

The ENGLISH PEOPLE
AT WAR IN THE AGE
OF HENRY VIII

Steven Gunn



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Ad suos Mertonenses: colleagues, students, friends

Preface

This book is based on my Ford lectures, delivered in 2015. The James Ford Lectures in British History, funded by a bequest from the Revd James Ford, were first given in 1896. A glance at the list of those who have delivered them since then should convince anyone that my protestations of unworthiness to follow in their footsteps are not merely a matter of conventional modesty. I thank the electors for asking me to deliver the lectures and the audiences who attended week by week. The lectures are intended both to advance historical understanding and to engage the interest of the general public. I thought it best to take a fairly large subject and one to which people could relate their own experience.

My country has often been to war in my lifetime, yet my personal experience of war is minimal, and I thank God for that. I have never come near to being drafted, I have rarely seen armed soldiers in public, the closest I have come to aerial attack is to watch the Red Arrows, and the most alarming weapon I have ever had at home was a blunted Austrian cavalry sword liberated from a film set by my grandfather. Yet my parents' generation can never forget that they lived through a war of conscription, and rationing, and bombing, and evacuation. What I hoped to explore in the lectures and hope to consider in this book is where the England of Henry VIII stood between these extremes. How regularly, how intensively, how disruptively did the king's wars affect the lives of his subjects?

We shall have to look for evidence of how much Henry's subjects thought about war, heard about war, prepared for war, as well as how much they took part in war or suffered its ill-effects. In the back of our minds will have to stand that perhaps legendary ploughman who had to be asked to move out of the way for the battle of Marston Moor. Hearing, two years into the English Civil War, that the forces of king and parliament were to fight, he asked 'What, has them two fallen out then?'¹ We shall also have to think about the boundaries of war and peace in a society in which the state had only imperfectly achieved its Weberian monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Henry's subjects were habituated to bloodshed across a spectrum of situations from the casual child-beating, wife-beating, and servant-beating of patriarchal domestic discipline, through the bear-baiting and cock-fighting of popular entertainment and the practised slaughter of pigs and chickens in half a million backyards, to feud and duelling, riot and rebellion. They shared the experience summed up by John Keegan, that there was 'considerable congruence between the civil and military facts of medieval life and a minimum—admittedly a very substantial minimum—of divergence between them on the battlefield'.² Some would argue that in their world violence against the person was so normal that to be asked to direct it against the king's enemies was more a deployment of transferable skills than the alien butchery for which twentieth-century recruits had to be pumped up by bayonet drill.³ We shall have to ask how Henry's subjects rehearsed, contemplated, and responded to killing and death in war.

What scope should we cover in asking these questions? The age of Henry VIII is one of those conveniently loose phrases that will, I hope, allow me to include what I want to include and ignore what I want to ignore. As Chapter 1 explains, there are good reasons for stretching it from the 1470s to the 1570s. The English people raise a further problem of definition. Again I hope I shall be excused an imprecise approach. Henry's English subjects, born and bred inside the old Anglo-Saxon kingdom, seem to have thought of the Welsh as English—subjects of the English crown—when it suited them, just as parliament legislated for 'an amicable concorde and unities' between his English and Welsh subjects, a concord to be furthered by the use of 'the speche or langage of Englishe', a language many of the Welsh did not understand, in the governance of Wales.⁴ In the same way the English of England thought and regularly spoke of the English in Ireland, what would later be thought of as the Old English, as English, at least when they were fighting together against the Gaelic opponents of the English king's rule. We shall have to think in due course about how far the different parts taken by these different peoples in Henry's wars helped to constitute their identities and their attitudes towards one another.

In converting the lectures into a book, I have preserved most of the text of the lectures as delivered in Chapters 2 to 7, while moving parts of the first and last lectures to this preface and to Chapter 1 and Chapter 8. While I have retained original spelling in quotations, I have extended contractions, modernized capitalization, and standardized the use of i, j, u, and v. I have translated other languages into English.

In the thirty or so years I have studied Henry's wars I have benefited from the advice of many colleagues. They include Ian Archer, Ian Arthurson, George Bernard, Jeremy Black, Susan Brigden, Hans Cools, John Currin, Michael Depreter, David Grummitt, Peter Gwyn, Richard Hoyle, Armand Jamme, Neil Murphy, Geoffrey Parker, David Parrott, Simon Payling, Andrew Pettegree, David Potter, David Rundle, Jonathan Thacker, David Trim, Malcom Vale, John Watts, Peter Wilson, and Neil Younger. I am grateful to them for their help, as I am to the three anonymous readers who guided me in turning the lectures into a book, to my editors at Oxford University Press, to the staffs of the libraries and archives in which I have worked, and to the Huntington Library, Merton College, Oxford, and the History Faculty of the University of Oxford for financial support. My graduate students have also been a constant source of inspiration. Those whose research has been particularly relevant to the themes I address here include Tom Boyd, Andy Boyle, Kirsten Claiden-Yardley, Mark Geldof, Yuval Harari, Graham Long, Chris Skidmore, Tracey Sowerby, Monica Stensland, and Annette Walton, but that of David Ashton, Jamie Bartlett, Benjamin Baum, John Baxter, James Berrill, Alice Blackwood, Madeline Briggs, David Burns, Thomas Carter, Paul Cavill, Nick Craft, Lois Day, Edward Geall, Emily Glassford, Tomasz Gromelski, Huw Jones, Allison Kroll, James McComish, and Victoria Smith has also touched on this topic in different ways. I am grateful to Roger Highfield for reading the text of the lectures week by week as I delivered them, and to Steven Ellis for reading the entire revised draft and especially for advice on Ireland. Janet Foot

provided invaluable support in finding and reading sources in Welsh and Kirsten Claiden-Yardley searched printed editions of wills. Lastly, and most continually, the loving encouragement of my wife, my daughters, and my mother has sustained me throughout.

Two of the great Tudor historians of the generation that taught mine died in the space between my delivering the lectures and completing the book. Cliff Davies was my doctoral supervisor and a perennial source of encouragement and advice, as well as the scholar whose published work touches most often, most closely, and most inspirationally on the themes I try to address here. David Loades not only published numerous important studies of the political and naval history of the period, but was also constant in his encouragement of younger researchers from the workshops he ran at Bangor in the 1980s to his involvement in Oxford research seminars in his retirement. They will both be sorely missed.

