

Blood Cries Afar: The Forgotten Invasion of England 1216

Submitted by Sean Joseph McGlynn to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of
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By Sean McGlynn

1. Introduction

The intent behind *Blood Cries Afar: The Forgotten Invasion of England 1216*¹ was to be the first book to study the French invasion of England in 1216 and the first to offer a military narrative and analysis of its events. In completing the study, a clear understanding is conveyed of the course of fragmented and frequently confusing and neglected events.²

¹ Hereafter *BCA*.

² Positive reviews by Michael Prestwich and Nigel Saul would indicate that the book has succeeded in this regard: M. Prestwich, Review, *Times Literary Supplement*, 6 July, 2012; N. Saul, Review, *History Today*, 62 (5), 2012.

The large French expeditionary force that landed in England in May 1216 allied with baronial rebels against King John to divide the country for eighteen months. For a year the French occupied and ruled the richest one-third of England, including the capital, London (which remained in their hands for the entire duration of the occupation). At one point, as many as two-thirds of the English baronage recognised the French leader, Prince Louis (heir to the Capetian throne in France) as their monarch; King Alexander II of Scotland travelled to Dover to pay homage to him as King Louis I of England. The invasion was ended by military means, not political ones.

The neglect of this major invasion event, which came close to being a second Norman Conquest, is a telling one. In part this is due to its events unfolding over the end of King John's reign the start of and Henry III's (as a minor), and also because it remains in the shadow of Magna Carta from a year earlier. Thus in the few places where the invasion has been investigated, its treatment has been partial, disjointed and brief.³ This book shows how

³ The closest military coverage of events for 1215-17 prior to *BCA* are occasional mentions in Matthew Strickland's important thematic study *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066-1217* (Cambridge, 1996) and Richard Eales' 'Castles and Politics in England, 1215-1224', *Thirteenth Century England*, ii, (Woodbridge, 1988). From a military point of view, what little attention the invasion has received has been in papers on major events such as Lincoln and Sandwich and on John, by, respectively, Tout, Cannon and Turner; the first two of these were written over a century ago. (See *BCA* Bibliography for these and other references in this footnote). On the politics of King John's reign and Henry's minority, Painter, Church, Warren, Turner, Carpenter, Crouch, Holt, Vincent, Power, Gillingham, dominate post-war scholarship; for the smaller literature on Louis, Petit-Dutaillis, Sivéry and Gorby are to the fore. The nearest to a detailed 'continuative' narrative by a single historian appears over three separate books: Kate Norgate's works on John's reign and the minority of Henry III from 1902 and 1912, and Charles Petit-Dutaillis' 1894 study of Louis VIII. All are useful but of course are seriously dated. For Henry's reign, the best and most detailed account is David Carpenter's *The Minority of Henry III* from 1990: the forty-odd pages for the post-Johanne era are thorough and cover the political aspects with insight; of some nine pages discussing the military matters, seven are devoted to just Lincoln and Sandwich alone (the book is a study of politics, not warfare). Turner's book on John from 1994 covers the invasion in nine pages; Jim Bradbury, a medieval military specialist, offers six pages in his *Philip Augustus* (1998). The French historians Sivéry (1995), Gorby (2009) and Choffel (1983) have written more recent accounts of Louis VIII. The last of these is brief and inconsequential; Gorby offers sixty very short pages (the equivalent of about twenty pages of *BCA*); Sivéry, the most substantial and the

it was that a succession of military events led to the point that the French were able to launch a full-scale invasion and how the invasion and subsequent occupation was defeated militarily. In so doing, it emphasizes strongly the primacy of military events over political and diplomatic ones, and offers a detailed analysis of campaigning in the early thirteenth century. It offers the most comprehensive account and analysis of a number of engagements, some of which have been almost completely neglected or overlooked entirely.

The book also offers fresh insights, context and arguments on the following: Richard I's and England's foreign policy; the military leadership of King John; the first re-issue of Magna Carta; Louis' campaign and planned last-stand; the fluidity of castle warfare; ravaging as a precision weapon; the impact on non-combatants and the role of atrocity; the importance of the invasion to nascent English identity. But most of all, its chief significance is that it offers the first, full-length and military study of events that dominated England from the sealing of Magna Carta in June 1215 to the end of the invasion in September 1217.

In my *viva* report, the examiners identified three areas for discussion in the amended supporting commentary: the authority of the chief sources of the invasion (to which most attention should be given); what the invasion reveals of military tactics and techniques; and what fresh insights on national identity might be gained from a study of the events of 1216-17. The remaining commentary is devoted to these areas.

2. The Sources

The recommendation at the *viva* was to focus here on the closest principal sources in time and place for the invasion in England and to investigate their credentials for writing on the invasion. As advised at the *viva*, this precludes Guillaume le Breton, an extremely well-informed but highly partisan source attached to the French court who was not personally involved in the events of the invasion and who never, as far we know, visited England. The

only one with any scholarly apparatus (albeit light), still only offers the same as Gorby. Even Cartellieri's massive, four-volume history of Philip II's reign - *Philip II. August: König von Frankreich* (Leipzig, 1899-1922) - has only fifteen short pages on the invasion out of a total of over 1,500 pages. Thus the limited extent of the secondary literature meant it was essential to fully exploit the chronicle sources to reconstruct a military narrative and analysis of the invasion.

main sources for discussion are therefore Roger of Wendover, the Anonymous of Béthune and *The History of William Marshal*. Some reference will also be made to Ralph of Coggeshall.⁴ Roger of Wendover receives most attention here for three reasons: he is the single most important source of events; he is treated with suspicion by many medievalists; and a major element of my research is to offer fresh insights on his work which I argue should render him in a considerably more positive light.

Gaining a clear and undisputed picture of events can be challenging enough in the twenty-first century; how much more so, then, for the thirteenth, when the fog of war is both denser and more distant. When Alexandre Dumas was talking at a dinner reception for Waterloo veterans, a French general present at the battle disputed his account of the battle: ‘But my dear Dumas, it wasn’t at all like that! And remember, we were there!’ ‘Precisely, *mon général*’, replied Dumas: ‘You were there so how could you possibly know?’⁵ Such considerations must be applied to our medieval sources, which are much more limited in quantity and hence less readily corroborated. However, at the same time, that does not mean that valuable information cannot be gained from them (even the much – and unfairly, I argue

⁴ Roger of Wendover, *Rogeri de Wendover Liber Qui Dicitur Flores Historiarum*, ed. H. Hewlett, 3 vols., Roll Series, 1886-9 (hereafter RW in notes). A. Holden, D. Crouch and S. Gregory (eds), *The History of William Marshal*, 3 vols., London, 2002-6 (hereafter HWM in the notes). F. Michelet (ed.), *Histoire des Ducs de Normandie et des Rois Angleterre*, Paris 1840 (hereafter AB in notes); I have also used the Anonymous’ shorter *Chroniques des Rois de France* in *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, vol. xxiv, ed. L. Delisle, part two: this offers some variations from the *Histoire* (noted in *BCA*) but otherwise follows it closely; Ralph of Coggeshall, *Radulphi de Coggeshall Chronicon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Stephenson, Rolls Series, 1875.

⁵ D. Crane, Review of G. Corrigan, *Waterloo: A New History of the Battle and its Armies*, in *The Spectator*, 21 June 2014, p. 36. Wellington makes a similar point with his choreographic illusion, in that one may as well attempt to write the history of a ball as of a battle. All this is familiar to military historians and Clausewitz’s fog of war, from which ‘most reports are false’ (*BCA*, p. 16) And that is with a sincere intention to tell the truth, before bias is applied. As Stonewall Jackson said to an aide: ‘Did it ever occur to you, sir, what an opportunity a battlefield affords liars?’: J. Simon and M. Stevens (eds), *New Perspectives on the Civil War: Myths and Realities of the National Conflict*, Lanham, 2001, p. 75. Yet, of course, there has never been a let-up of publications or scholarly studies reconstructing Waterloo and the American Civil War, and on military history in its broadest terms.

– traduced Roger of Wendover).⁶ But as a recent article on the Third Crusade warns, ‘widely divergent perceptions [...] show the fluidity of historical truth’.⁷

Roger of Wendover

Ralph of Coggeshall and Roger of Wendover are our most important Latin sources for the invasion, the latter being far more significant. Ralph of Coggeshall, while a key chronicle from the time, does not cover the invasion at any length; his interest is more in recording the narrative of events rather than detailing how the war was fought.⁸ I refer to the chronicle on many occasions, finding him most useful in making comparisons with Roger of Wendover on the role of ravaging and corroborating Wendover’s explanation of it. Coggeshall experienced the war at first-hand on at least one occasion.⁹

⁶ See Kelly DeVries’s comments in K. DeVries, ‘The Use of Chronicles in Recreating Medieval Military History’, *Journal of Medieval Military History*, ii, 2004, p. 15. DeVries draws attention to ‘the motives of the chronicler’, an aspect taken up by C. Allmand, ‘The Reporting of War in the Middle Ages’, in D. Dunn (ed.), *War and Society in Medieval and Early Modern Britain*, Liverpool, 2000, p. 20. See also C. Saunders, F. Le Saux and N. Thomas (eds), *Writing War: Medieval Literary Responses to Warfare*, Woodbridge, 2004.

⁷ T. Foster, ‘Reconquering the Holy Land: The Third Crusade in Medieval French Literature’, in L. Bleach and K. Borrill (eds), *Battle and Bloodshed: The Medieval World at War*, Newcastle, 2013, p. 89.

⁸ Coggeshall covers the whole Magna Carta war from early 1215 within sixteen pages of the Stephenson edition (pp. 171-86), of which less than six deal with the actual invasion (pp. 181-6). The whole post-John phase is covered in just one-and-a-half pages and the major battles – Lincoln and Sandwich – are covered briefly in just one page (p. 185). His close association with Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, ensures his pro-baronial stance in the war.

⁹ *BCA*, pp. 157-8, and also p. 153. Gransden rightly states that he ‘was in close touch with contemporary events’ and, being within fifty miles of London, ‘kept well-informed’: A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England I, c. 550-1307*, London, 1974, pp. 322-31 (quote on p. 324).

For some commentary on Coggeshall as a chronicler, see: Freeman, ‘Wonders, Prodigies and Marvels in Ralph of Coggeshall’s *Chronicon Anglicanum*’, in *Journal of Medieval History*, xxvi, 2000; F. Powicke, ‘Roger of Wendover and the Coggeshall Chronicle’, *English Historical Review*, vol. 21, 1906; J. Gillingham, ‘Historians Without Hindsight: Coggeshall, Diceto and Howden on the Early

Roger of Wendover is our most important source for events of John's reign at this time, as I emphasize in the book; unfortunately, he also has a long-held reputation for being the most problematic. Where he has been studied previously, it has never been as reporter of warfare. Furthermore, a detailed look is warranted as I stress that Latin sources such as Wendover should not automatically be deemed secondary to vernacular sources when it comes to the study of medieval warfare. As such, Wendover deserves most of our attention here for the sources. I will first look at his generally poor reputation, while showing that more recently there has been some necessary movement to enhancing it. This will be followed by my argument that this re-evaluation is particularly needed for the events of the Magna Carta war, which includes the invasion, as I demonstrate that Wendover was uniquely placed to write on the war. Finally, I will examine why this monastic figure was able to write with competence on the warfare he describes. Since starting the revisions to this essay, I have come across further evidence that reinforces my positive views of Wendover's work as a chronicler of the Magna Carta war and invasion.

