtually at Westmorland's mercy. His actions at this point have been derided as ingenuous in the extreme, but in fact Scrope, through no fault of his own, had been placed in a position where he was faced with three courses of action, none of which gave him more than a slender chance of salvaging anything from the wreckage. He could have fled and left his faithful followers to their fate; but far more sophisticated and cynical men might have hesitated to take such a course, and a successful flight was in any case by no means guaranteed. He could have fought, and sacrificed a semi-armed rabble to Westmorland's levies. The other alternative was to attempt, albeit from a position of extreme strategic weakness, to negotiate. It is difficult to argue that, once Scrope was on the Moor, he could have acted otherwise.

Scrope's reply was that his aim was peace, not war; and he commanded Westmorland's envoy to take the manifesto back to whoever had sent him. The earl read the document, and declared himself in agreement with Scrope's proposals. He then expressed his wish to try to reach a full agreement with the archbishop in person.

Scrope came out from the ranks of his supporters without hesitation.<sup>1</sup> It is said that he had been promised by his nephew Fitzhugh that he would be safe,<sup>2</sup> and it is not impossible that he believed that Westmorland was sincere. But in any case, Scrope's only chance now was to try to talk his way out of his predicament; recent history suggested that his high spiritual rank would afford him enough protection against the wrath of the king. He was accompanied by the earl Marshal, who came with great misgivings—all the more so because his feud with Westmorland was common knowledge. Plumpton<sup>3</sup> and a handful of others completed the party. They met Westmorland and his colleagues between the two armies, and the earl enthusiastically promised to give Scrope his support and to try to persuade the king to accept the archbishop's programme. Scrope may have thought that he had a chance of extricating himself;

<sup>1</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, pp. 405-6. <sup>2</sup> *Historians of the Church of York*, iii. 289.

<sup>3</sup> *The English Chronicle from 1377 to 1461*, ed. J. S. Davies, Camden Society (1856), p. 31.

after all, the articles as they stood were not unreasonable (it has already been noted that certain of the " reforms " asked for might already be said to have been put into effect) and it was not impossible that the king might have been induced to put them into practice. But then Westmorland asked Scrope to send word to his army that, as the lords were in agreement, they could now return to York.

Scrope was completely in the earl's power. Whether or not he believed in the earl's professed support, he had no choice but to agree.<sup>1</sup> The citizens of York had been in the field for three days. They were tired and eager to get back to their homes. Furthermore, many of them were not fighting men, and had probably had their crusading fervour rudely dispelled by the sight of genuine hostile troops. Without hesitation, they turned and hurried home,<sup>2</sup> anxious, it seems, to get as far away as possible in case they became involved in further trouble. Their disorderly flight seems to confirm the impression that these men had little military qualification, and the suggestion, made here, that they were never intended to be the mainstay of the insurrection.

Westmorland struck quickly. As Scrope's men streamed off the Moor, his own men seized the archbishop and the rest of his party.<sup>3</sup> The complete capitulation of the revolt followed. While Westmorland turned northwards again, probably to deal with any Cleveland rebels still in the field, the king arrived in Yorkshire and, against all the traditional religious and political ethics of the time, ordered the execution of Scrope before his cowed followers, later marching on to Northumberland to complete the work of suppression by the systematic reduction of the Percy castles.

But the surrender on Shipton Moor was not the crucial moment which marked the end of the 1405 rebellion. The rising was doomed when Northumberland decided that he was not prepared to risk the possibility of defeat after the failure of his initial manoeuvre. It was Northumberland's rising throughout, and it was his refusal to fight which sealed the fate of all his followers. The possibility that the earl hoped that, with an

<sup>1</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, pp. 406-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Continuatio Eulogii*, p. 406.

<sup>3</sup> *Annales Henrici Quarti*, p. 407.



early withdrawal on his part, he might be able to dissociate himself from a defeated Scrope cannot be discounted. He could not have originally intended Scrope to face the king's forces alone in his name—defeat would have been certain. And Northumberland's betrayal of the archbishop seems to be the root cause of the most popular misconceptions about the rising and Scrope's role. One is that Scrope was at best saintly and ingenuous, at worst a fool; that he was naive to march out of York at all with an army with which he could not really hope to achieve anything, and—completely incongruously—that he was equally naive to surrender when he faced Westmorland with “superior forces”. Once Scrope's true role is appreciated there no longer seems to be anything foolish about his actions. The other misapprehension is that Scrope's rebellion was foiled and his execution brought about by Westmorland's “betrayal” on Shipton Moor. But whether Westmorland needed to resort to deception is hardly relevant. It was Scrope's betrayal by Northumberland which sealed his fate. Perhaps, indeed, he suffered a double betrayal. Persuaded to be the moral and religious spokesman of an insurrection in which he was in fact merely the tool of a self-seeking magnate bent on a policy of revenge and aggrandisement in which he was unlikely to reap any worthwhile personal reward, Scrope was then left to his own devices by his leader and allowed to act out instructions which no longer had any relevance or purpose, and which, whether by enforced surrender, military defeat, or betrayal could only have one ending.