For the dedication of this book I have adopted an expression used by Thomas Bradwardine, fellow of Merton College, Oxford and Archbishop of Canterbury, in his *De causa Dei contra Pelagium* of 1344. It has been and remains a privilege to teach and research in an institution with deep historical roots and a lively commitment to scholarship, and one in which I am grateful for the friendship and encouragement of many academic and non-academic colleagues and many generations of students. The first ever Ford lecturer was a Mertonian, S. R. Gardiner, and he was followed by many more: Arthur Johnson, Maurice Powicke, Michael Wallace-Hadrill, Rodney Hilton, Donald Bullough, Conrad Russell, Paul Slack, James Campbell, and Rees Davies. In my time as a student the Merton history school felt the positive influence of the tutors who had developed it in the previous decades, especially Roger Highfield, John Roberts, and Ralph Davis. Roger Highfield, the anchor of successive teams of history tutors for nearly forty years, died as this book was going to press, warmly remembered by hundreds of Merton historians. As a tutor at Merton it has been a pleasure to work with their successors, Philip Waller, Robert Gildea, Karl Gerth, Matthew Grimley, and Micah Muscolino, and to share in historical debate with them and with a succession of inspirational junior research fellows and other younger colleagues, as well as with our admirable undergraduate and graduate students. I was touched by the numbers of Mertonians of all generations who attended the lectures. Bradwardine's Merton was doubtless a smaller and more closely-focused place than mine, but we have both been blessed in our college.

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List of Abbreviations

ADN	Archives Départementales du Nord, Lille
AO	Archives Office
APC	<i>Acts of the Privy Council of England</i> , ed. J. Dasent, 2nd ser., vols i–vii, AD 1542–70 (London, 1890–3)
Bodl.	Bodleian Library
BL	British Library
CA	College of Arms
CCA	Canterbury Cathedral Archives
CEPR*	<i>Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland</i> , ed. W. H. Bliss et al., 19 vols to date (London and Dublin, 1893–)
CS	Camden Society
CSPDE	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Edward VI 1547–1553 preserved in the PRO</i> , rev. edn, ed. C. S. Knighton (London, 1992)
CSPDM	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Mary, 1553–1558</i> , ed. C. S. Knighton (Chippenham, 1998)
CSPFE	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Edward VI, 1547–1553</i> , ed. W. Turnbull (London, 1861)
CSPFM	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Mary, 1553–1558</i> , ed. W. B. Turnbull (London, 1861)
CUL	Cambridge University Library
EETS	Early English Text Society
ESRO	East Sussex Record Office
EcHR	<i>Economic History Review</i>
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
HC	History Centre
HJ	<i>Historical Journal</i>
HKW	H. M. Colvin (ed.), <i>The History of the King's Works</i> , 6 vols (London, 1963–82)
HL	Huntington Library, San Marino, CA
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
HP	<i>Hamilton Papers</i> , ed. J. Bain, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1890–2)
HR	<i>Historical Research</i>
HS	Historical Society
KHLC	Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone
LJ	<i>Journals of the House of Lords</i> , 10 vols (London, 1846 edn)
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LP*	<i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII</i> , ed. J. S. Brewer et al., 23 vols in 38 (London, 1862–1932)*

- NA* *Norfolk Archaeology*
NRA National Register of Archives ('NRA report' indicates documents I have not seen in the original)
n.s. new series

ODNB *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and B. Harrison, 60 vols (Oxford, 2004)

PP *Past and Present*
PRO The National Archives: Public Record Office

RO Record Office
RS Record Society

SHC Surrey History Centre
SS Surtees Society
STC *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475–1640*, ed. A. W. Pollard, G. R. Redgrave, W. A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson, and K. F. Pantzer, 2nd edn, 3 vols (London, 1976–91)
StP *State Papers, King Henry the Eighth*, 5 vols in 11 (London, 1830–52)

TE *Testamenta Eboracensia*, ed. J. Raine and J. W. Clay, 6 vols, SS 4, 30, 45, 53, 79, 106 (London, 1836–1902)
TRHS *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
TRP *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. P. L. Hughes and J. F. Larkin, 3 vols (New Haven CT and London, 1964)*

UL University Library

YASRS Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series
YCR *York Civic Records*, ed. A. Raine, 8 vols, YASRS, 98, 103, 106, 108, 110, 112, 115, 119 (Wakefield, 1939–53)

* references in these sources are usually made to document numbers, rather than to pages.

1

The King's Wars

Henry VIII grew up knowing that great kings won battles and made conquests. Edward I, his great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, victor at Evesham and Falkirk, had conquered Wales and almost subdued Scotland. Edward III, his great-great-great-great-grandfather, was victorious at Halidon Hill and Crécy and took Berwick and Calais for England. Henry V, the first husband of his great-grandmother Catherine of Valois, a 'noble predecessour' whose reign he alluded to in a letter with the telling adverb 'lately', won at Agincourt and overran Normandy.¹ His grandfather Edward IV took the throne and kept it at Towton, St Albans, and Tewkesbury, and his father Henry VII did the same at Bosworth, Stoke, and Blackheath.

This was not only true of English kings. Henry's father-in-law Ferdinand of Aragon consolidated his control of Castile after the admittedly inconclusive battle of Toro and conquered Granada, the last outpost of Moorish Spain, in 1492, while his lieutenants beat the French to master Naples. Maximilian of Austria, who accompanied Henry on his own first campaign, saved the Low Countries for the Habsburgs at Guinegatte in 1478. And all the kings of France who reigned in Henry's lifetime mounted campaigns of conquest in Italy, Charles VIII to Naples, Louis XII to Genoa, Francis I to Milan, claiming along the way bloody glory at Marignano over the once invincible Swiss. Conquests placed kings in history. In November 1545, as Henry clung on to his last acquisition in France, Edmund Harvel, English agent at Venice and an accomplished stroker of the royal ego, put it crisply: 'that famous conquest of Bolaigne...shalbe a perpetual monument of the most mightye King Harry the Eight'.²

Of course great kings did other things too. They spread justice among their subjects, encouraged learning and godliness, built magnificent palaces, and held great festivals. Henry did, or thought he did, all these. But wherever he turned, war caught his eye. Had not even King David, the Old Testament monarch on whom he increasingly patterned himself as he came to believe in his royal supremacy over the English church and his duty to preside over his subjects' spiritual as well as their temporal welfare, been a great warrior? David, victor over Goliath, was a man of whom the women sang that Saul had slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands, a king beset by wars on every side until the Lord put his enemies under his feet.³