Wendover is a much disparaged and maligned chronicler. One reason for this, as one writer has recognized, is that there is a 'prejudice against Wendover in comparison with Matthew Paris'.¹⁰ Criticism of his work has certainly been trenchant and he is academically and popularly regarded as being 'generally unreliable'.¹¹ Galbraith has noted that 'the mistakes made from 1202-c.1216 are worse and much more frequent than in the remaining years'.¹² In the post-Galbraithian era of revisionism on King John, Wendover's anti-royal bias comes in for a bashing: Lloyd claims that 'He set no great store by accuracy, and his writing is highly prejudiced. Much of his work is parabolic rather than objective';¹³ James Holt wrote of 'the increasing distrust of Wendover's work in recent years' and on some issues he 'is best shelved'.¹⁴ Gillingham has commented that 'even schoolboys are now

Years of John's Reign', in S. Church (ed.), *King John: New Interpretations*, Woodbridge, 1999; Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, p. 86.

¹⁰ C. Jenkins, *The Monastic Chronicler and the Early School of St Albans*, London, 1922, p. 60.

¹¹ E. Hallam (ed.), *The Plantagenet Encyclopedia*, London, 1990, p. 177.

¹² Galbraith, *Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris*, Glasgow, 1944, p. 17.

¹³ A. Lloyd, *King John*, Newton Abbot, 1973, p. 402.

¹⁴ J. Holt, *Magna Carta*, 2nd edn., Cambridge, 1992, pp. 225-6.

taught to distrust' him.¹⁵ Wendover's poor reputation owes much to the influential works on John's reign by Warren, Holt and Turner.

However, in an article that arose from writing *BCA*, I attempt to rehabilitate Wendover's reputation for Henry III's reign.¹⁶ Here I show that Wendover was not unthinkingly anti-royal and that his dubious stories on miracles and wonders should be treated separately from his political history.¹⁷ One aspect that I have overlooked in this regard is the role of imaginative memory and its function; this is an area that would merit attention for Wendover's work. As Marcus Bull comments, medieval authors who sought to project their 'ideals and concerns' to validate 'present-day circumstances' should not automatically be dismissed for writing 'bad history', as 'the past was not a neutral quantity preserved for its own sake'.¹⁸ Michael Clanchy, however, has time for Wendover, declaring 'recent historians have expected too much of chroniclers' and that 'Wendover has been the butt of unjustified criticism' as he counters some of Holt's reproaches of the writer.¹⁹

Interestingly, very recently there has been some indication of a change in attitude to Wendover. In 2015, David Carpenter has also come to the defence of Wendover as a reporter of his times. He says that Wendover, 'although not free from invention and error', must have been 'working from a draft or from notes he made close to the events he describes' before demonstrating that the Annals of Dunstable and a Reading abbey source offer a considerable degree of approximate truth to Wendover's notorious and much derided account of the death of Geoffrey of Norwich.²⁰ Later, when discussing events in autumn 1214 at Bury St Edmunds, Carpenter again reminds us that Wendover could unarguably make 'egregious mistakes' but also that 'neither lapidary effusions nor Holt's observations, however, should

¹⁵ J. Gillingham, 'The Unromantic Death of Richard I', *Richard Coeur de Lion*, Aldershot, 1994, p. 179. As an A-Level history examiner, I can confirm this is still the case today. See, for example, a recent A-Level and – unfortunately, first year undergraduate – textbook by G. Seel, *King John: An Underrated King*, London, 2012.

¹⁶ S. McGlynn, 'Roger of Wendover and the Wars of Henry III, 1216-1234' in B. Weiler and I. Rowlands (eds), *England and Europe in the Reign of Henry III, 1216-1272*, Farnham, 2002.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 184.

¹⁸ M. Bull, *The Miracles of Our Lady of Rocamadour*, Woodbridge, 1999, p. 24. My thanks to Simon Barton for drawing my attention to this.

¹⁹ M. Clanchy, *England and Its Rulers, 1066-1307*, 3rd edn, Oxford, 2006, pp. 189-90.

²⁰ D. Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, London, 2015, pp. 89-90.

prevent us from accepting the gist of Wendover's narrative'.²¹ On the matter of Wendover's much highlighted mistakes, crucially even one of his main detractors has acknowledged that though Wendover's work is blighted by *errata*, 'how could it be otherwise in so large an undertaking? And what large medieval chronicle is not?'²²

When it comes to the matter of reporting on war and on the invasion, Wendover's chronicle has much to support its importance here. Wendover's own work is deemed 'original' and 'all important' for events in England from the start of the thirteenth century up to the chronicle's end.²³ It is not certain when he started writing; this could have been anytime from 1204 until, but was probably after John's death in 1216 and, more likely, after 1219, following his removal as prior of Belvoir. David Carpenter has recently put forward the date of 1225, close to the composition of the other two main sources of the invasion, the Anonymous of Béthune and the *History of William Marshal*.²⁴

The use of Wendover is especially important to my research for the book as he was very close to events and therefore demands attention from historians of the conflict in England between 1215 and 1217. I believe that this is a significant contribution that the book makes. Wendover's geographical proximity to actual events has not been fully appreciated. As a monk of St Albans (and possibly a precentor), he would be well-informed of national events as a matter of course.²⁵ Wendover tells of how: John mustered his army here in

²¹ Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, pp. 291-2.

²² Galbraith, *Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris*, p. 17.

²³ V. Galbraith, *Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris*, p.15.

²⁴ Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, p. 87. See also McGlynn, 'Roger of Wendover', p. 198 n. 5. There is also the suggestion, posited by Liebermann, that Wendover had access to earlier, lost annals, up until 1214. For a discussion of this, see R. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, Cambridge, 1958, pp. 22-4. However, as will be obvious from my discussion that follows, I disagree wholly with Vaughan's opinion that 'it seems, in fact, that there may be little original material in Roger's chronicle before his account of Henry III's reign' (Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, p. 24); a negative view of Wendover very much of its time. My thanks to Dr Hugh Doherty of the University of East Anglia for reminding me of Liebermann's thesis at the Canterbury Magna Carta conference in June 2015 and for explaining to me how Wendover copied Robert Fitzwalter's letter on the 1215 tournament from an original. It was interesting to note that his paper at the conference also made the case for Wendover's strength as a highly informed chronicler of the Magna Carta war on the same lines that I have written.

²⁵ The monastery was better placed than most to be tapped into national events. It was a day's ride north of London, the first stopping place on the Great North Road of the great and the good, and 'even

December 1215; Louis visited the monastery and threatened it a year later and his men returned there in April 1217; and in January 1217 how it was severely raided by royalists.²⁶ And it was only a day's ride from the rebel and French headquarters in London.

As prior of the St Albans cell at Belvoir during the Magna Carta war and invasion, Wendover was also superbly located to comment personally on events further to the north of St Albans as well. Belvoir castle sits just above the old priory and provides views of twenty-plus miles distance. It is only six miles off the Great North road; Nottingham, Mountsorrel, Newark and Lincoln (all playing major roles in the invasion) are all within a twenty mile radius of Belvoir, and hence also within the operational sphere of the Belvoir garrison. Thus in 1217 Wendover was able to witness at first-hand French troops ravaging their way through the valley of Belvoir to the only major land battle at Lincoln.²⁷ It is an obvious comment to make but needs reaffirmation here given the suspicion of Wendover: proximity to events is to be preferred over distance for more reliable reporting. As Bernard Bachrach has recently noted in the *Journal of Medieval Military History*, Bishop Paulinus is a better source than Jerome for events in southern Gaul in the early fifth century because Paulinus 'lived at Béziers, only about 150 kilometres from Toulouse, i.e., less than a day's journey for the relays of the post riders who served in the *cursus publicus*, and, therefore, was in a better position, at least geographically, to obtain accurate information'.²⁸ Wendover was much better placed than this.

The importance of St Albans monastery is well known and would have been a valuable source of information for Wendover as we have seen. It is likely that as prior of the Belvoir cell he would have visited St Albans. Even if he did not make the journey south during the civil war and invasion, he would have learned much from its abbot, William of

more in the centre of affairs than most abbeys': R. Vaughan (ed.), *The Chronicles of Matthew Paris: Monastic Life in the Thirteenth Century*, Gloucester, 1986, p. 5).

²⁶ *BCA*, pp. 150-1, 192, 193, 205. This muster has especial historical significance: see S. Church, 'The Earliest English Muster Roll, 18/19 December 1215', *Historical Research*, vol. lxxvii, 1994. See also McGlynn, 'Roger of Wendover', p. 186 for official lines of communication and visitations between St Albans and its cells.

²⁷ *BCA*, p. 206. Of course, if Coggeshall's proximity to events is, rightly, considered a plus (see n. 11), then this attribute must be amplified in Wendover's case.

²⁸ B. Bachrach, 'Some Observations Regarding Barbarian Military Demography: Geiseric's Census of 429 and Its Implications', *Journal of Medieval Military History*, xii, 2014, p. 13.

Trumpington, who held office from 1214 to 1235, when he travelled to Belvoir in the course of a visitation of the cells of his houses, almost certainly completed by 1220 at the latest.²⁹

Furthermore, there are other compelling reasons why Wendover was well-informed. Wendover's lord and patron, William d'Albini (a name that can be rendered over a dozen different ways), was a leading rebel commander who commanded the garrison during the heroic defence of Rochester castle; and in December 1215 John was threatening the Belvoir garrison into surrender.³⁰ As one of the twenty-five barons cited in Magna Carta, he then goes on to join with the king following his capture at Rochester and subsequent imprisonment; this places Wendover at the heart of political and military events on both sides for 1215-17.

But the d'Albini connection stretches further as I have recently ascertained to a greater degree and which has been overlooked even in recent work on the d'Albinis. William's cousin, Philip d'Albini, was one of King John's most loyal military captains, serving with him as a marshal on the king's 1214 Poitevin campaign. As the first Warden of the Channel Islands, he was instrumental as a naval commander in the Channel, frequently involved in combat against Eustace the Monk, the French admiral, and acting as Hubert de Burgh's chief adviser at the naval engagement at Sandwich, the culminating battle of the invasion in August 1217. Little wonder, then, with William now among the ranks of royalists, that Wendover gives Philip d'Albini such a prominent role in the battle of Sandwich.³¹ Wendover, writing after these events, can therefore chastise John as the oppressor of his patron, but, following John's death, offer a more balanced view of the civil war and invasion afterwards, with both his patron and his patron's cousin fighting for the royalists. Thus Wendover's hostility to John should not, as it tends to, be taken as the stance of an unreconstructed, hardened, pro-baronial partisan. Wendover proves himself capable of criticising both sides in the conflict and was also well-placed to receive information from both.

²⁹ *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1161.

³⁰ *BCA*, pp. 143-8, 153-4.

³¹ *BCA*, p. 230. Nicholas Vincent's entries on William and Philip in the *Dictionary of National Biography* make it clear that they are kinsmen. However, Vincent does not make the connection. This oversight may be due to the numerous renditions of the d'Albini surname. I have come across some fourteen variants. Vincent employs two – d'Aubigné and d'Aubigney – although both are actually the same toponym relating to a village in Brittany. Wendover's starring role for Philip d'Albini at Sandwich can now be understood in light of this connection.

Wendover's physical proximity to events and key players underline the chronicler's position to be extremely well-informed. Clearly, then, criticisms of Wendover being remote from events need to be corrected when it comes to the invasion.³² Both physically and personally, he had very close connections to the North, St Albans, London, and the South: in other words, to the third of England where the bulk of military activity took place. Therefore I feel that a significant aspect of the book is to rescue Wendover's poor reputation by demonstrating his central importance for the events of 1215-17.

What of Wendover's credibility as an informed writer of war? He was, of course, a monk, which for some historians precludes him from having any insightful views on the waging of war.³³ As I argue in the book and elsewhere, a church background would not in any way limit his ability to write on warfare.³⁴ Wendover follows in a long line of church writers with a healthy and knowledgeable interest in reporting wars and on whom medieval military historians have relied heavily: Orderic Vitalis, Suger, Otto of Freising, Guillaume le Breton and Pierre de Vaux-de-Cernay, to name but a few. (There is more positive recognition of churchmen writing on military matters for the crusades.)³⁵ There exists a long-standing natural and logical tendency to favour vernacular sources, written by men who actually participated in the combats they describe. As John Gillingham has written: 'the vernacular brings us closer than Latin to the thoughts and actions of soldiers'.³⁶ There is a lot of truth in

³² Eg, see G. Turner, 'The minority of Henry III, part two', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, new series 1, 1907, pp. 205-6; Galbraith, *Roger of Wendover*, p. 17.

