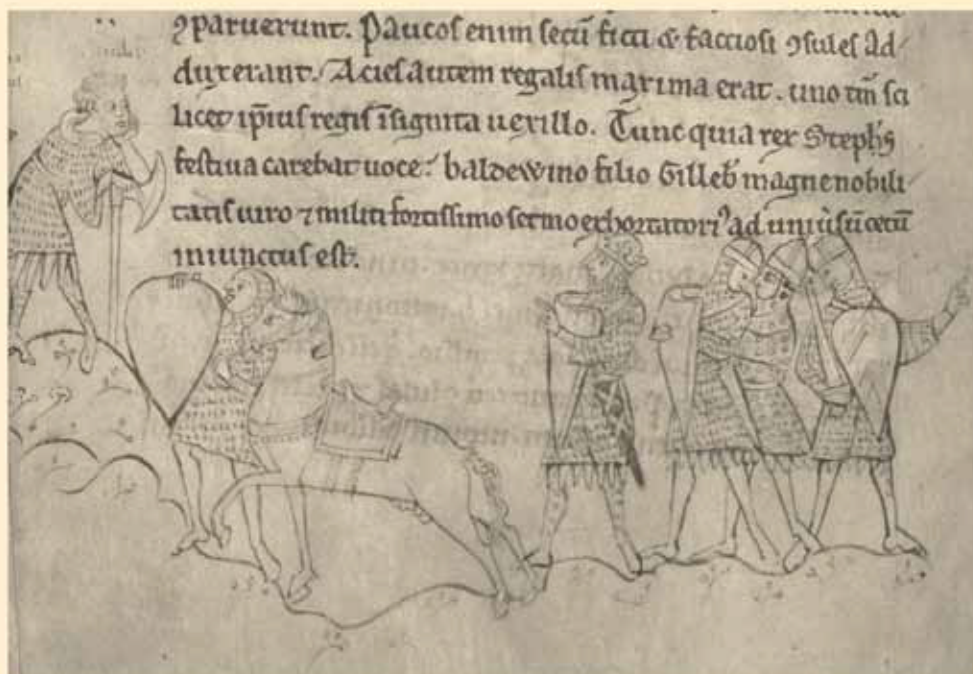


Rulership and Rebellion in the Anglo-Norman World, c.1066–c.1216

Essays in Honour of Professor Edmund King

Edited by
Paul Dalton and David Luscombe



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Edmund King

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Paul Dalton and David Luscombe

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List of Abbreviations

<i>ANS</i>	<i>Anglo-Norman Studies</i>
<i>BL</i>	British Library, London
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>GS</i>	<i>Gesta Stephani</i> , ed. and trans. K.R. Potter with new introduction and notes by R.H.C. Davis (Oxford, 1976)
<i>HH</i>	<i>Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, Historia Anglorum. The History of the English People</i> , ed. and trans. D. Greenway (Oxford, 1996)
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , ed. H.C.G. Matthew and B. Harrison (60 vols, Oxford, 2004)
<i>OV</i>	<i>The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis</i> , ed. and trans. M. Chibnall (6 vols, Oxford, 1969–80)
<i>PL</i>	J.-P. Migne, <i>Patrologia Latina</i> (221 vols, Paris, 1844–64)
<i>RRAN</i>	<i>Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154</i> , ed. H.W.C. Davis et al. (4 vols, Oxford, 1913–69)
<i>TNA</i>	The National Archives (of the United Kingdom), Kew
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
<i>VCH</i>	<i>Victoria County History</i>

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Introduction

Paul Dalton and David Luscombe

The importance of the themes of rulership and rebellion in the history of the Anglo-Norman world between 1066 and the early thirteenth century is incontrovertible. The power, government and influence of kings, queens and other lords pervaded and dominated society but were frequently challenged and resisted. We can note, for example, the English risings against William the Conqueror during the period 1068–75, the rebellions against King William Rufus in 1088 and 1095, the contest between King Henry I and Duke Robert Curthose for control of England and Normandy between 1101 and 1106, the protracted civil war of King Stephen's reign (1135–54), the rebellion against King Henry II in 1173–74 and, most famously, the baronial resistance to King John that brought about the issue of Magna Carta in 1215. Given the importance of rulership and rebellion in this period, it is unsurprising that much has been written about these subjects by historians. But while biographies of rulers, studies of the institutions and operation of central, local and seignorial government and works on particular aristocrats and political struggles abound, many major aspects of rulership and rebellion remain to be explored or further elucidated.

One of the aspects of rulership and rebellion which requires further investigation is the role of diplomacy and peacemaking in the process by which resistance to authority might be overcome. Paul Dalton seeks to add to our knowledge in this area by examining the negotiations in which William, duke of Normandy, persuaded English leaders to submit to his authority and accept him as king during his campaign through south-east England between the battle of Hastings (14 October 1066) and January 1067, a subject that has received far less attention than the military aspects of the Norman Conquest.¹ Although William frequently demanded that the English leaders accept his lordship, perform homage, swear oaths of loyalty, hand over hostages and money and accept the construction of castles, and threatened them with violence, he was also prepared to offer them good lordship in return for peaceful submission. This was reflected in his respect for the royal status and dignity of members of the Anglo-Saxon royal family; confirmation of urban privileges and the offices,

¹ Chapter 2.

dignities, lands and inheritances of English aristocrats; ecclesiastical patronage; offer of additional powers and favourable marriages to particular Englishmen; and wider promises to maintain peace and justice and rule the English well.