The wars of his English ancestors had shaped the institutions available to Henry should he wish to wage war. Powerful systems of taxation both direct and indirect, able to tap the wealth of the laity, of the clergy, and even of foreign consumers of

English goods, had developed under Edward I and Edward III. So had parliament as a body able to make grants of those taxes to the king with the endorsement of the political nation.⁴ The same two kings drew together the hybrid system of military recruitment inherited by Henry. All adult Englishmen had an obligation to serve in the defence of the realm, had to possess arms appropriate to their wealth as defined by Edward I's statute of Winchester of 1285, and could be gathered into armies by commissions of array of the sort Edward pioneered. But effective forces for overseas conquest were better assembled by the issue of contracts to lords, knights, and esquires to raise retinues of cavalry and infantry to fight for generous pay under their command, on the model perfected by Edward III.⁵

Those earlier wars also shaped the strategic context and the ambitions of Henry's wars. Edward I's attempts to subjugate the Scots led to two centuries of conflict punctuated by truces and occasional, fragile peace treaties, like that under which Henry's sister Margaret married James IV in 1503. These struggles left Scottish kings with a grievance over English-held Berwick and a traditional alliance with France. They left English kings with border subjects who complained of Scottish raids and with claims to overlordship that could be dusted off when required. In Wales Edward I had committed all England's resources to complete a conquest begun piecemeal by Anglo-Norman barons, but in Ireland no English king had acted so decisively to build on similar Anglo-Norman expansion and make a reality of the English crown's claim to the lordship of all Ireland. Expeditions were sent from time to time to bolster the English communities of the East and South against the assertive Gaelic lordships of the West and North and to rein in the more independent-minded of the English lords in Ireland, the earls of Ormond, Desmond, or Kildare. Only a king with a high view of royal power like Richard II tried to make much of his sovereignty over Ireland, for campaigns against O'Neills or O'Briens across mountains, forests, and bogs promised neither glamour, profit, nor comfort compared with those elsewhere. But in Ireland as in Scotland, Henry might wish to pursue titles his ancestors had been happy to underplay.

For most of Henry's predecessors and, it seems, for Henry himself, all these struggles were eclipsed by that with France, the strongest monarchy in Europe.⁶ Edward I and Edward III inherited from their Angevin forebears a conflict with the French kings over lands in western France, notably Normandy and Gascony. Edward III raised the stakes by claiming that he, rather than Philip of Valois, should have inherited the French crown in 1328. His English successors kept up the claim, and Henry VI was even crowned king of France in Paris, the fruit of his father Henry V's victories, before his feeble kingship, his nobles' rivalries, and his subjects' exhaustion brought disaster and the loss of all England's French territories save Calais in 1450–3. The long war begun by Edward III shaped the imagination of the English elite as they looked back to the heroic deeds of their ancestors and read Froissart's chronicles, a work owned by lawyers and merchants as well as heralds, captains, and kings, and other texts whose contents and very language were shaped by the Anglo-French conflict.⁷ The war consolidated English national and political identity, as ordinary men and women were taught to pray for the king's success, honour St George, and pay taxes for the common good,

generating a passion that demanded 'justice upon the traitors' when Normandy fell in 1450.⁸

The Anglo-French war also shaped the politics of western Europe for more than a century. Each side sought alliances in Iberia, with Portugal, Castile, or Aragon. Each sought alliances in the Low Countries, with the counts of Flanders, Hainaut, or Holland, or with the great cities that made cloth from English wool. As the various principalities of the Low Countries were drawn together under the Valois dukes of Burgundy and their Habsburg successors, so they became vital partners for any English regime bent on war, or well-defended peace, with France. As Castile and Aragon were united by Ferdinand and Isabella, the same became true of the Trastámara, then Habsburg, monarchy in Spain. Henry's father's shrewdness was never more evident than in the marriages he planned for his son and heir, first Arthur then Henry, to the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, and for his younger daughter Mary to Charles of Ghent, heir both to the Habsburg Low Countries and, prospectively, to the Spanish kingdoms.

To understand Henry's wars and his subjects' engagement with them we must set them not just in this general background, but in the context of around a hundred years of change in England's strategic fortunes and military institutions. This has a certain logic in terms of historical analysis. It takes us from 1475, the occasion of the first great English expedition across the Channel after the traumatic collapse of Lancastrian France, to the 1570s and the inauguration of the militia trained bands that would form the basis of English military organization for the following seventy years. It shows us English regimes facing drastic change in international politics, from the consolidation of French royal power and the French invasions of Italy, through the formation and dissolution of the empire of Charles V, the most powerful European ruler since Charlemagne, to the religious civil wars of the 1560s and 1570s in the Low Countries, Scotland, and France. It embraces both English rulers beset by political and religious dissent, from a suspected child-murderer in Richard III to the consort of a foreign king in Mary I and an unmarried and excommunicate queen regnant in Elizabeth I, and those, above all Henry himself, able to draw together the political nation and capitalize on the inherited strengths of English government to pursue ambitious policies at home and abroad. It includes episodes of civil disorder from the last campaigns of the Wars of the Roses to the Northern Rebellion of 1569–70, the occasion of the last great mobilization on English soil for actual combat—as opposed to the preparations to meet successive Spanish armadas—before the civil wars of the late 1630s and 1640s.