³³ Monks and clergy 'had little comprehension of military matters, an even less interest in [...] strategy and tactics': J. Beeler, *Warfare in Feudal Europe*, Ithaca, 1971, xii.

³⁴ *BCA*, pp. 13-14; S. McGlynn, *By Sword and Fire: Cruelty and Atrocity in Medieval Warfare*, London, 2008, pp. 67-9.

³⁵ See, eg: J. France and W. Zajac (eds), *The Crusades and their Sources: Essays Presented to Bernard Hamilton*, Aldershot, 1998; J. France, *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade*, Cambridge, 1994, 374-82; and, recently, B. Bachrach and D. Bachrach, 'Ralph of Caen as a Military Historian', in S. John and N. Morton (eds), *Crusading and Warfare in the Middle Ages*, Farnham, 2014.

³⁶ J. Gillingham, 'Richard I and the Science of War in the Middle Ages', *Richard Couer de Lion*, London, 1994, [orig. 1984], p. 212. Verbruggen also expressed a similar sentiment: J. Verbruggen, *The Art of Warfare in Western Europe During the Middle Ages From the Eighth Century to 1340*, 2nd edn., trans. S. Willard and R. Southern, Woodbridge, 1997, pp. 10-14.

this, but, having noted Dumas' comments above on Waterloo, this does not automatically make the vernacular superior (see also below).

In *BCA*, I emphasize the close connections between *bellatores* and *oratores*, referring to clerics (both high and low) frequently involved in active combat (so much so that laws had to be formulated to accommodate their compromised non-combatant status); and how the Bishop of Auxerre enjoyed discussing Vegetius's *De Re Militari* with knights; why monasteries (including St Albans and, I should have mentioned here, Coggeshall) were military targets and often at the centre of military events; and the intimate familial relations with the knightly classes.³⁷ I also draw attention to the obvious ties with the military orders and also the martial aspect of monasticism as a 'spiritual battle against the forces of evil', and how 'many monks, including Wendover, commonly describe a company of troops as a *turma*, a term used at the monastery of St Maurice, for example, to denote [its] groups of monks [...] which one commentator has called a "powerful ritual weapon"'.³⁸

Since writing the book, two studies have substantially reinforced the ideas that I make on the spiritual combat aspect and ecclesiastical-military associations. John Hosler has shown how churchmen such as John of Salisbury could have high levels of understanding of warfare and give considerable thought to it.³⁹ Katherine Allen Smith has devoted a monograph – the first – to the whole matter of the place of war within monastic culture, which offers support to my views above. She writes of cloistered soldiers of Christ who waged perpetual spiritual war and 'actually brought war to the forefront of the monastic experience', and also that 'actual contact with arms-bearers was arguably an equally important source of medieval monastic knowledge about warfare'.⁴⁰ Interestingly, and bearing in mind the *turma* of the previous paragraph, she also writes of 'what Benedict's *Rule* termed the fraternal battle line (*acies*)'.⁴¹ Wendover was, of course, a Benedictine.

This is not to say that there are not potentially serious problems with Wendover as a monastic source. These gravitate around moral and religious didactics and the propensity of monks to fill their accounts with direct borrowings from the bible and, to a lesser extent, from classical texts. Wendover has no reputation as a notable scholar and unlike a contemporary

³⁷ *BCA*, pp. 13-4.

³⁸ *BCA*, p. 14.

³⁹ J. Hosler, *John of Salisbury: Military Authority of the Twelfth Century Renaissance*, Leiden, 2013.

⁴⁰ K. Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture*, Woodbridge, 2011, p. 197.

⁴¹ Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture*, p. 121.

such as Guillaume le Breton, pays little attention to the classical age or writers from that era, most probably due to ignorance, and thus rarely ever quotes them. This is perhaps surprising given the Benedictine emphasis on ‘the transmission of humanist trends’ and study of classical *auctores*.⁴² In his book on learning at St Albans for the later Middle Ages, James Clark has noted Benedictine work on Lucan’s *De bello civili*,⁴³ which would be an obvious text for Wendover to draw on for the Magna Carta civil war, as Henry of Huntingdon did for the civil war of his time in his *Historia Anglorum*.⁴⁴ As far as I am aware, Wendover does not resort to this. There is an interesting study to be undertaken on Wendover to identify any classical references in his work.

Where should we position Wendover among contemporary writing of history? As mentioned above, he has been overshadowed by his successor Matthew Paris and had to wait another 150 years until Thomas Walsingham paid him tribute as a chronicler and as his predecessor at St Albans.⁴⁵ I have discussed above how Wendover was party to both sides of the civil war and that his bias has been overstated (relating as it does primarily to John), although this must be tempered with the fact that ‘from Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris to Thomas Walsingham, a succession of chroniclers based at St Albans adopted a consistently – at times, it seems, almost institutionally – sceptical attitude to England’s kings’.⁴⁶ It is not surprising that Wendover also displayed an anti-papal side, as shown in his hostility towards Italian clerks in England and resentment at papal interference into the affairs and hence independence of the Benedictine order following the directive of a general visitation of their houses in 1232.⁴⁷

⁴² J. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, Woodbridge, p. 193.

⁴³ J. Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance at St Albans: Thomas Walsingham and his Circle, 1350-1440*, Oxford, 2004, p. 224.

⁴⁴ Henry of Huntingdon, *The History of the English People 1000-1154*, ed. and trans. D. Greenaway, Oxford, 2002, p. xxv for a discussion of this.

⁴⁵ Galbraith, *Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris*, p. 22.

⁴⁶ C. Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England*, London, 2004, p. 211.

⁴⁷ A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, p. 368. The papacy was on the royalist side for the 1215-17 war.

The importance of writing history to medieval chroniclers has been well established.⁴⁸ Chroniclers were programmed to take ample opportunities in their histories to impart moral didactics, cautionary tales, miracles and expressions of divine judgment on errant behaviour. Wendover was no exception, as with his minatory tale of the washer woman who earned extra money by taking in laundry on the Sabbath, for which digression she was sucked dry by a little black pig. Ralph of Coggeshall displayed similar tendencies.⁴⁹ Warren, hardly a defender of Wendover, says: ‘To be to fair to Wendover, he was not setting out to be a careful historian [...] His purpose in writing was didactic’.⁵⁰ Many scholars have therefore consequently combined such proclivities with factual errors to place little faith in Wendover as an historian.

This is imbalanced, and not just for the reasons given above. As James Clark has shown, the Benedictines had a special affinity with the writing of history, and this was markedly so at St Albans. By the thirteenth century, ‘the active historical impulse was confined increasingly to a hierarchy of houses, particularly those that retained a pre-eminence in political or public life. Among the English Benedictines, it was the monks of St Albans that were most prolific’; Clark follows this immediately with a discussion of Matthew Paris⁵¹ and notes that contemporaries valued his reliability.⁵² All commentators on Matthew Paris would acknowledge his debt to his predecessor Wendover.

Wendover tries harder than many scholars give him credit for, especially on the great war of his day that he was so interested in. He was honest enough to admit on occasion when he was unsure of his material, as when he forgets the name of a castle under siege: ‘castellum [...] cuius nomen non teneo’.⁵³ At one point there is an interesting, precise corroboration of

⁴⁸ See, for example: N. Partner, *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England*, Chicago, 1977; L. Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Washington, 1997; P. Magdalino (ed.), *The Perception of the Past In Twelfth-Century Europe*, London, 1992; B. Dobson, ‘Contrasting Chronicles: Historical Writing at York and Durham in the Later Middle Ages’, in I. Wood and G. Loud (eds), *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages*, London, 1991; N. Partner (ed.), *Writing Medieval History*, London, 2005.

⁴⁹ See Freeman, ‘Wonders, Prodigies and Marvels’, pp. 127-43.

⁵⁰ Warren, *King John*, p. 13 and n. 2.

⁵¹ Clark, *The Benedictines*, p. 228. See pages 224-230 for a general discussion of the Benedictines and the writing of history.

⁵² Clark, *The Benedictines*, p. 224.

⁵³ RW, iii, p. 55. The castle is Usk.

usually elastic and slippery numbers between the Wendover's *Flores* and the *History of William Marshal*: as I show in *BCA*, Wendover's figures for the royalist army at Lincoln in 1217 and the casualties afterwards are remarkably close to that given by the *History of William Marshal*, a source with a higher reputation than Wendover's.⁵⁴ Note, too, there is no customary monastic hyperbole or inflation of figures here.

Wendover's detailed account of the civil war and invasion is hardly surprising, and not simply because, as a chronicler, he was recording the greatest crisis to visit England in his lifetime. Wendover not only had access to eye-witness accounts of the war, he had direct experience of the war itself. In December, 1215 King John besieged Belvoir castle and threatened Nicholas d'Albini that if he did not surrender the castle, Nicholas' father William, a prisoner since the fall of Rochester, would be killed.⁵⁵ In the spring of 1217, Wendover watched as troops 'marched through the valley of Belvoir' to assist Franco-baronial forces at Lincoln; displaying a lack of anti-royal bias, he calls these marauding troops 'robbers' and 'scum'.⁵⁶

Monika Otter asserts, in a widely accepted view, that 'to classical, medieval and early modern Europeans, history was not a separate academic discipline, but a subsection of rhetoric' and that 'medieval historiography may seem less beholden to our standards of evidence than to a kind of rhetorical or textual "truth"'.⁵⁷ What, then, of Wendover in his writing on war? For a start, we must guard against too much metahistory and historiographical navel-gazing. Wendover, as we are seeing, wore many caps when writing his *Flores Historiarum*, and his historian's one kept his tonsure warm as much his moral teacher and fable-teller ones. It is not simply the case that 'genre distinctions were permeable' in medieval historiography;⁵⁸ as Matthew Kempshall explains in *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, Wendover was writing at a time of transition:

One practical effect of the expression of [...] anxiety towards the admixture of rhetoric and historiography was for the chronicle to emerge as some sort of

⁵⁴ *BCA*, p. 207.

⁵⁵ *BCA*, pp. 153-4.

⁵⁶ *BCA*, p. 206.

⁵⁷ M. Otter, 'Functions of Fiction in Historical Writing', in Partner, *Writing Medieval History*, pp. 109-10.

⁵⁸ Otter, 'Functions of Fiction in Historical Writing', p. 111.

compromise position, occupying the middle ground in the polarisation between ‘truthful’ annals and ‘false’ romance which might otherwise result from twelfth-century disagreement over the relationship between *historia*, *argumentum* and *fabula*. As a consequence, and despite Gervase of Canterbury’s explicit elision of chronicles with annals, a distinction between three types of writing, rather than two, began to open up in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in more reflective ‘chronicles’ by Roger of Wendover, Matthew Paris and Thomas Walsingham’.⁵⁹

As discussed above, Wendover’s work has few classical allusions. When it comes to the subject of war, there are also surprisingly (as it may seem) few literary biblical tropes in his work. While heeding Kempshall’s salutary warning that ‘modern applications of the study of rhetoric to medieval historiography are often reduced to protracted bouts of trope-spotting’,⁶⁰ I nonetheless asked Rev Dr Anthony Cross, a member of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Oxford, to examine some of the major passages by Wendover on warfare (and on which *BCA* draws heavily) for biblical borrowings. He identified only one passage which contained these, concerned with ravaging.⁶¹ Even this rare section of lifting from the bible does not automatically preclude its veracity in a broader sense, as I argue in the book and elsewhere, with Wendover’s accounts and explanations on ravaging being corroborated by Ralph of Coggeshall. Wendover proves himself capable of some extremely accurate and authentic accounts of targeted ravaging.⁶² A high number of brief biblical phrases in chronicles may indicate a literary and moralistic device rather than an obfuscation of the facts

⁵⁹ M. Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, Manchester, 2011, p. 449.

