REVIEW

Iain A. MacInnes, *Scotland's Second War of Independence 1332-1357*. Warfare in History. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016. Pp. xiv and 275. ISBN 978-1-78327-144-3. £60.00.

Via the fourteenth-century account of John Barbour, Geoffrey Barrow's classic study and a plethora of recent books on Bannockburn, the career of Robert Bruce is the best-known period of medieval Scottish history. However, within a few years of his death, Robert's achievements seemed to have been reversed. A new round of wars began in 1332 and brought the prospect of renewed domination by the English crown. Iain MacInnes is right to point out that this struggle, which seems to have acquired nowadays the unfortunate title of the "Second War of Independence", was as serious and sustained as the earlier conflict and has suffered from relative scholarly neglect. It is relative neglect. Since the 1960s the period has become much better known and understood through works by both English and Scottish historians. Nevertheless, this new volume is a welcome addition to a, still-small, body of material.

MacInnes's work is unabashedly a history of the warfare of this period. His chronological account of the period, entitled "Anglo-Scottish relations", limits these relations to military conflict. Subsequent chapters deal with military organisation, the conduct of war and perceptions of warfare. A focus on the means of war is fine, but the ends need also to be considered. In a war fought to secure the submission of Scots to Bruce or Balliol and Plantagenet kings, the timing and terms of surrender agreements (like those made in 1335 and 1346) provide a crucial indicator of motivations and the impact of military events. The attempt by Edward III to achieve his goals through a negotiated agreement with the captive David II had a major effect in reducing the intensity of conflict in the early 1350s (and perhaps encouraging internal Scottish conflict). Although Michael Penman has looked at such issues in depth, their absence here makes the account of the

conflict seem rather one-dimensional. The same approach defines the chapter on *Dramatis Personae*. This studies the careers of a large group of nobles who supported David Bruce. The breadth of this group is interesting but they are discussed solely with regard to their military activities. However, as much recent work has stressed, for nobles like Robert Stewart and William Douglas of Liddesdale, war against the English cannot be neatly separated from their roles within Scottish political life.

In terms of warfare, MacInnes argues that too much emphasis has been placed on “localised struggles” by nobles who sought to carve out “their own area of local influence” (p. 5). He may have a point on this, though the suggestion that the “logical conclusion” of this approach is that “the Bruce Scottish war effort (lacked) ... any co-ordinated action” (p.5) is an Aunt Sally which no-one has really suggested. The chapter on “The Organisation of War” stresses the continuity of military practice in the summoning of the Scottish army of unpaid freemen and knightly tenants. However evidence for recruitment and service from within this period is hard to find and full armies may have been assembled relatively infrequently (perhaps only in 1332, 1333, 1339 and 1346). This topic has been dogged by the lack of record material for the crucial periods of the war, in the mid-1330s and from 1346 to 1357. By using evidence from outside these eras, MacInnes adds to our understanding of the organisation of Scottish armies but, as he recognises, except for a few major campaigns, “armies were of a far smaller scale” (p. 79). Such smaller armies, like that at Culblean, were composed of “retinues”, a term which leads us back to questions of private lordship. While dependence on such armed followings is not the same as arguing that there was no central military effort, it again raises questions about shifting political and social relationships and the link between government, war and lordship.

As the above demonstrates, the study of this period is shaped by the limitations of the Scottish sources. And yet, the statement on page one of the book that the “contemporary Scottish chroniclers ... allowed the Bruce victories and the romance of the war fought between 1296 and 1328 to overshadow the history of the years that followed” is not really accurate. The full accounts of

the period, in the chronicles of Walter Bower and Andrew Wyntoun, drew on a long, chivalric narrative from the later fourteenth century whose focus and tone suggest a similar approach to Barbour's *Bruce*. This so-called "anonymous" chronicle provides MacInnes with much material for his discussions of chivalry and military behaviour but its character and close identification with particular noble families (as demonstrated by Steve Boardman) are not given sufficient consideration. It is an account of the war which demonstrates that such a conflict involved complex loyalties and left a complicated legacy. This book might do more to represent these complications but is, nevertheless, a valuable addition to our understanding of the period.

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