To think of this period of a hundred years as the age of Henry VIII also bears some relationship to the experience of Henry's subjects. The men who were wise old warriors when Henry was young had fought in 1475: Thomas Howard, second duke of Norfolk, victor at Flodden, for example, or John Risley, the Yorkist courtier who went on to serve as a loyal councillor to Henry and his father.⁹ Some even remembered the switchback campaigns of 1469–71: John de Vere, thirteenth earl of Oxford, who was worsted at Barnet, led the vanguard at Bosworth, and lived on until 1513, or Thomas Butler, seventh earl of Ormond, who may have fought at Towton, was captured at Tewkesbury, and raised troops for naval service in Henry's

first French war.¹⁰ In the same way the great commanders of 1569–70 had served their apprenticeships in Henry's last campaigns. Thomas Radcliffe, third earl of Sussex, knighted by Henry at Boulogne in 1544, commanded against the northern rebels. Edward Fiennes, Lord Clinton, knighted at Leith after the burning of Edinburgh that same year, was made earl of Lincoln for his role alongside Sussex.¹¹ Elizabeth's Irish captains too, Sir Nicholas Arnold, Sir Nicholas Bagenal, Sir James Croft, and Sir William Drury, had all blooded themselves around Boulogne in Henry's closing years.¹² At least one great man, William Paulet, marquess of Winchester, who mustered men for Henry's first wars, gathered supplies for his last campaigns and then struggled to finance Mary's and Elizabeth's wars with France and Scotland, was born around the time Edward IV crossed the Channel and died as the trained bands were nearing birth.¹³

The campaign of 1475 illustrated the complexities of English military enterprise in the wake of the Hundred Years War. Edward sought to use war against France to unite his people after the civil strife that had marked the beginning and middle of his reign, but he had trouble raising money, resorting to extra-parliamentary benevolences as well as parliamentary grants with experimental scales for the assessment of individual wealth, and his army was dominated to an unusual extent by his own close followers at court. He coordinated his invasion carefully with his ally, Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy, but Charles got bogged down in his siege of Neuss and never came to join Edward. Edward rapidly came to terms with Louis XI, but was this a shameful abandonment of his mission of conquest, as some of his contemporaries seem to have felt, or a clever way to turn a profit—a pension from the French and a great marriage for his daughter—from an otherwise fruitless campaign?¹⁴

Edward's brother and northern lieutenant, Richard, duke of Gloucester, took more interest than most English kings in Scotland. In the war of 1481–4 he recaptured Berwick, which had been handed back to the Scots by Henry VI, and briefly occupied Edinburgh, but failed to depose James III. Having taken the throne from his nephew Edward V, he defeated one domestic uprising in 1483, but was overthrown by the next, as Henry Tudor returned from exile in France in 1485.¹⁵ Henry VII kept the crown for twenty-four years but never felt entirely secure. Challenges from dynastic rivals, international conflicts, and adverse public reactions to the policies he pursued in the efforts to deal with threats internal and external interacted in frustrating ways.

At the battle of Stoke in 1487 he defeated an invasion by the backers of a boy, Lambert Simnel, whom they had crowned Edward VI at Dublin. Then he sought to neutralize the support of the Habsburgs for such ventures by dispatching small armies in 1489 and 1492 to aid them in their fight against towns and nobles who opposed their rule in the Low Countries. In the same period he sent expeditions to Brittany, trying in vain to bolster the independence of the duchy, often an English ally in the past, against the French monarchy. In 1492 he invaded France himself, but like Edward IV, and similarly let down by his allies in the Low Countries, he cut a financially attractive but inglorious deal and returned home. Meanwhile the heavy taxes he had raised, drawing on, but going beyond Edward's experiments,

and amplified by a benevolence, had provoked a large revolt in Yorkshire in 1489 and a smaller one three years later. Against the first he had to mobilize a full-scale army, though the second was dealt with by local forces.¹⁶

A second wave of troubles followed. Perkin Warbeck, claiming the throne as the supposed younger son of Edward IV, found support in both Ireland and Scotland. Henry sent English troops under one of his leading captains, Sir Edward Poynings, to stabilize the situation in Ireland in 1495–6, and prepared a large campaign by land and sea for 1497 to punish James IV of Scots for his invasions in support of the pretender. Before the blow could fall, the largest tax grants of the fifteenth century, preceded by a forced loan, sparked revolt in the South-West and the rebel army reached Blackheath before it was defeated by the king's forces, recalled from their march towards Scotland. As Warbeck arrived in Cornwall to try to capitalize on the unrest there, Henry headed west and all submitted before him. Those of his captains who remained in the North were left to make token war on the Scots.¹⁷

Thereafter Henry VII sought peace, but his style of rule would condition his son's strategic options in important ways. He sought military strength for the crown through a navy equipped with large new ships and permanent dockyards and through a scheme to control the recruitment of retainers of military and political followers by noblemen and gentry. He sought financial security by the development of sources of revenue independent of parliamentary grant, above all the crown lands, the feudal dues, and the customs on trade, which, while authorized by parliament, were granted for life rather than one levy at a time. And he sought political control by the manipulation of debts imposed on leading subjects in a way that many found painful and humiliating. This gave Henry VIII at his accession in 1509 both enhanced means to make war and an attraction to the idea that war might unite him and the great men of his realm, consolidating his rule by visibly repudiating his father's ways.¹⁸

At first Henry, like his father, sent out small forces to aid his friends, to crusade in North Africa with the Spanish, or fight the duke of Guelders with the Dutch. By 1512, however, he was ready for full-scale war with France in alliance with other rulers, led by the pope, who were alarmed at French expansion in Italy. That summer saw an over-optimistic attempt to invade Gascony from Spain and a naval campaign of mixed fortunes in the Channel. French trade was disrupted and Brittany pillaged, but one of Henry's biggest ships, the *Regent*, went up in flames with one of his favourite courtiers, Sir Thomas Knyvet, in command. In 1513 the king, aided by the administrative skill of his rising minister Thomas Wolsey, determined to do better. The spring naval campaign was inauspicious, as Admiral Sir Edward Howard drowned in a quixotic attack in rowing-boats on the becalmed French fleet. But in the summer Henry marched into northern France with a larger English army than any seen since Edward III's siege of Calais, conquered two cities, little Théroutanne and the much larger Tournai, and defeated a French relieving force in what was soon dubbed, mocking the speed of the French flight, as the battle of the Spurs. In Henry's absence James IV invaded Northumberland and was killed together with many of his noblemen in a bloodily decisive encounter on the moors at Flodden.¹⁹

Henry gave Tournai a large garrison and began to plan its fortification as a new bastion of English power to match Calais, but as his allies wavered he decided to make peace in 1514. By then the enormous cost of even comparatively minor military success was becoming evident. This first war had cost around a million pounds, some ten years' ordinary crown revenue, and grants of taxes had covered only about a third of that. Much may have been financed by reserves accumulated by Henry VII, the scale of which remains shadowy thanks to the old king's habitual concern to keep his cards close to his chest. However large they were, they were now gone, and in the aftermath of war Wolsey had to implement sharp policies to cut royal spending and improve regular income, including in 1518 the return of Tournai to France. This set the tone for the reign: Henry would spend whatever money he could get to register military success, but that money might be hard to find.²⁰