⁶⁰ Kempshall, *Rhetoric*, p. 7.

⁶¹ *BCA*, p. 157 (RW, ii, pp. 165-6: ‘On the various types of suffering endured by the Christian people’). My thanks to Rev Dr Anthony Cross for identifying some biblical borrowings in this passage and excluding the others. Here Wendover has quoted Exodus 10.5 and 10.15 for the locusts references and echoed Matthew 10.21 for brothers being sold into torture by their brothers (Matthew has ‘brother shall deliver up the brother to death’). Also, but very indirectly, there is Matthew 23.35 for priests being killed at the altar. Interestingly, it is worth noting here that there may well be elements of martyrology introduced into the passage, as with the description of those roasted on gridirons, the fate of St Laurence. For a discussion of the torture of St Laurence, see L. Tracy, *Torture and Brutality in Medieval Literature: Negotiations of National Identity*, Cambridge, 2011, pp. 45-7.

⁶² *BCA*, pp. 158-9; S. McGlynn, *By Sword and Fire: Cruelty and Atrocity in Medieval Warfare*, London, 2008; McGlynn, ‘Roger of Wendover’, pp. 104-7.

that follow or a covering up of ignorance. A closer study on Wendover in this area would be profitable, but from my reading, his accounts of the warfare of the invasion do not share anything like the level of frequency of biblical borrowings in such medieval texts as, say, *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, *Gesta Frederici I Imperatoris* or the chronicles of Otto of St Blasien, Magnus of Reichersberg and many, many others.⁶³ This is all the more surprising for Wendover given that monastic understandings of the ‘representations of warfare in the Bible must begin with the Psalms’: ‘In monasteries following the Benedictine *Rule* [i.e. Wendover’s] to the letter, forty psalms were sung each day, but some houses developed traditions incorporating over one hundred’.⁶⁴ (So we may expect Psalms to be heavily recited in the *Flores*.) There may be a number of reasons for this relative lack of borrowing.

As stated above, Wendover is not ranked amongst the best educated chroniclers; he may well have been a modest man with much to be modest about. A more likely explanation may lie with Kempshall’s point above on this being a period of transition. But most likely of all, I would posit, is simply that Wendover had little need to pad out his work as he was so well informed in the first place. Similarly, his contemporary in southern France, the Cistercian monk Peter of Les Vaux-de-Cernay, while frequently drawing heavily from the Bible, does not do so for his detailed accounts of warfare in the Albigensian crusade in his *Historia Albigensis*:⁶⁵ his narration of the warfare, sieges and battles owe very little to the Bible. Like Peter, Wendover was well-placed and well-connected and thus able to offer original accounts rather than simply serve up reactualizations of sacred events; he had no need to borrow material for his narrative.

⁶³ See the following editions for these: S. Barton and R. Fletcher (eds), *The World of El Cid: Chronicles of the Spanish Reconquest*, Manchester, 2000; Otto of Freising, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, ed. C. Mierow, Toronto, 1994 [1953]; G. Loud (ed.), *The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa: The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick and Related Texts*, Farnham, 2010. See also H. Nicholson, ‘*Martyorum Collegio Sociendas haberat*: Depictions of the Military Orders’ Martyrs in the Holy Land, 1187-1291’, in John and Morton, *Crusading and Warfare*, pp. 101-4.

⁶⁴ Allen-Smith, *War and the Making of Monastic Culture*, p. 23. The whole of ch. 1, ‘Encountering War in the Scriptures and Liturgy’ (pp. 9-38), is instructive here.

⁶⁵ Peter of Les Vaux-de-Cernay, *The History of the Albigensian Crusade*, ed. and trans. W. Sibly and M. Sibly, Woodbridge, 1998.

So while there are various elements competing in Wendover's work, when it comes to the warfare of the invasion, it seems that factual interest in events around him dominated his writing more than other concerns or agendas. Excessive and unnecessary concern over Wendover has tended to make many scholars hold him to a higher standard than they perhaps maintain for other chronicles they mine. As Kelly DeVries concludes in his piece on recreating military history from the chronicles: 'We must not "throw out the baby with bath water"' .⁶⁶

With Wendover, we must allow that his close physical proximity to events and his close connections to both the rebel and royalist sides across the occupation zone make him an invaluable rather than suspect commentator on the invasion. As such, he is the single most important source for the invasion of England.

The Vernacular Sources

There is less dispute over the significance for military history of the vernacular sources, the Anonymous of Béthune and the *History of William Marshal*, and so they need not detain us to the same extent as Wendover, especially as vernacular texts have also received scholarly assessment of their depiction of warfare and are not as contentious as Wendover.⁶⁷

Vernacular sources are more readily viewed as bringing us closer to the reality of the fighting. As such, the Old French *History of William Marshal*,⁶⁸ the earliest extant biography in a European vernacular, is a highly regarded verse source (although its anonymous author – possibly John – is effusively panegyric about his subject and hence partisan). In an influential article, John Gillingham has dissected the poem for its valuable insights into the

⁶⁶ DeVries, 'The Use of Chronicles', p. 15.

⁶⁷ See C. Hanley, *War and Combat: 1150-1270: The Evidence of the Old French Literature*, Woodbridge, 2003. For two extremely useful studies of individual, near contemporaneous vernacular sources from the second half of the twelfth century, see: M. Strickland, 'Arms and the Man: War, Loyalty and Lordship in Jordan Fantosme's Chronicle', *Medieval Knighthood*, iv, 1992; M. Bennett, 'Wace and Warfare', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, xi, 1989.

⁶⁸ Meyer's French three-volume French edition (Paris, 1891-1901) is now superseded by A. Holden, D. Crouch and S. Gregory (eds), *The History of William Marshal*, 3 vols., London, 2002-6. I reviewed this work in *History*, 89 (294), 2004.

warfare of the time.⁶⁹ In *BCA*, I highlight some of the revealing detail furnished by the poem, as in a rare account of sailors preparing their fleet for battle.⁷⁰ However, I also draw attention to the poem's often redundant verbosity and that the number of pages expended on an event such as the battles Lincoln does not, on closer scrutiny, exceed in quantity Wendover's accounts.⁷¹ As noted above, the biography corroborates some of Wendover's observations on Lincoln. (Throughout *BCA*, I also draw attention to where the main sources differ over episodes.) Furthermore, the preference of the poem for chivalric derring-do can limit its utility as an account of the larger combat or engagement that is occurring.⁷² As Richard Abels has recently noted in his article on cultural representations of warfare with reference to the thirteenth-century Maciejowski bible, what the chivalric audience of patrons and knights

demanded was not a representation of warfare as they had experienced it, warfare dominated by the drab business of pillaging villages, burning fields, and laying sieges to castles, but the type of warfare that validated and legitimated them as a military elite, one in which battles predominated and knights remained supreme.⁷³

There are clear, repeated elements of this focus on chivalric warfare in the *History*. One example comes from the aftermath of the battle of Lincoln: Wendover is especially valuable here as he describes the terrible sack of the city; the *History* ignores this entirely, concentrating instead on the capture and ransom value of knights, with the briefest of references to the opportunity 'to win booty'.⁷⁴ Thus while, as Gillingham has observed, 'the

⁶⁹ J. Gillingham, 'War and Chivalry in the *History of William Marshal*', *Thirteenth Century England*, ii, 1988.

⁷⁰ *BCA*, p. 227.

⁷¹ *BCA*, p. 208.

⁷² Eg. see the biography's account of the Errol Flynn-like activity of Reginald Payn at the battle of Sandwich: *BCA*, p. 231.

⁷³ R. Abels, 'Cultural Representations of Warfare in the High Middle Ages: The Morgan Picture Bible', in John and Morton, *Crusading and Warfare*, p. 14.

⁷⁴ *HWM*, ii, pp. 352-4; *BCA*, pp. 215-16. For a further relevant discussion of chivalry, also see: L. Ashe, 'William Marshal, Lancelot, and Arthur: Chivalry and Kingship', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, xxx, 2008; Hanley, *War and Combat*, pp. 66-70, 79-80. For a recent discussion of the biography, see: *HWM*, iii, pp. 3-41, especially the commentary at pages 37-41; Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, pp. 82-6; D. Crouch, *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire, 1147-1219*, Harlow,

vernacular brings us closer than Latin to the thoughts and actions of soldiers',⁷⁵ it does not necessarily bring us closer to a complete portrayal of medieval warfare. However, William Marshal was indisputably at the heart of the events of 1215-17, especially as regent of England following John's death in October 1216; as such the text is undoubtedly of great value for its political and military content.⁷⁶

The Anonymous of Béthune's *Histoire des Ducs de Normandie et des Rois d'Angleterre*⁷⁷ is another Old French text, replete with all the consistently inconsistent vocabulary and grammar that this entails. Probably written before 1225, and perhaps as early as 1220, the Anonymous is interesting in that it provides the perspective of a writer, frequently an eye-witness, serving a foreign lord who in turn served in King John's army from 1215. Although a vernacular source, it is less prone than the *History* to engage in blatantly chivalric-tinged accounts. The author has received significant scholarly attention in America from Gabrielle Spiegel,⁷⁸ but less attention in the UK until John Gillingham's

pp. 3-8; D. Crouch, 'Writing a Biography in the Thirteenth Century: The Construction and Composition of the "History of William Marshal"', in D. Bates, J. Crick and S. Hamilton (eds), *Writing Medieval Biography: Essays in Honour of Frank Barlow*, Woodbridge, 2006; Hanley, *War and Combat*, pp. 58-9, 74-5, 90-1, which explores military aspects further. For some general context, see R. Kaeuper, 'Literature as Essential Evidence for Understanding Chivalry', *Journal of Medieval Military History*, v, 2007.

⁷⁵ See n. 38 above.

⁷⁶ As Warren noted, the work 'sometimes ... takes us into John's presence'. W. Warren, *King John*, London, 1978, p. 7.

⁷⁷ F. Michelet (ed.), *Histoire des Ducs de Normandie et des Rois Angleterre*, Paris 1840. I have also used the Anonymous' shorter *Chroniques des Rois de France* in *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, vol. xxiv, ed. L. Delisle, part two. This offers some variations from the *Histoire* (noted in my book) but otherwise follows it closely. An updated edition of the *Histoire des Ducs* is needed. Since the publication of *BCA*, I have been in frequent contact with Janet Shirley, a translator of Old French work texts, following my suggestion to her that an English translation would be tremendously useful for scholars and students. She has very recently completed a draft translation and we have been discussing plans for taking it further.

⁷⁸ G. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France*, Berkeley, 1993; G. Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography*, Baltimore, 1997. Prior to this the work received relatively little attention, barely receiving a mention in *Studies in Medieval French*, (no ed.). Oxford, 1967, at pp. 195, 211.

article, ‘The Anonymous of Béthune, King John and Magna Carta’.⁷⁹ To the content of these I would add that the Anonymous’ account of the invasion from a military perspective is of special value, not least for the wealth of detail and names given in the French invasion fleet preparations in 1216 and, to a lesser extent, the reinforcement fleet of 1217.⁸⁰ The Anonymous’ continental contacts allows him to offer some personal views of events in Louis’ camp, as at Marlborough and Rye,⁸¹ and he provides the most detailed accounts of some actions, as at Rye, and the only account of a sortie from Dover in 1217.⁸² His text is all the more valuable as the author tends to focus on events in the south, where his lord seems to have operated and where he was in the middle of events; thus I think it important to highlight that even the battle of Lincoln, the biggest land set-piece of the invasion, is not covered as he was not present there. This reinforces his credibility as a source for events covered in *BCA*, as the scholarly consensus indicates.⁸³

⁷⁹ J. Gillingham, ‘The Anonymous of Béthune, King John and Magna Carta’, in J. Loengard (ed.), *Magna Carta and the England of King John*, Woodbridge, 2010. See pp. 28-29 and accompanying notes for scholarship on the Anonymous, although missing here is P. Eley, ‘History and Romance in the *Chronique des ducs de Normandie*’, *Medium Aevum*, vol. 68 no. 1, 1999. More recently, see: G. Fedorenko, ‘The Language of Authority? The Source Texts for the Dual Chronicles of the “Anonymous of Béthune” (fl. c.1220) and the Evolution of Old French Prose Historiography’, in J. Dresvina and N. Sparks, *Authority and Gender in Medieval and Renaissance Chronicles*, Newcastle, 2012; G. Fedorenko, ‘The Thirteenth-Century *Chronique de Normandie*’, *Anglo-Norman Studies*, xxxv, 2013.

