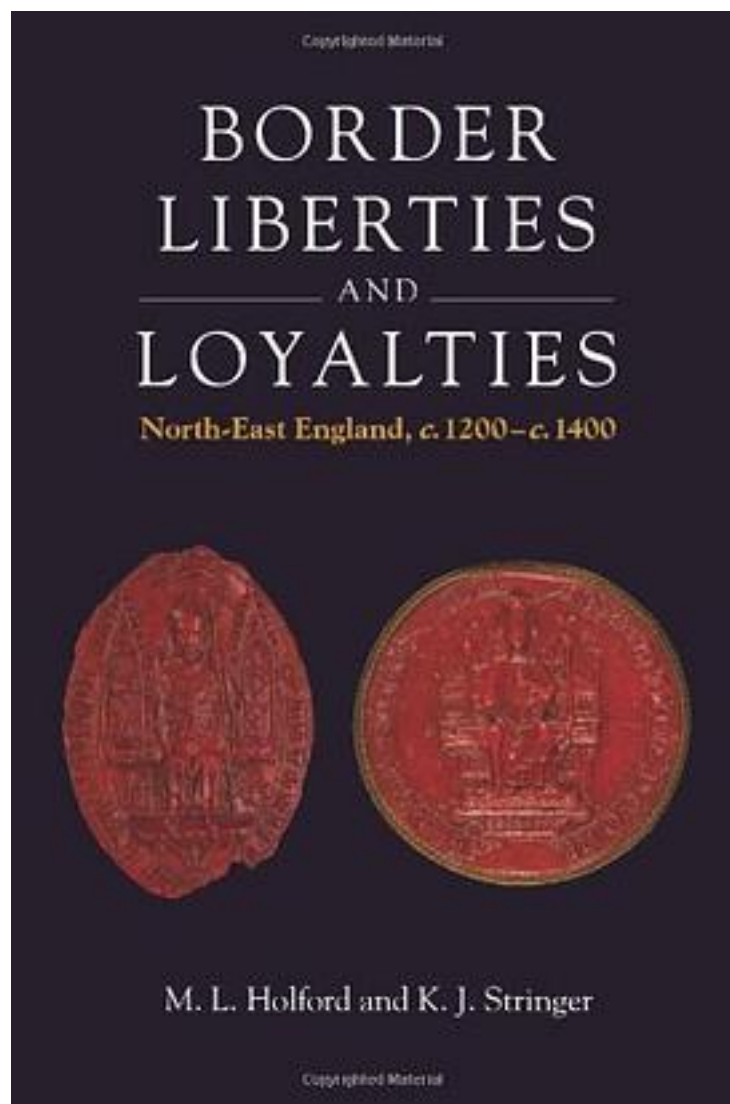


Border Liberties and Loyalties



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This book examines the organisation of power and society in north-east England over two crucial centuries in the emergence of the English 'state'. England is usually regarded as medieval Europe's most centralised kingdom, yet the North-East was dominated by liberties - largely self-governing jurisdictions - that greatly restricted the English crown's direct authority in the region. These local polities receive here their first comprehensive discussion; and their histories are crucial for understanding questions of state-formation in frontier zones, regional distinctiveness, and local and national loyalties. The analysis focuses on liberties as both governmental entities and sources of socio-political and cultural identification. It also connects the development of liberties and their communities with a rich variety of forces, including the influence of the kings of Scots as lords of Tynedale, and the impact of protracted Anglo-Scottish warfare from 1296. Why did liberties enjoy such long-term relevance as governance structures? How far, and why, did the English monarchy respect their autonomous rights and status? By what means, and how successfully, were liberty identities created, sharpened and sustained? In addressing such issues, this ground-breaking study extends beyond regional history to make significant contributions to the ongoing mainstream debates about 'state', 'society', 'identity' and 'community'.

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