Henry's next military venture was in Ireland, with the dispatch in 1520 of a small army under Thomas Howard, earl of Surrey. Instructed, optimistically, to begin with his 500 or so men and limited local contacts a process that might 'reduce this land to obedience and good order', Surrey achieved little.²¹ Soon the earl and Henry's other captains were back in the more familiar wars with France and Scotland, as Henry tried to take advantage of the rivalry between Francis I of France and the newly elected Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, while the Scots were drawn in to support the French. The campaigning seasons of 1522 and 1523 saw major raids on the French coast at Morlaix and Tréport and significant forces guarding the North against the Scots. Participation in a failed siege of Hesdin in Artois in 1522 was followed next year by a dramatic thrust across the Somme to threaten Paris, before Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, and his colleagues from the Low Countries were forced to retreat amid freezing weather and mutinous men.²²

These campaigns were funded by new fiscal initiatives. In 1522 a general survey of personal wealth, arms, and military capacity was exploited to levy heavy forced loans, never to be repaid. In 1523 large taxes were raised from the clergy and a more efficiently assessed direct tax on landed income or goods, the lay subsidy, was perfected, though only after considerable parliamentary wrangling.²³ When funds were needed at short notice to renew the war in 1525, however, to take advantage of the capture of Francis I by Charles V's army in Italy, the limits of fiscal expansion were exposed. Henry sent out commissioners to ask his subjects for an 'amicable grant' of a swingeing proportion of their wealth, one-third from the richer clergy, one-quarter from the poorer, and between one-sixth and one-tenth from the laity. The demand was met by widespread refusals and, in some places, popular unrest. Henry backed down, though staging first submission and then pardon for the protesters, and made peace soon afterwards.²⁴

From the later 1520s, as Henry concentrated on his divorce campaign and the break with Rome necessary to conclude it, his wars turned to unfamiliar channels and he entangled himself again in the awkward nexus between foreign policy, crown finance, and domestic revolt. In 1527–9 he briefly and unsuccessfully confronted England's traditional allies in the Low Countries in the attempt to

press their lord, Charles V, to acquiesce in the divorce, but provoked disorder among cloth-workers unemployed thanks to his efforts at economic warfare.²⁵ In 1532–4 he fought the Scots in a war for which parliament refused taxes; it was born of border raiding and mutual distrust, uncommonly devoid of major initiatives on either side, and patched up by French mediation.²⁶ In 1534 he had to send the largest English force seen in Ireland since Richard II's reign to suppress a rebellion by the followers of the earl of Kildare, whom he had planned to remove as governor, as part of a general tightening of central control over outlying parts of his realm as the crisis over the break with Rome deepened.²⁷

In 1536 he mobilized the entire South and Midlands against a huge revolt in the North, the Pilgrimage of Grace. The rebels were responding to many and diverse grievances, but prominent among them were the taxation levied to pay for the army in Ireland, the new annual tax of a tenth on clerical incomes, the statute of uses which tried to improve the king's revenue from his feudal rights, and the first phase of the dissolution of the monasteries. The dissolution, though framed in terms of the reform of religious life and the deployment of resources to other pious ends, was a policy Henry justified in his answer to the rebels as compensation for the 'extreme charges' he had to meet for his subjects' 'defence against foreign enemies'.²⁸ Then in 1538–40, as Francis I and Charles V made peace, he faced the threat of invasion by both major powers at the pope's behest. He responded with a vigorous programme of coastal fortification paid for by further monastic dissolutions.²⁹

After 1540 the revival of tension between Habsburgs and Valois took Henry's policy back to more familiar courses and onwards into a confrontation of unprecedented scale with both the French and the Scots. Tetchy talks with James V led in summer 1542 to large-scale but aimless war. An English setback at Hadden Rigg in August was matched by the defeat of James's army in an ambush at Solway Moss in November. The stakes changed when James, allegedly stricken by the humiliation of his men, suddenly died, leaving a six-day-old daughter as queen. Henry grasped the opportunity this offered, negotiating with the nobles captured at Solway Moss for Mary, queen of Scots, to marry his son Edward and thus unite the British kingdoms, a match agreed by the treaty of Greenwich in July 1543. When, within six months, the Scots reneged on this unpalatable deal, he resolved to enforce compliance by war, while loudly reasserting claims to sovereignty over Scotland bolstered by historical research of the sort recently deployed in his campaign for ecclesiastical supremacy. Constant border raiding was joined to larger expeditions. One, backed by ships, burned Edinburgh in 1544, another Kelso and Jedburgh in 1545, but in the latter year a large English raiding force was defeated at Ancrum Moor.³⁰

Meanwhile Henry joined Charles V in war against France, seeking to renew the conquests of his youth with the resources gathered in rapacious middle age. In 1543 he sent auxiliaries to the siege of Landrecies and began raids on French shipping, but his great enterprise was held over for 1544. One English army mounted a forlorn siege of Montreuil together with Habsburg forces, but their mission was mainly to distract the French from Henry's favoured prize, Boulogne,

which surrendered to the king in person on 14 September after weeks of battering. Within a week Charles made a separate peace, leaving Henry to defend his conquest alone. He did so for nearly two years, fortifying and garrisoning Boulogne, raiding France by land and sea, and defending England against French invasion in 1545, when a large fleet entered the Solent and landed troops on the Isle of Wight. Peace was finally agreed in June 1546. It permitted Henry to keep Boulogne for eight years, after which the French would have to buy it back. It also restored the pensions from the French to the English crown which had featured in every peace since 1475, and which Henry chose to regard as rent for his kingdom of France. And it offered peace to the Scots, but only on ambiguous terms that might compel them to accept the treaty of Greenwich.³¹