⁸⁰ *BCA*, pp. 164-5, 225.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 202, 196-7.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁸³ David Crouch emphasizes his presence in England for the wars: D. Crouch, ‘Baronial Paranoia in John’s Reign’, in Loengard, *Magna Carta*, pp. 46-7 and n. 3. John Gillingham says the *Histoire des Ducs* has ‘from May 1213 onwards the bones of some strictly contemporary narratives, some of them composed before John’s death’: Gillingham, ‘The Anonymous of Béthune’, pp. 33-4. Gabriel Spiegel judges the Anonymous’ work to be a ‘completely original account of events during the reign of King John’ and notes that he ‘achieves real value [...] as a narrator of history’: Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, pp. 232, 243. Nicholas Vincent believes he had ‘close access to sources at court’: N. Vincent, ‘Isabella of Angoulême: John’s Jezebel’, in S. Church (ed.), *King John: New Interpretations*, Woodbridge, 1999, p. 200. Most recently in 2015, David Carpenter praises the Anonymous for his

3. Strategy and Warfare

As *BCA* is primarily concerned with providing the first military narrative of the French invasion of England, it provides the most comprehensive account of the warfare this entailed.⁸⁴ It offers the most detailed reconstructions and analysis of such neglected military events as, among others, the engagements at Berkhamstead, Winchester and, especially, Rye, as well as explaining the sheer extent of the invasion and occupation. I demonstrate the overlooked importance of La Roche-au-Moine as a significant engagement.⁸⁵ For the siege of Château-Gaillard I offer the only analysis of the non-combatants issue.⁸⁶ For Bouvines,⁸⁷ I argue that elements from the accounts of Wendover and especially the Anonymous are plausible and explain why the Count of Boulogne's infantry tactics were probably not as novel as is thought.⁸⁸ For Rochester,⁸⁹ I challenge Turner's claim that it demonstrated John's ability in military leadership and explain Savary de Mauléon's restraint of John's intended

'superb and unique account of the Magna Carta period', from an author 'who had every reason to be well informed': Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, pp. 78-9 (pp. 78-81 for the full discussion).

⁸⁴ Full-length studies of campaigns for the period covered by *BCA* are extremely rare, F. Powicke's study of the loss of Normandy in 1204 being a notable exception: F. Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, 2nd edn., Manchester, 1961. Arthur Lyons' study of the Capetian conquest of Anjou is primarily a political study, containing little military detail: A. Lyons, 'The Capetian Conquest of Anjou', unpublished PhD thesis, John Hopkins University, 1976. Two thorough-going military studies of the Albigensian Crusade offer choices for comparing contemporary campaigns: L. Marvin, *The Occitan War: A Military and Political History of the Albigensian Crusade, 1209-18*, Cambridge, 2008; S. McGlynn, *Kill Them All: Cathars and Carnage in the Albigensian Crusade*, Stroud, 2015. (The author's original, preferred title was *Kill Them All: Cathars, Crusaders and Conquest – A Military History of the Albigensian Crusade*.)

⁸⁵ *BCA*, pp. 94-100.

⁸⁶ *BCA*, pp. 42-59, non-combatants at pp. 49-55.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 94-114.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 105, 106, 107 (and n. 297), 113, 162.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-8.

fate for the garrison.⁹⁰ Also presented for the first time is an account and discussion of the stalling of the post-Sandwich peace talks which led to Louis planning a Muret-style break-out action in September 1217.⁹¹ Therefore there is little need to replicate the material here, other than to draw together some features of note to reveal what the invasion reveals about the warfare of its time.⁹² It should be stated at the outset that, when compared to contemporaneous texts on the Albigensian Crusade, the sources on the invasion are generally less comprehensive on tactical details and innovations. Where I found them to be of especial interest is on strategy, the impact of war and naval matters.

One of the book's most important conclusions is on grand strategy which will hopefully encourage a reappraisal of undue criticism on Richard I's foreign policy. Richard has often been criticized for being an absentee king.⁹³ The orthodox position before my research was that Richard cared for his Angevin lands more than his kingdom, exploiting and even bankrupting the latter to serve the former. However, as I argue in the book, Richard's wars in France were part of the age-old continental balance of power problem.⁹⁴ As is borne out by the book and the invasion, fighting the French in France was far less costly and incomparably less destructive than fighting the French in England. When John lost his lands in France, the French were able to turn their thoughts to invading England. A full-scale attempt had to be countered in 1213 even before Louis' expedition in 1216. As David Carpenter has noted, by the end of the war 'virtually no regular revenue was coming into the centre'.⁹⁵ Thus *BCA*, in demonstrating the extent and scale of the invasion and its impact, challenges criticisms of Richard's wars in France. As far as I can ascertain, I am the first to

⁹⁰ Ibid, pp. 147-8.

⁹¹ Ibid, pp. 235-6.

⁹² See *BCA*, p. 224, n. 31 for a list of critical works surveying medieval military historiography and the scholarly debates surrounding the subject. To this can be added S. McGlynn, 'Recent Research on Medieval Warfare', *European Review of History – Revue Européenne d'Histoire*, vol. 20 no. 1, 2013.

⁹³ Appleby sums it up thus: 'He never reigned over England [...]. Richard took little interest in England; he stayed in the country less than six months': J. Appleby, *England Without Richard, 1189-1199*, London, 1965, p. 223.

⁹⁴ *BCA*, pp. 21-2. See the accompanying endnotes for the literature.

⁹⁵ Carpenter, *Minority of Henry III*, p. 51. See ch.3 of this book for the aftermath of the invasion and its financial effect on the kingdom. See also J. Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*, 2nd edn., London, 2001, p. 109.

make this point about Richard's strategy. John Gillingham, the foremost authority on Richard, has commented to me that this is an original and important observation.

BCA, in emphasizing the primacy of military events over political and diplomatic ones, also shows how the encounter at Damme in 1213 might support this line by the English pre-emptive strike across the Channel.⁹⁶ Both the English and the French obviously wished to carry the fight into their enemy's territory and sought defence through offence. Civil war and unrest, such as in England from 1215 especially, offered great strategic military opportunities for foes.⁹⁷ The book also addresses the various geo-political alliances affecting strategy, such as the Anglo-German coalition forged by Richard and renewed (at great expense) by John, culminating in the battle of Bouvines, and, most obviously, the Franco-baronial alliance.⁹⁸ I also draw neglected attention to Simon Langton's financial association with Prince Louis since 1213, suggesting long-term planning in Franco-baronial co-operation and military planning.⁹⁹

As for campaign strategy, the invasion clearly and repeatedly demonstrates the dominance of castles and fortified towns to overall strategic objectives: the war was based on the taking and holding of fortifications. This rendered the war a series of sieges. But the book

⁹⁶ *BCA*, pp. 88-92. Despite John's submission to the papacy – motivated by his desire to avoid a French invasion – Philip pressed ahead with his plans in 1213, ignoring papal instructions to abandon the enterprise. Historians make much of John's submission to the papacy in 1213 as a 'master-stroke', 'a brilliant manoeuvre', 'stroke of genius', 'prudent and wise', affording much weight to the Barnwell / Crowland's annalist's oft-quoted opinion that no one 'would dare attack him or invade his lands now'. The influential Barnwell / Crowland annalist was wrong. For these quotes from historians, see Turner, *King John*, p. 169; the Barnwell quote can also be found in *BCA*, p. 89. As I show in *BCA*, Philip II's reconciliation with Ingeborg – and hence the Church – in April 1213 is an overlooked factor in John's submission to the papacy the following month, as this made invasion all the more likely (p. 90).

⁹⁷ Eg, the French declared war on England during the risings of 1549; French troops joined with rebels against Henry IV (marked by the Battle of Shrewsbury in 1403); and, of course, Henry V availed of civil war in France to initiate his reconquest of Normandy. Additionally, Colin Veach's research published this year on John's problems in Ireland suggests to me the possibility that rebellion there may well have provided inspiration for the baronial uprising in England: C. Veach, 'King John and Royal Control in Ireland: Why William de Briouze had to be Destroyed', *English Historical Review*, vol. 129 no. 540, 2015.

⁹⁸ *BCA*, pp. 93, 142-3, *passim*.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

shows that the dominating, lengthy sieges of Lincoln, Rochester, Dover and Windsor were the exceptions; most sieges were relatively short-lived (the second siege of Rochester, when it was retaken by the French, lasted less than a week).¹⁰⁰ This resulted in a remarkable fluidity of troop movements that one might not expect with the static image of siege warfare. We see this constantly throughout the campaign, as forces moved from one stronghold to another, responding to enemy movements as well as changing priorities of campaign objectives. The fluidity was made all the greater by tides of military momentum and the resulting transfers of loyalty that these prompted. The book records these military movements with dates and personnel involved where known to chart for the first time as fully as the sources allow the chronology of the invasion. This was one of the most challenging tasks of the research, reflecting the fluidity of warfare based on strongholds.

All involved recognized the central role of castles; it was the rebels' deficiency in this area that necessitated their need for a powerful foreign ally.¹⁰¹ Thus the greatest asset of the rebels and the French throughout over two years of war was their possession of the city and Tower of London, as the rebel military commander Robert Fitzwalter acknowledged.¹⁰² As a secure headquarters, London was used to bring in advance French forces prior to the invasion and as a refuge after the defeat at Lincoln. John's possible mistake in failing to besiege London and the minority war council's attitude to the capital are discussed in the book.¹⁰³ Guillaume le Breton states that Philip Augustus believed that his son's invasion of England failed because he was unable to take the key stronghold of Dover.¹⁰⁴ Access to London was a primary concern, hence the major siege of Rochester in late 1215, taken and lost again by John. The south coast ports were obviously vital to Franco-baronial interests and reinforcement routes from France, as is notably seen in the winter and spring of 1217 with the major but neglected encounter at Rye, the recapturing of southern territories on his return from France in May 1217, and naval activity in the Channel.¹⁰⁵ Lines of communication were also important to Scotland, allowing Alexander II to travel safely all the way down to Dover

¹⁰⁰ *BCA*, p. 169.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 142, 175.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 135. It was the military loss of London in May 1215 that forced John to Runnymede and the concession of Magna Carta the following month.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-1, 219, 234-5.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 176-7, 238.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 194-204

to pay homage to Louis as king of England. This Scottish progress through England shocked the English government for years to come.¹⁰⁶ Grand strategy is often not discernible in medieval warfare; the invasion fits into an established pattern of piecemeal advances centred on strongholds, in the hope that victories will initiate the all-important momentum which results in increasing numbers joining the ascendant force so as to share in the spoils of expected victory.¹⁰⁷

The invasion sits squarely with the battle avoidance strategy that medieval commanders usually ascribed to. As John France has recently written: ‘No wonder soldiers tended to avoid the field of honour when chance played such a great part’.¹⁰⁸ When King John is one of those medieval commanders, battle avoidance becomes even more probable, as he was quite unlike his brother Richard I when it came to styles of military leadership. John had avoided battle at La Roche-au-Moine in 1214,¹⁰⁹ and, no doubt anxious to circumvent another Hastings 1066, withdrew his forces at Thanet in May, 1216, allowing Louis to land unopposed.¹¹⁰ Given John’s deliberately evasive tactics – he spent months consolidating his position in the security of the West country until the start of autumn 1216 (and even then he is reported as deliberately avoiding direct contact with a French force near Windsor) – we do not know of Louis’ intentions regarding battle-seeking.¹¹¹ The one important exception to this is Louis’ plan to force a Muret-style battle to break out of London at the very end of the war, an episode that previously, as far as I can ascertain, has not received any attention by historians.¹¹² After John’s death, we might discern a change of royalist policy, if the Lincoln engagement was indeed a deliberate battle-seeking exercise rather a siege-lifting one.¹¹³

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 178-9, 182. The preponderance of rebel barons from East Anglia and the North facilitated Alexander’s movements (despite the network of royal castles), as did the fact that Robert de Ros and Eustace de Vescy were brothers-in-law of the Scottish king: *BCA*, pp. 129-30.

¹⁰⁷ As can be clearly seen in the back-and-forth movements in early 1217: *BCA*, pp. 194-204.

¹⁰⁸ J. France, *Warfare, Crusade and Conquest in the Middle Ages*, Farnham, 2014, p. xii

¹⁰⁹ *BCA*, pp. 94-100.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp.167-69.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 180-82. There is an indication that the French were seeking battle at Windsor in 1216: *BCA*, p. 181.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 235-36. Muret had occurred under similar circumstances only four years before; Louis’ close involvement with Simon de Montfort, victor at Muret, and the Albigensian Crusade, would have ensured his detailed knowledge of the famous battle.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 207.

The invasions therefore offers some evidence to support the orthodox view on the rarity of battles; sieges and ravaging dominated instead, and as to be expected. For the Magna Carta War there are two full-scale battles: the land engagement at Lincoln and the naval engagement off Sandwich. While both battles have received attention, the most detailed previous accounts were seriously dated, both being over a century old. For Lincoln, the book provides for the first time the full detailed military context and events leading up the battle (including Louis's spring return in 1217 with reinforcements and his campaign), as well as a full reconstruction of the battle itself.¹¹⁴ In addition, here I attempt to show the accuracy and value of Wendover's reporting; discuss the matter of the western gate; and draw attention to the sacking of the city in the aftermath of battle. But this was not a pitched battle in the open field such as Bouvines; like so many engagements, it arose from a siege situation and the combat predominantly took place within the confines of the castle and city walls. As the sole major land engagement of the invasion, it is futile trying to establish any broader patterns. The battle has received substantial coverage, so I need not dwell on it here other than to note some of its more interesting features I cover in the book: these include: army size and composition (including crossbowmen contingents); the role of intelligence gathering (and military mistakes that arise from poor intelligence); the royalist appeal to national pride; crossbowmen deployed to meet a possible cavalry charge; the order to be prepared to kill one's own horses to create a defensive position; command structures; the surreptitious placing of crossbowmen to reinforce the castle garrison; the targeting of horses rather than knights; the death of the French commander, the Count of Perche; the chivalric aspects attested by the Latin and vernacular sources; and the attempt of the Franco-baronial forces to escape. With the hundreds of high-ranking prisoners taken to crushing effect on the French cause, Lincoln does prove how decisive a battle could be, with Louis consequently leaving the siege of Dover and holding up in London, awaiting reinforcements from France before he could make another major move.

For Sandwich,¹¹⁵ I provide for the first time the detailed military context of events leading to the battle. Sandwich has obvious interest as the first major English naval battle to receive close attention from contemporary writers.¹¹⁶ Here I again attempt to show Wendover's utility in corroborating numbers from the more favoured account by the *History*

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 200-18, with the battle starting at p. 208.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 219-234, with the battle starting at p. 226.

¹¹⁶ The battle of Damme in 1213 was joint naval-land victory for the English.

of *William Marshal*; challenge the views of one historian on the nature of naval warfare in the period; and offer a detailed account of the death of the French admiral, Eustace the Monk (having explored in unique depth his earlier roles in French fleet preparations).¹¹⁷ The sources I use for the battle reveal an unusually detailed account of sailors preparing the English fleet; the tactics involved, including the use of bowmen and, famously, lime powder; and the bloody nature of maritime warfare.¹¹⁸ The invasion, and occupation of the south coast including the Cinque ports that pledged loyalty to Louis, seriously disrupted England's system of naval organisation; after the English victory at Lincoln, the Cinque ports were able to exact further concessions from the government in return for full support of the royalist cause when the next crisis loomed in the summer with the imminent arrival of Louis' reinforcement fleet.¹¹⁹

An important observation that the book makes on the battle is the perceived supremacy (from both English and French contemporary writers) of the English in naval warfare, long before the Spanish Armada. As the focus of English defence shifted from land to sea after the battle of Lincoln, I include extremely rare accounts of interesting English naval activity in the Channel at this time.¹²⁰ I also note that the battle of Sandwich was a clear English versus French affair as there was no baronial assistance to the French here. Following on from the book, I have since argued for the possibility that Sandwich may be the most important English naval victory prior to the Battle of the Atlantic.¹²¹ The more famous Armada and Trafalgar were arguably not so immediately critical: both were fought to prevent a landing and a planned invasion; but Sandwich was fought against the background of a large occupying force of French troops already based in London for over a year, allied with English

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 229 for the refutation of naval tactics merely replicating a cavalry charge.

¹¹⁸ Following on from the information on ships and army sizes in the invasion sources, I am currently researching fleet sizes and the number of ships required to transport armies. Preliminary findings indicate strongly that there is consistency between the average number of fighting men a ship could carry for the Norman invasion in 1066 and the 1216 invasion, this figure only slightly increasing for the fourteenth-century expeditions to France, with figures for the latter as indicated in C. Lambert, *Shipping the Medieval Military: English Maritime Logistics in the Fourteenth Century*, Woodbridge, 2011, and G. Cushway, *Edward III and the War at Sea: The English Navy, 1327-1377*, Woodbridge, 2011.

¹¹⁹ *BCA*, p. 226-7.

¹²⁰ Eg, *BCA*, pp. 226 and 197 (pre-Lincoln).

¹²¹ S. McGlynn, 'England's Medieval Trafalgar', *BBC History Magazine*, July 2013.

rebel forces, and with first-hand experience of fighting in England during that time. The matter of whether the royalists sought a naval battle or were merely trying to prevent the French from landing is open to question.

BCA also discusses in detail for the first time a third, very-much forgotten engagement: that at Rye in early 1217.¹²² Although arising from a siege, the combat is actually an extremely interesting joint land and naval encounter, notable for its rare description of tactics and sophisticated, large-scale operations involving modified ships, naval blockade, a naval collision and ship-to-shore fighting, as well as for reports of disagreements within the French camp.

The invasion shows how the war, like most conflicts in medieval Europe, centred on sieges, and thus conforms to the orthodoxy of medieval military scholarship, while also showing that this actually meant surprisingly fluid, rather than static, troop movements and warfare. While the sieges of Rochester, Dover and, to a lesser degree, Windsor, have received previous attention, I have, to the best of my knowledge, provided here the most detailed account of the first and added a little detail to the second and third,¹²³ while also highlighting a skirmish outside of London.¹²⁴ For Dover and Windsor, an important contribution once again is the first detailed military context provided by the book, not least in its recording of troop movements. Other than affirming ravaging as a diversionary tactic (see below), the accounts of the invasion's sieges do not add anything substantially new on siege warfare itself (as opposed to strategy already discussed) – in this regard the contemporaneous Albigensian Crusade offers far more in interesting and innovative details of siege combats – but its comprehensive accounts of sieges constructed from all the relevant sources will hopefully be of value to some historians, as these accounts offer considerable details on many aspects of siege warfare. This is most important for the numerous smaller-scale sieges neglected in the shadow of Dover and Rochester; *BCA* attempts to include all those mentioned in the sources as being involved in the war (including giving due consideration to military operations in Winchester, which hitherto have also lacked attention) and, crucially, to place them in the complex narrative of events for the first time. The preponderance of sieges during the war confirms the expected conventions of siege warfare: negotiations

¹²² *BCA*, pp. 194-7.

¹²³ Eg, *BCA*, p. 201 for the attack on the French camp at Dover; and a skirmish outside Windsor, p. 181.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

(Tonbridge, Castlethorpe, Marlborough, Berkhamstead, Hertford), tunnels and mining (Rochester, Dover and Winchester), sorties (Odiham, Dover, Berkhamstead), castles holding out in towns (Lincoln, Winchester), abandonment of castles (Reigate, Norwich, Orford), preemptive dismantling of defences (Portchester, Marlborough, Chichester), refortification of damaged defences (Winchester), storm attempts (Dover) and aspects of life in siege camps (Rochester, Dover, Winchester and Berkhamstead). As might be expected, there are frequent references to crossbowmen in the garrisons (and also in field armies, placed in the vanguard while on the march). Siege machines were habitually deployed, but not the trebuchet, which the anonymous of Béthune notes for its novelty in the conflict.¹²⁵ Thus a study of the invasion offers much important detail on sieges (mainly from Wendover, as we might expect, given the chivalric interests of the vernacular writers), but nothing that is unexpected or innovative (except, it could be argued, Wendover's account of the sack of Lincoln).

More interesting is how the invasion demonstrates the use of ravaging as a diversionary tactic to draw besieging forces away from fortified places.¹²⁶ I place great emphasis on this. Another notable, connected, feature of the invasion provided by Wendover, again showing his value as a non-chivalric source, is the clearer understanding provided of the impact of ravaging on non-combatants. The invasion clearly shows that ravaging was not simply a blunt weapon but could be a highly targeted one and used for diversion.¹²⁷ The invasion allows *BCA* to offer original insights into, and analysis of, the impact of ravaging during this war. I show how extensive the impact of ravaging associated atrocities such as torture was; in arguing that these were not randomized acts of violence in the social breakdown of war, I offer detailed, practical explanations as to their purpose: financial remuneration for troops and strategic intimidation of the populace being foremost. I challenge those that downplay the extent of such atrocities, especially in a 'chivalrous' war between

¹²⁵ *BCA*, p. 201. Michael Prestwich noted in his review of *BCA* that there is perhaps a missed opportunity here to discuss new trebuchet technology. On siege machines, it is perhaps worth noting here that I have found that *The Revised Medieval Latin Word List* (compiled by R. Lathan, Oxford, 1983) is incorrect to state that the usage of *scrofa* (sow) in England first appears c.1250; Wendover employs the term for the siege of Avignon in 1226 (RW, ii, p. 311).

¹²⁶ *BCA*, pp. 181-2 offer examples.

¹²⁷ Eg, *BCA*, pp. 180-2, 205. I have since investigated further the tactic of targeted ravaging: S. McGlynn, "'Sheer Terror' and the Black prince's Grand *Chevauchée* of 1355", in L. Villalon and D. Kagay (eds), *The Hundred Years War. Part Three: Further Considerations*, Leiden, 2013.