At Henry's death in 1547 the leading captain of this last war, Edward Seymour, earl of Hertford and now duke of Somerset, took control of government on behalf of the young Edward VI. Weaker, as lord protector, than an adult monarch, yet inclining to autocracy rather than collaborative rule, and bent on a disruptive extension of Henry's Reformation in religion, he had neither the political strength to consolidate Henry's military gains nor the political strength to abandon them with confidence. He won a crushing victory over the Scots at Pinkie in September 1547 and used it to install English garrisons across southern Scotland and even on the coast north of the Firth of Forth, aiming to support the assured Scots, those who backed the marriage treaty, against their countrymen who opposed it. But he was outmanoeuvred. In summer 1548 Mary was betrothed to the dauphin and taken to France and over the next eighteen months French troops helped the Scots eliminate the English strongholds one by one, some, such as Haddington, after epic sieges. In 1549 opposition to religious change and discontent at social and economic problems sparked revolt in almost every English county, and in the South-West and East Anglia full-scale military campaigns and pitched battles were necessary to suppress the rebels. Henry II of France now saw his chance to recover Boulogne and overran its outlying forts. Those who ousted Somerset in an aristocratic coup in autumn 1549 cut their losses in March 1550 so they might 'lyve in peace tyll our master come to a more age', returning Boulogne to France, effectively giving up on the pensions paid since 1475, and paving the way for a settlement with the Scots in 1551.³²

Henry's gains and the attempts to retain them came at astonishing cost and it was no wonder that retrenchment marked the regime led by John Dudley, duke of Northumberland, which governed after Seymour's fall. Military charges between 1539 and 1552 totalled some £3.5 million, around £1 million of it spent on campaigns in Scotland and more than £1.3 million on getting and keeping Boulogne. Direct taxation provided about £1.2 million of this. About a quarter of the sum came in subsidies levied on the clergy in addition to the annual tenths introduced in 1534–5, or in the reliefs on goods granted under Edward VI, but three-quarters of it was raised in a fierce six-year burst of taxation on the laity beginning in 1541. Here Henry combined all the exactions devised in his own reign with those of his predecessors. Seven subsidy collections, including the largest of the century so far, were topped off by three grants of the older fixed-yield fifteenth and tenth. A large

forced loan in 1542, never repaid, was followed by another in 1544. A benevolence was raised in 1545 and a 'loving contribution' from richer taxpayers in 1546. All that still left a vast gap between income and expenditure. Perhaps £0.9 million came from sales of land, confiscated both from the monasteries and from the chantries, threatened with dissolution in 1545 and actually dissolved in 1547. The largest contribution, nearly £1.3 million, came from a debasement of the coinage that reduced its silver content from 92.5 per cent to 25 per cent, stoking inflation and causing damaging fluctuations in exchange rates and export trade. And most of what this bought was temporary—forts abandoned to the enemy, troops recruited in much larger numbers than ever before on the general European mercenary market, food eaten by soldiers or left to rot—though Henry's coastal fortifications were solid enough, and there was at least a steady campaign of naval building and administrative consolidation which made a powerful fleet an established part of the English state apparatus.³³

Edward died young in 1553 and this led to more domestic mobilization, first in a brief succession crisis and then to confront Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion in 1554, mounted to oppose Queen Mary's marriage to Charles V's son Philip and the queen's restoration of Catholicism. Though the marriage treaty stipulated that England need not join in the war then in progress between Habsburgs and Valois, once Philip had succeeded his father as king of Spain and lord of the Low Countries he pressed for English engagement against France, and in 1557 he secured it. English troops helped him take Saint-Quentin and the English navy fought the French in the Channel, but the French troops of the regent Mary of Guise opened a second front from Scotland and early in 1558 the French surprised Calais. Heavy subsidies were levied, larger in annual yield at face value even than those of the 1540s, forced loans were taken, crown lands were sold, customs rates were increased, and English crown debt, which had been largely cleared after Henry VIII's borrowing spree on the money markets of Antwerp, began to mount again. All this came after several dire harvests and during a devastating outbreak of influenza. Even so Philip thought that his English subjects were not straining themselves as hard as they might, and after Mary's death he felt little obligation to help them achieve more than a face-saving mention of the possible return of Calais in the general peace of 1559.³⁴

Mary's successor Elizabeth soon faced new challenges, as political and religious dissension afflicted each of her neighbours in turn. In 1560, after understandable hesitation, she intervened in Scotland to help a band of Protestant lords take control of the government from the queen mother Mary of Guise and expel her French troops. In 1562, again urged on by councillors and captains concerned with the fate of international Protestantism, she accepted an offer from the hard-pressed French Huguenots to occupy Le Havre as a guarantee for loans she had made them. This initiative ended much less successfully, as Catholic and Protestant French patched up their differences in 1563 to expel the English, who made peace in 1564, renouncing any prospect of the recovery of Calais, for which the queen had hoped. Her navy, steadily reinforced, played a significant part in both these campaigns, but its costs contributed to the alarming bill of some £0.75 million for

what were meant to be limited ventures. Parliamentary subsidies, including that with the highest yield at face value of the entire century, covered two-thirds of this, and increasing customs duties some of the rest, but international loans were still necessary and these costs left the queen with a lasting aversion to the expense of war.³⁵

For the next dozen years Elizabeth engaged in the French Wars of Religion and in the revolt against Spanish rule which took shape in the Low Countries from 1566 by more indirect means. She lent money and weaponry to the Huguenots and the Dutch patriots and encouraged cooperation between them. She turned a blind eye to attacks on Spanish shipping or illegal trading with the Spanish colonies by her own subjects and by Dutch and French privateers who used her ports. She did not stop some of her leading noblemen and veteran captains working with London merchants and French and Dutch exiles to recruit companies of volunteers, hundreds strong, to join the rebel armies. In 1568–9 she confiscated money on its way by sea to the Low Countries to pay the Spanish army of the duke of Alba and brought on a threat of invasion by the duke and his men. Open war in alliance with the Dutch did not come until 1585 and English troops did not return to France until 1589, but forces were sent to Scotland to back the Protestant regency regime there in 1572–3 and from 1570 a new class of faster, more nimble but heavily-gunned ‘race built’ warships was added to the navy. For all the rhetoric of Elizabeth’s peaceful rule, martial activity of different sorts and the prospect of war were constant in her reign.³⁶

Elizabeth’s own realms, moreover, were not immune to the troubles of the times. In England the last great revolt of the sixteenth century broke out in the North in 1569, as popular anger at the imposition of reformed religion blended with uncertainty over the succession, stirred by the flight to England of Mary, queen of Scots, and the frustration of great northern lords edged out of regional power by southern courtiers and ambitious local gentlemen. Forces more than twice the size of the rebel host were marched north to suppress the rising. Meanwhile the English military establishment in Ireland continued to grow, as it had done ever since the Kildare revolt of 1534, encouraged by the proclamation of Henry’s title as king—rather than merely lord—of Ireland in 1541 and the associated aspiration to exercise effective rule over the entire island. At first this was done largely by persuading Gaelic lords of the benefits of submission to Henry and assimilation to the social and political elite of the new kingdom, but in the later 1540s the army expanded through the establishment of garrisons like those in Scotland. From the 1550s there ensued a policy of plantation, whereby uncooperative Gaelic clans saw their land confiscated and given to English settlers in militarized colonies likened with increasing frequency to those of the Romans. By the late 1560s these changes, together with attempts to enforce the Reformation, produced a new kind of Irish revolt, one mixing Gaelic resistance to plantation with Old English resentment at the power of New English settlers and opposition to religious change. The government’s response was an unstable mixture of private-enterprise colonialism and the use of regional captains deploying punitive expeditions and martial law, a solution which left subsidies from English revenues to Irish military expenditure increasing,

despite the insistence of a succession of governors that they could make Ireland pay for itself.³⁷

As this narrative suggests, the age of Henry VIII was certainly an age of war. Slightly fewer than half the years between 1475 and 1575 saw English military activity against France or Scotland or in the Low Countries, a figure that rises past half when major domestic revolts are added in and reaches nearly three-quarters when we consider the sustained effort in Ireland from 1534 onwards. Some of these wars were more freely chosen by England's rulers than others. Henry's three wars with France, for example, were entered to fulfil ideals of royal honour, live up to the record of his ancestors, or compete with his royal contemporaries, but he could have avoided them had he wished. Somerset's war with Scotland was risked because the prize on offer was too temptingly significant to resist. Other wars—Henry VII's intervention in Brittany, Henry VIII's war with the Low Countries, or Elizabeth's early intervention in Scotland—seem to have been undertaken more reluctantly, as the best means available to meet a wider aim. Sometimes war was forced on English rulers, as in James IV's invasion of 1513 or the French attack on Boulogne in 1549.

Yet such distinctions are less clear than they might look. The lure of honourable conquest on the model of the past may have driven Henry VII more than we think.³⁸ There may have been more policy in Henry VIII's wars than at first sight appears, first aiming to draw the nobility together under his rule after the divisions of the Wars of the Roses and the oppression of his father's rule, then trying to pacify the quarrels unleashed by his Reformation by uniting his people against the French.³⁹ Because of the frequency with which taxation featured as a cause of revolt, finally, campaigns to repress revolt, which rulers would certainly have wished to avoid, were often the indirect result of other decisions to wage war; just as were, for example, Scottish invasions of England in response to English invasions of France. As Henry VII's councillor Edmund Dudley warned Henry VIII at the start of his reign, war, is 'a greate consumer of treasure and riches' and there 'are mayny waies to enter into yt, and the begyning semeth a greate pleasure, but the waie is verie narroo to come honorably owt therof'.⁴⁰

The age of Henry VIII was an age of war, yet these wars have not loomed as large as they might in historical writing on the period. It would be wildly unfair to suggest that they have not been studied. Biographers of Henry such as J. J. Scarisbrick, Lacey Baldwin Smith, David Starkey, and Lucy Wooding have stressed his engagement with war: as the most recent of them put it, 'military achievement and military defence were perhaps the most weighty preoccupations consistently sustained by Henry throughout his reign'.⁴¹ Individual campaigns and whole wars have been analysed in their political and diplomatic contexts by a long succession of scholars, prominent among them Charles Cruickshank, Marcus Merriman, David Potter, John Currin, and Paul Hammer. Particular practices and institutions have been masterfully investigated: taxation by Roger Schofield, George Bernard, and Richard Hoyle, recruitment by Jeremy Goring, food supply by Cliff Davies, the navy by David Loades and Nicholas Rodger, and the Calais garrison by David Grummitt.⁴² Henry's noblemen's military careers have been charted by Helen Miller, those of

his most experienced captains by Luke MacMahon, those of Elizabethan captains in Ireland by Rory Rapple, and those of Elizabethan volunteers in the French Wars of Religion and the Dutch Revolt by David Trim.⁴³ English adaptation to the tactical and technical innovations of continental warfare has been tested by Gervase Phillips, David Eltis, Mark Fissel, and James Raymond.⁴⁴ In what follows I shall draw gratefully upon all this sterling work. Yet apart from two pioneering studies by Cliff Davies, the wider impact of war has been neglected.⁴⁵ Certainly there is nothing like the academic industry surrounding the Hundred Years War or the British Civil Wars.

There are many reasons for this comparative neglect. Insofar as the history of war has been left to military historians, they have not found much to excite them. There are no recognizably great generals or sensational battles. Our period lies between the age of Edward III and Henry V, of Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, and that of Cromwell and Marlborough, of Marston Moor, Dunbar, and Blenheim. Its military history has all too often been told not in the epic mode, but in that of tragicomedy: Henry VIII at the comic end, in his bulbous armour with its 54-inch waistline (see Fig. 1.1), hoisted onto his horse from his 'table... to lift one on horseback'; Sir Edward Howard at the tragic, plunging to his watery death.⁴⁶ There are no definitively new weapon-systems or tactics or strategies to evaluate. In the first



Fig. 1.1. King Henry VIII's armour of 1540 (Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2017).



Fig. 1.2. St Mawes Castle, Cornwall. Photograph by the author.

great age of pike and shot and *trace italienne* artillery fortification, the English seemed to prefer bills to pikes, bows to shot, and Henry's old-fashioned coastal forts, as rounded as his armours (see Fig. 1.2), to the beguiling geometry of the new continental bastions.⁴⁷ What victories there were have been hard to work into our island story: Flodden and Pinkie a bloody embarrassment to a United Kingdom, Sampford Courtenay and Dussindale an inglorious slaughter of peasant protesters. Those in search of swashbuckling glamour have hurried past to Elizabeth's reign, to Drake and Grenville and the Armada war, a climax to which Henry provides a prelude of questionable value summed up by the fate of the *Mary Rose*, toppling, overweighted like her master, into the waters of the Solent.