England and France, presenting evidence of even cemeteries being ransacked. In providing this original research I emphasize the impact on non-combatants and also show how these responded when the opportunity arose.¹²⁸ Here I also stress the role of Wendover and the other Latin chroniclers, as the vernacular sources are quiet on this aspect of war; we only hear of atrocities against non-combatants during the war from monastic sources such as Ralph of Coggeshall at Ely¹²⁹ and Wendover. These accounts reinforce my point about the value of Latin sources; both writers, but especially and repeatedly Wendover, are extremely sensitive to the impact of war on non-combatants, something that is palpably of little concern to the more belligerently inclined vernacular writers, who, by way of example, do not discuss the sack of Lincoln.¹³⁰ Consequently I argue that not only has the extent of the war itself been underestimated, but so has its impact on the population.¹³¹

Of course, ravaging was not just a weapon but also a form of provisioning.¹³² The strong focus in *BCA* on this aspect of the invasion reveals the wide extent of ravaging and plunder, with the quest for money prompting many of the atrocities. Financial remuneration was important in troop motivation and retention (a major issue as we shall see below). The important role of logistics in the invasion is revealed on several occasions, including: in the much overlooked French fleet preparations in 1216 and 1217; in the royalist provisioning of

¹²⁸ For examples and discussions of ravaging, see *BCA* pp. 152-9, 181-3, 205-6, 216, 218. As discussed above, the key passages on ravaging have been examined by Rev Dr Anthony Cross for biblical borrowings, which prove to be very limited. Dr Balfour noted in his review of *BCA*, my argument on atrocity is 'well taken' (*Medieval Warfare*, vol. 2 no. 6, 2012, p. 54).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.153, 157.

¹³⁰ As discussed above, Coggeshall and Wendover were both geographically close to the events they describe and on occasion directly involved in them (the abbeys of Coggeshall and St Albans were both subjected to raids during the invasion). Wendover's account of Lincoln is both detailed and important: *BCA*, p. 216.

¹³¹ My findings on terror and atrocity in the invasion reflect very similar conclusions from research I have since undertaken in this area on the contemporaneous Albigensian Crusade: S. McGlynn, *Kill Them All*. This fits a well-established historical pattern in warfare – see S. McGlynn, 'War Crimes', in G. Martel (ed.), *Blackwell's Encyclopedia of War*, Oxford, 2012 – that continues to this day, as we are witnessing in Iraq and Syria: J. Harkin, 'Abandoned to Terror', *Prospect*, April, 2015; P. Cockburn, *The Rise of Islamic State: Isis and the New Sunni Revolution*, London, 2015, pp. xiii-xiv, 17, 132.

¹³² For a detailed discussion of ravaging in medieval warfare, see McGlynn, *By Sword and Fire*, pp. 195-244.

castles (as at Wallingford, Corfe, Wareham, Bristol and Devizes); in the rushed gathering of supplies by the rebels occupying Rochester; in the French and royalist depredations of St Albans; in the sortie against the provocative ‘market’ in the French siege camp at Dover; and in the supply gathering *chevauchées* by the French from London in the summer of 1217 (Bury St Edmunds being the one known target for these previously neglected operations). One of the most interesting and detailed examples of logistical problems comes from the overlooked combat at Rye, where Louis’ forces are blockaded by land and sea, and in terrible want of food, the burghers of the area having pre-emptively destroyed their mills.

The invasion reveals tantalizing insights into guerrilla warfare. The covert nature of the topic, especially for the medieval period, renders it a notoriously elusive area; however, in the resistance led by William of Kensham in the forest of the Weald and the South-East, we are provided with some interesting evidence of his actions and movements.¹³³ William, well-known to the royalist high command despite his lowly origins, co-ordinated ambushes on the French, severely harassed Louis’ men at Rye and enforced the land blockade there, launched a surprise attack on the French siege camp at Dover and attempted to contain French ravaging in the area.¹³⁴ William, given the sobriquet Willikin of the Weald at the time, receives attention from all of the three main sources of the invasion: all confirm his great effectiveness as a guerrilla leader of a large band of bowmen operating behind enemy lines from the cover of the forest.

The detailed account of the invasion also allows for a closer study of military leadership at this time. *BCA* clearly argues for John’s incompetence in this area, offering sustained material throughout to challenge Ralph Turner’s influential defence of John’s military ability.¹³⁵ As I have argued since for Philip Augustus, not being a chivalric figure

¹³³ *BCA*, pp. 179-80, 189, 195-6, 201, 204, 220.

¹³⁴ In *BCA* I suggest that William is, possibly, a potential candidate for the real-life inspiration of the Robin Hood legend (p. 179). Since then, I have researched William further and written the most detailed accounts of his activities: S. McGlynn, ‘The Real Robin Hood’, *History Today*, vol. 63 no. 3, 2013 (note the title was not my choice); ‘William of Kensham: Hero of the Resistance’, *Medieval Warfare*, vol. 3 no. 6, 2013.

¹³⁵ R. Turner, ‘King John’s Military Reputation Reconsidered’, *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 19, 1993. Turner excuses some of John’s defeats as being due to issues of personality and politics; *BCA* repeatedly shows how these were fundamental to military success and thus should not be considered separately or as mitigating factors. Turner does not have a fully-formed view of medieval warfare. He

such as Richard I or Henry V did not necessarily lead to a lack of military success.¹³⁶ Other commanders receive considerable attention, not least, of course, Louis himself. To the best of my knowledge, Louis has received no attention whatsoever as a military commander (and relatively little as a king), so the invasion allows *BCA* to offer original research here. His achievements in England were very considerable. I offer an evaluative summary of his English campaign¹³⁷ and reveal the problems of the Franco-baronial alliance in the field and internal arguments.¹³⁸ It was an impressive feat of Louis to keep the Franco-baronial alliance together throughout the invasion, despite squabbles over the spoils of war (as, for example, over the ownership of Marlborough castle). Other military leaders receiving attention in the book include William Marshal, Falkes de Bréauté, Hubert de Burgh, the William Longsword, William d'Albini and, more originally, Eustace the Monk and William of Kensham. These last two, especially William, are lesser well-known and receive original treatment: the former especially for his fleet preparations and activity at Rye; the latter, as we have just seen, for his guerrilla activity.

The invasion reveals interesting issues over troop retention and circulation. John and the royalists seem to have done better in this regard, possibly because the crown's coffers could better afford a steady and plentiful supply of mercenaries; John appointed the Templar Brother Roger to administer the finances of the continental influx.¹³⁹ For the French the situation was more acute, with continental lords and knights such as the powerful Robert de

cites Rochester as a great victory and a sign of his military ability, but I question this while arguing elsewhere that John largely had himself to blame for his defeats: *BCA*, pp. 61-2, 99-100, 123-30 (political failings), 147, 150-1, 156, 167, 180. I also offer the opinion of Robert of Auxerre (an author easily passed over for these events) that convincingly claims John lost his nerve when the invasion broke (p. 170).

¹³⁶ S. McGlynn, 'Philip Augustus: *Rex not-quite-so bellicosus?*' in S. McGlynn and E. Woodacre (eds), *The Image and Perception of Monarchy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Newcastle, 2014.

¹³⁷ *BCA*, pp. 238-41.

¹³⁸ Eg, *BCA*, pp. 171-3, 196-7.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 149. Not all mercenary transports made it to England: the mercenary captain Hugh de Boves and his large force all drowned en route from the Continent (p. 140). Another notable royalist loss occurred after John's death, when the mercenary commander Savary de Mauléon embarked for the Crusade (p. 193). For medieval mercenaries, see J. France (ed.), *Mercenaries and Paid Men: The Mercenary Identity in the Middle Ages*, Leiden, 2008.

Dreux and feudal contingents drifting back to their homes and seeking other opportunities in the Albigensian crusade in the south of France. As the annals of Dunstable noted, even by the autumn of 1216 ‘day by day the followers of the French dwindled’.¹⁴⁰ This created the added difficulty for Louis of trying to maintain the all-important momentum of success.¹⁴¹ Louis made a dangerous return to France in late winter 1216, partly on a recruitment drive. With the loss of so many baronial allies at Lincoln in May, he had to rely on his wife Blanche de Castile to organise large-scale reinforcements. There is an interesting prosopographical study to be made of the movement and careers of knights fighting in England and France in the early thirteenth century.¹⁴²

4. National Identity

Another issue which I believe the invasion sheds light on is the controversial one of national identity. I argue in the book that the invasion was a key factor in promoting English identity at this time, in a period which has received little recognition for this. Whereas it might be expected that modernist historians generally fail to recognise the emergence of national identity in the medieval period, it is also the case for some medievalists. Thus Nicholas Vincent believes that that one should not read back into the early thirteenth century ‘nationalist sentiments which are more appropriate to the nineteenth century’.¹⁴³ The whole

¹⁴⁰ *BCA*, p. 181.

¹⁴¹ Military success or failure went hand-in-hand with momentum. It worked both ways for royalists and French, eg: *BCA*, pp. 171, 221. The sweeping tide of momentum and the accompanying desertions and recruitments is seen very clearly during Louis’ absence from, and return to, England in early 1217 (pp. 197-203).

¹⁴² Between the conquest of Normandy, Bouvines, the Albigensian Crusade and the invasion of 1216-17, there is considerable scope for this.

¹⁴³ N. Vincent, *Peter des Roches*, Cambridge, 1996, p. 305. Very recently, however, there has been increasing scholarly interest in, and acceptance of, national identity throughout the Middle Ages and

area is muddled by obfuscating semantics, especially over the excluding phase ‘the modern nation state’. I stress here that I am merely making the case for the formation of English national identity to be taking place within a longer continuum, and not that this period sees the birth of such a phenomenon.¹⁴⁴ Later thirteenth-century England is more usually seen as the time when identity – and xenophobia – began to flourish in England,¹⁴⁵ although more

earlier. See, for example, two recent conferences: the TORCH conference in Oxford, April, 2015: ‘Identity, Ethnicity, and Nationhood before Modernity: Old Debates and New Perspectives’ (<http://torch.ox.ac.uk/sites/torch/files/publications/Oxford-Identity-Conference-Programme.pdf>) (unfortunately I was unable to attend as I was involved in a Magna Carta Carta conference at the same time); and, in May 2014 at the University of Warwick, ‘Nationalism and Patriotism, Ancient and Modern’ at which I gave a paper (http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/research/currentpgs/eportfolios/clrmab/nationalism_patriotism_conference/); the proceedings are to be published in 2016.

¹⁴⁴ See: S. McGlynn, ‘British Nationalism and Europe: A Medieval Comparison’, *Politics*, vol. 16 no.3, 1996; A. Smith, *National Identity*, London, 1991; P. Wormald, ‘Engla Lond: The Making of an Allegiance’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 7 no. 1, 1994; P. Wormald, ‘The Making of England’, *History Today*, vol. 45 no. 2, 1995; John Gillingham, ‘Henry of Huntingdon and the Twelfth-Century Revival of the English Nation’, *The English in the Twelfth Century* (and pages 93-162 for other relevant essays); J. Llobera, ‘State and Nation in Medieval France’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 7 no. 3, 1994; L. Scales and O. Zimmer (eds), *Power and Nation in European History*, Cambridge, 2005 (Part Two for the Middle Ages); L. Scales, ‘Identifying “France” and “Germany”: Medieval Nation-Making in Some Recent Publications’, *Bulletin of International Medieval Research*, 6, 2000; L. Scales, ‘Bread, Cheese and Genocide: Imagining the Destruction of Peoples in Medieval Western Europe’, *History*, vol. 92 no. 3, 2007; S. Forde, L. Johnson and A. Murray, *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, Leeds, 1995; M. Clanchy, *England and its Rulers*, pp. 173-89; A. Smith, ‘“Gastronomy or Geology? The Role of Nationalism in the Reconstruction of Nations”, *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 1 no. 1, 1995; S. Reynolds ‘How Different was England?’, *Thirteenth Century Studies*, vii, 1998, especially for governmental and judicial variations; E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, 1983; A. Smyth (ed.), *Medieval Europeans: Studies in Ethnic Identity and National Perspectives in Medieval Europe*, Basingstoke, 1998; Tracy, *Torture and Brutality in Medieval Literature: Negotiations of National Identity*, pp. 8-10; L. Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity: Authority and Crisis, 1245-1414*, Oxford, 2012.