Henry's England has also been peripheral to the debate on the military revolution. Historians and historical sociologists have been asking for more than fifty years how important the need for fiscal and military institutions to defend subject populations and compete with other states was as a cause of the development of the powers of the modern state, compared with, for example, the extractive ambitions of the dominant classes, the demand from subjects for justice, or the princely duty to impose the godly discipline of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation.⁴⁸ A generation of debate suggests that while war often made a significant contribution to political development elsewhere, its effects on Tudor England were underwhelming. Henry dramatically drove up state revenue per head of population, but this was more by his plunder of the church and reckless debasement than by his innovations in direct taxation.⁴⁹ After Henry, as price inflation complicated the government's problems, total revenue contracted drastically in real terms. Only in the first half of Edward's reign and the early years of Elizabeth's did it

reach more than half of what Henry had raised in 1543–6, and thereafter it fell below one-third of that level for the rest of the century apart from a blip in the Armada crisis.⁵⁰

Henry had solved his financial problems by short-term means, so much so that historians of the seventeenth century have argued that Henry's wartime spending and the alienation of monastic lands that funded it deprived the Stuarts of the resources they needed to govern England effectively and thus led to the civil wars.⁵¹ Because Henry had not tried to develop long-term sources of revenue, England emerged from the sixteenth century with no regular system of direct taxation or of domestic indirect taxation. And even when parliamentary subsidies were voted in the early seventeenth century they had declined into farcical under-assessment. The slide began as soon as Henry died and probably before. Several peers lowered their declared wealth between the 1546 and 1547 payments of the subsidy voted by parliament in 1545, in 1558 the queen had to point out to subsidy commissioners that everyone knew they had assessed their own wealth at a level 'farre under the some of that they all knowe you have', and by 1566 the Lord Treasurer himself would admit only to an income two-thirds of that he had enjoyed in 1559. By the 1560s, subsidy assessments, when they can be compared with probate assessments of the wealth of the same individuals, were tapping just over a fifth of real wealth, where they had in the 1520s reached nearly half. Already by 1545–6, as Henry made intensive use of the subsidy, individual assessments were down to a third of wealth as assessed for probate and there was a significant increase, compared with the 1520s, in the number of taxpayers who defaulted irretrievably on payment. At least in the North, vigorous assessment, probably over-assessment, of individual wealth in 1540–1 fell back as early as in 1543–4.⁵² Meanwhile there was little growth in bureaucracy to administer what revenues there were.

Developments in military institutions were equally unimpressive. From the last years of Henry's reign there was a shift in emphasis in raising troops from what Jeremy Goring called a 'quasi-feudal' to a 'national' basis, changing the emphases between the two systems of recruitment inherited by Henry from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Armies composed of contingents recruited by individual noblemen and gentlemen from their servants, tenants, and friends were superseded from the 1540s by forces made up of county contingents levied by commissioners informed by regular musters of men of military age from every parish.⁵³ But of the standing armies whose rise was central to the idea of the military revolution there was no sign, except in the small Irish establishment, the even smaller Calais and Berwick garrisons, the tiny ordnance team based at the Tower of London, and the court guards of yeomen and gentlemen pensioners.⁵⁴ The one attempt at standing companies of heavy cavalrymen of the sort maintained by the French, Burgundians, Venetians, and others since the mid-fifteenth century lasted only two years until the money for them ran out in 1552.⁵⁵ Henry's efforts did generate a substantial standing navy and his successors maintained it, but after its Elizabethan glories it readily fell prey to corruption and decay.⁵⁶ If we ask a rather different set of questions from those usual in the military revolution debate, we can see that engagement in war shaped the political development of Henry's England, in relations

between towns and central government, for example, or the articulation of noble power.⁵⁷ But by the standards of ascending Brandenburg-Prussia, or *grand siècle* France, or even the market-driven, stakeholder-negotiated Dutch Republic, the state formation induced by Tudor England's wars was feeble.⁵⁸ It would take the civil wars and those of William III and Marlborough to make England, then Britain, a fiscal-military state.⁵⁹

This was a reality of which mid-Tudor statesmen were uncomfortably aware. William, Lord Paget and William Cecil, Lord Burghley stated it repeatedly in letters and memoranda.⁶⁰ For Paget in February 1549, the English government had 'no money at all to speake of in a kinges case' and to 'have yt of the subjectes' was impractical, since disruption to trade would limit what could be had from merchants, clothiers, and wool-farmers and, while any true subject would 'helpe with all that he hath for defence of the realme', not every man was 'throughly wise and able to understand and waye his duetie'. Two months later he added to these fiscal weaknesses two military defects: England had 'great scarsitie of cheiftaynes to conducte the warres' and 'great scarsitie of men and those that be are not most willing to serve in the warre but disobedient and slouthfull'.⁶¹ Twenty years later, Cecil reiterated the 'lack of captens, of soldiers exercised and trayned, of marryners for the navy, of stores of municion, and of treasure to maintain armyes by land or sea', concluding that 'it wer a fearfull thing to imagyn, if the enemyes war at hand to assayle the realme, of what force the resistance wold be'.⁶²

The frustration of those charged with the management of English policy is clear, and it has been well used by historians studying the interaction of fiscal power and international strategy to explain why Mary and Elizabeth acted so much more cautiously than their father.⁶³ What is less certain is what the frustration represents. Were Paget, Cecil, and their colleagues looking at a country bled dry of money and men to feed over-ambitious military strategies by efficient systems of taxation and conscription, or at a society which had successfully fended off most efforts to tap its wealth and manpower, leaving those in government fuming but impotent? Here comparisons may be helpful. These statesmen had to make their assessments in comparative terms, weighing their resources against those of rival states. Sir Nicholas Bacon, for example, pointed out in 1559 that France was four times the size of England and had four times the money and men, and that its king enjoyed, if anything, larger powers than the English monarch to draw on those resources.⁶⁴ In the concluding chapter we shall seek to set the effects of Henry's wars on his people in the context of what the debate on the military revolution and other scholarship has taught us about war, state, and society across early modern Europe.

If Henry's wars have not looked sufficiently important to historians of war or historians of the military-fiscal state, most historians have found other things in Henry's times more seductive or significant and have focused attention on those. The history of foreign relations has concentrated on a newly institutionalized diplomacy of resident ambassadors and reflective state papers and on the practice of competitive display: the Field of Cloth of Gold makes much more of a splash than the battle of the Spurs. The recovery of the crown's strength after the Wars of the Roses and the destructive politics of Henry's court have stimulated analysis of