¹⁴⁵ D. Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery: Britain, 1066-1284*, London, 2003, p. 354; M. Prestwich, *English Politics in the Thirteenth Century*, Basingstoke, 1999, pp. 84-94; M. Rubin, ‘Identities’, in R. Horrox and M. Ormrod (eds), *A Social History of England, 1200-1500*, Cambridge, 2006, p. 407.

focus is still devoted to the fourteenth century.¹⁴⁶ This overlooks earlier expressions of xenophobia and clear expressions of separate national identities, evident in mid-twelfth century England.¹⁴⁷

The later thirteenth-century emphasis on English national feeling and xenophobia tends to focus on courtly and episcopal intrusions into the English polity and underplays the role of war, arguably the single most important formative factor in forging national identity.¹⁴⁸ As Anthony Smith, leading light in the persuasive primordialist school of national identity and ethno-symbolism, has written, warfare is even more important than religion in

¹⁴⁶ Eg, see recently: M. Ormrod, 'Friend or Foe? Foreigners in England in the Later Middle Ages', *The Historian*, Winter 2-14/15; B. Lambert and M. Ormrod, 'Friendly Foreigners: International Warfare, Resident Aliens and the Early History of Denization in England, c.1250-c.1400', *English Historical Review*, vol. 130 no. 542, 2015.

¹⁴⁷ This applies even for English attitudes to Germans in their pre-national states (it was not all just Francophobia or, as Gillingham shows in *The English in the Twelfth Century*, dislike directed against the nations of the Celtic fringe). John of Salisbury railed angrily: 'Who appointed the Germans to be judges of the nations?': L. Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity*, p. 209 and B. Arnold, 'Germany and England, 1066-1453', in N. Saul (ed.), *England in Europe, 1066-1453*, London, p. 80, where John also refers to the Germans as 'brutal and headstrong'. I have used Arnold's translation here. Also see T. Reuter, 'John of Salisbury and the Germans' in M. Wills (ed.), *The World of John of Salisbury*, Oxford, 1984. And even though there were Anglo-German alliances, carefully and expensively nurtured by Richard and John, a defining feature of the German race was a consequence of war - the people's martial ferocity, *furor Teutonicus*: see Scales, *The Shaping of German Identity*, pp. 370-1. For a discussion of Scales' arguments on medieval German identity, see my review of his book in *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 21 no. 2, 2015. Björn Weiler shows that the English recognised this attribute of the Germans in the early thirteenth century: B. Weiler, *Kingship, Rebellion and Political Culture: England and Germany, c.1215-c.1250*, Basingstoke, 2007, p. 174 (see also p. xiii for a brief discussion of medieval historians' attitudes towards English exceptionalism and German *Sonderweg*).

¹⁴⁸ See, for example, B. Taithe and T. Thornton (eds), *War: Identities in Conflict, 1300-2000*, Stroud, 1998. War and identity are main themes in Smith, *National Identity*; J. Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd edn., Manchester, 1993; E. Shils, 'Nations, Nationalism and Civil Society', *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 1 no. 1, 1 1995. See J. Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, pp. 123-62, for the role of war within the British Isles on the formation of identity, and, taking the theme of war and national identity across a broader time span, S. McGlynn, 'National Identity in Early Medieval England, c.850-1217', in A. Peck (ed.), *Aspects of Nationhood: Ancient to Modern*, London, forthcoming 2016.

forging identity: ‘Not only does “war make the state (and the state makes war)”, as Tilly declared; it fashions ethnic communities not only from contestants but even from third parties across whose territories such wars are often conducted’.¹⁴⁹ Nowhere is it more formative than when one’s own land is being invaded; a case can be made, therefore, to see nascent English national identity as far back as the Viking invasions of Alfred the Great’s reign.¹⁵⁰

There are clear indications that national feeling was a force during the 1216 invasions. Already elements of anti-foreign (especially anti-foreign mercenary) sentiments were represented in Magna Carta in 1215, reflecting both patronage concerns and military ones.¹⁵¹ The French invasion drew these out further.¹⁵² *BCA* shows the extent of the invasion and occupation in England, with French troops ranging across much of the country. Both Roger of Wendover and the *History of William Marshal* attest to an awareness of Englishness and hatred of the French during 1216-17. In Spring 1217 Wendover watches the French plunder their way in front of his priory in the Vale of Belvoir: ‘everything was seized by these robbers, because the French infantry, who the filth and scum of their country, left nothing untouched’.¹⁵³ As Matthew Bennett has shown, foreign troops were not popular on English soil in the Stephen-Maud civil war; just as they received a ‘bad press’ then,¹⁵⁴ so they did in 1216-17.

¹⁴⁹ Smith, *National Identity*, p. 27. See also p. 166 where he states: ‘War in turn cemented both the state and its dominant ethnic population into the compact, territorially and legally unified nation’ (p. 166).

¹⁵⁰ The case is convincingly made in A. Smyth, ‘The Emergence of English Identity, 700-1000’, in Smyth, *Medieval Europeans*. See also Wormald’s work cited in n. 132.

¹⁵¹ *BCA*, p. 138. For a detailed study of the ripe atmosphere for English national identity in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, see S. McGlynn, ‘British Nationalism and Europe: A Medieval Comparison’, *Politics*, vol. 16 no. 3, 1996.

¹⁵² Just as, at the same time, the northern French invasion of Languedoc stirred up Occitan identity there (see McGlynn, *Kill Them All*), and, in the Far East, the Mongol invasion produced ‘a true national consciousness in Korea [...] leading to a nationalist movement’ (F. McLynn, *Genghis Khan: The Man Who Conquered the World*, London, 2015, pp. 233, 242; W. Henthorn, *Korea: The Mongol Invasions*, London, 1963, pp. 27-9).

¹⁵³ *BCA*, p. 206.

¹⁵⁴ Matthew Bennett, ‘The Impact of “Foreign” Troops in the Civil Wars of King Stephen’s Reign’, in Dunn, *War and Society*. The quote is on p. 96. Of special relevance here are the Flemings (pp. 102-6).

Wendover later declares that English forces in May 1217 were keen to fight ‘pro patria’,¹⁵⁵ echoing the call to ‘defend the land of England’ during the invasion threat of 1213.¹⁵⁶ William Marshal is reported as delivering a powerful pre-battle exhortation at Lincoln, calling on the troops to ‘defend our land’ against ‘those who have come from France to take [it] for themselves’; later in the year before Sandwich he repeats this refrain, warning that the French now ‘return to claim the land as theirs’.¹⁵⁷ Had I delved more assiduously into government records, I might have seen even the Pipe Rolls in 1217 portraying the war as one to ‘deliver England from the French’.¹⁵⁸ A poem written about the battle of Lincoln and composed just after it has clear patriotic overtones, talking of ‘the English nation’ being beset by the ‘black’ Scots, ‘legions of the French’ and ‘the inconstant Welsh’ threatening ‘the honour of the English’. Faced by the ‘degenerate’ French, it says ‘the English call up the strength of England’ to meet the challenge.¹⁵⁹

The ordinary English townspeople had a chance to exact their revenge on the French for their depredations after Lincoln, Wendover reporting that many of them ambushed and laid into the retreating French troops with clubs as they fled towards London.¹⁶⁰ William Marshal’s biographer derides the French for being overconfident about ‘having England in their hands’ and in saying ‘England was theirs and that the English should vacate their land’. He gloats with black humour over the death and misfortune over the French dead: ‘I saw a hundred of them eaten by dogs, men whom the English had killed between Rochester and Romsey. That was the only land they managed to keep’.¹⁶¹ Thus, notwithstanding the

¹⁵⁵ *BCA*, p. 207.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 206, 208.

¹⁵⁸ Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, p. 407.

¹⁵⁹ *BCA*, p. 209 and P. Coss (ed.). *Political Songs of England From the Reign of John to That of Edward II*, Cambridge, 1996 [1839], pp. 19-27. In *BCA* I did not make the most of this work and thus did not comment on its patriotic expressions.

¹⁶⁰ *BCA*, p. 218. It would be interesting here to apply Tracy’s findings in *Torture and Brutality in Medieval Literature: Negotiations of National Identity* to the invasion and the Latin chroniclers’ accounts of torture.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

baronial rebel contingent supporting Louis, there is frequent and clear delineation between the English on one side of the conflict and the French on the other.¹⁶²

An interesting additional aspect here, as seen above, is the clear sense from the sources that one way in which the English defined themselves was by their maritime skill. There a number of references to this. Wendover claims that the English navy was superior in ability to the French and that the English won the naval battle of Sandwich (a straight English versus French engagement) because ‘they were skilled in naval warfare’ while the French ‘were not used to it’.¹⁶³

One of the most influential scholars on the history of national identity is John Breuilly, especially for his seminal work *Nationalism and the State*.¹⁶⁴ The overlooked invasion of 1216 fits squarely into his important thesis. Early thirteenth-century England meets with Breuilly’s criteria for defining nationalism, despite being pre-modern.¹⁶⁵ Breuilly is right to consider nationalism as a form of politics which arises to oppose the state and which is manipulated to advance the interests of the ruling elites; but the state does not need to be, as he contends, modern: the Magna Carta war that began in 1215 can be interpreted as following these lines. Breuilly is also right in stressing the crucial role of military factors in the formation of nationalism; he sees the sixteenth-century and the threat of the Spanish Armada instrumental for England here. He argues that the lack of ideology in English nationalism before that time is explained by the fact that ‘there has been no foreign presence which could generate nationalist opposition’.¹⁶⁶ Of course, a widespread foreign presence is exactly what England did experience for eighteen months in 1216-17.

¹⁶² The primordialist sense of the foe as the ‘other’ extends back to the hunter-gatherer tribes because, argues, Christopher Coker, ‘we are hard-wired to be prejudiced against others and biased in favour of the in-group (people like us). We really are “wired” to distinguish ourselves from other people, even at the most prosaic level’: C. Coker, *Can War Be Eliminated?*, Cambridge, 2014, pp. 2, 102-3.

¹⁶³ See *BCA*, p. 228, 233. After the English victory at the port of Damme, Guillaume le Breton has Philip Augustus declare that the French ‘do not know the way of the sea’ (p. 233). The naval reputation of the English even extended to the Arab world: J. Gillingham, *Richard I*, London, 1999, p. 231.

¹⁶⁴ For an excellent historiographical survey of the national identity in history debate, see C. Emsley, P. Lawrence and M. Drake, *Creating Nations*, Milton Keynes, 2007, pp. 70-140.

¹⁶⁵ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, p.2.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 87. No wonder, then, that the English government tapped into existing nationalist feeling again in 1264 to mobilize huge numbers of the common folk against another expected French

5. Conclusion

Blood Cries Afar: The Forgotten Invasion of England 1216 sheds important light on political and military events associated with this overlooked expedition. The book offers some original work on Richard I's - and hence England's - foreign strategy, national identity, the chronicle of Roger of Wendover, neglected military events (such as La Roche-au-Moine, Winchester, Rye and Louis' planned breakout from London), leadership (especially for Louis) and various detailed aspects of warfare. But its single most notable contribution to scholarship is that it is the first study of the neglected 1216 invasion. It offers the first and only comprehensive account of all known military events connected to the invasion and the occupation in a detailed narrative reconstructed for the first time from the sources. In so doing it reveals the full scale and impact of this major military campaign. As such it fills an important gap in our knowledge of a truly momentous but overlooked period in English history.

invasion: D. Carpenter, 'English Peasants in Politics, 1258-1267' *Past and Present*, 136, 1992.

Invasion and national identity can be discerned in most wars; to give an example of this for a rarely studied area, see N. Housley: 'Christendom's Bulwark: Croatian Identity and the Response to the Ottoman Advance, Fifteenth to Sixteenth Centuries', *Transaction of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, xxiv, 2014, where Housley writes: 'There can be little doubt that the principal shaping force in Croatia's history in the fifteenth and sixteenth century was the Ottoman advance, and the response to that advance by Croats' (p. 149). His description of Croatia and of the impact of war on the country – 'much of the country became in effect a war zone' (p. 149) – similarly applies to England for the period 1216-17.