A profound reflection of the scale of the disaster that befell the English aristocracy during and after 1066, and of the ultimately ruthless and exploitative nature of Norman rulership, is to be found in the famous *Domesday Book*. The purpose of *Domesday Book* has been vigorously contested by modern scholars for more than a century, and in this volume David Roffe adds significantly to his recent contributions to this debate.² Roffe examines evidence from 'a late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century calendar of donors appended to a history of the church of St Peter, Gloucester' relating to this church's tenure of Nympsfield and to the ignorance of its abbot (Serlo) regarding the assessment of Nympsfield to the king's farm (by Roger de Berkeley) during the Domesday survey. Roffe argues that the abbot's ignorance 'is of considerable interest to an understanding of the procedure of the survey and the place of disputes within it'. It supports Roffe's view that a number of separate but interrelated surveys – of royal demesne and regalia and the geld, conducted by local officials, and then of baronial lands undertaken by 'special commissioners ... appointed to groups of counties' – were undertaken in 1086, and that, more broadly, the Domesday survey and the making of *Domesday Book* cannot be seen 'as a single monolithic process'. Roffe contends that Abbot Serlo's ignorance of Berkeley's actions reflects the exclusion of tenants-in-chief like Serlo from the 'private review of the royal fisc' undertaken by local officials in 1086, information from which was 'used to inform the survey of seigneurial estates which followed'; that the evidence relating to Nympsfield 'illuminates the way in which disputed tenure bubbled up in a series of enterprises in which they had no place'; and that the 'airing of questions of title was a by-product which was to prove of little interest to the GDB scribe and were apparently peripheral to the main business of the inquest'.

Kenji Yoshitake continues the theme of exploring the operation of central government addressed by Roffe.³ The Domesday survey and the compilation of *Domesday Book* relied heavily on Anglo-Saxon governmental institutions and processes, and after its completion the Book was deposited in the royal treasury in Winchester, the principal centre of Anglo-Saxon administration beyond the royal court. By the late twelfth century, however, Winchester's position as the key centre of fixed 'central government' had been superseded by that of London. Yoshitake challenges the view that the initial change of governmental emphasis from Winchester to Westminster occurred during King Stephen's reign (1135–54), especially after 1141, arguing that the transformation was already underway when William the Conqueror was

² Chapter 3; quotations at pp. 47, 48, 56, 60.

³ Chapter 4.

crowned king at Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1066, and continued with the holding of crown-wearing courts and the construction of a Great Hall at Westminster by William Rufus. Yoshitake also places a significantly different emphasis on the role of King Stephen's reign in further diminishing Winchester's importance. He notes that the citizens of London played an important part in Stephen's accession before he secured control of the royal treasury in Winchester, and shows that Stephen issued significantly more charters at Westminster than at Winchester before 1141, and far more charters at London than either Westminster or Winchester. Yoshitake observes that the chroniclers rarely report Stephen's activities at Winchester after 1142, and suggests that the elevation in the administrative significance of London, especially the Tower of London, from this time is also reflected in the increasing importance of Queen Matilda in royal government after c. 1140. He also suggests that the exchequer may have been convened at Winchester until 1141, but by 1154 and during the early years of Henry II's regime it met more frequently at Westminster and was distinct from the treasury at Winchester.

Three chapters in the volume cast new light on the much debated nature of baronial behaviour during Stephen's reign, a subject that has been strongly influenced by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's* famous depiction of treacherous barons taking advantage of a weak king, committing atrocities, filling the land full of castles held against him and using these fortresses to exploit the people.⁴ It was a view that helped to shape, for example, the negative depiction of baronial behaviour advanced by John Horace Round,⁵ and it continued to cast its shadow over the historiography of this subject long after Round's day. In the last 40 years, however, historians have advanced a more sophisticated and nuanced appreciation of aristocratic political conduct during 'the Anarchy'. One of the strands in this reappraisal is a more complex appreciation of the nature and limitations of allegiance between lords and their men.

Contributing to this theme, Kathleen Thompson examines a significant, but little explored, aspect of resistance to rulership that featured in the defection of King Henry I's illegitimate son, Robert, earl of Gloucester, from King Stephen's cause in 1138: Robert's formal defiance or renunciation of his obligations (*diffidatio*) to his lord the king.⁶ Noting the rarity of such acts of defiance, despite William of Malmesbury's depiction of Robert's *diffidatio* as if it were customary procedure, Thompson explores the context of an earlier

⁴ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume 7 MS. E*, ed. S. Irvine (Cambridge, 2004), p. 134; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation*, ed. D. Whitelock et al. (London, 1961), E, 1137, pp. 198–9.

⁵ J.H. Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville: A Study of the Anarchy* (London, 1892).

⁶ Chapter 5; quotation at p. 84.

diffidatio alleged to have taken place in the region to the west of Chartres in the early years of the twelfth century. The allegation was made by Count Rotrou of Mortagne against his man Ivo of Courville during the course of a dispute between them concerning Rotrou's construction of a castle on land that Ivo and Hugh du Puiset, viscount of Chartres, claimed was under Hugh's protection and had been conceded by him to Ivo. Thompson explores the nature of the relationship between Rotrou and Ivo, suggesting that it might have been forged during their earlier cooperative involvement in military actions. In this view, Ivo's defiance could indicate his 'departure from a personal association forged in conflict rather than a formal denial of homage for land holdings'. Thompson also explores the role and difficulties of Bishop Ivo of Chartres in trying to resolve the dispute, opposed as he was by the lord of Courville and other powerful supporters of Viscount Hugh, pressurised by his archbishop to carry out papal orders to excommunicate Rotrou, and yet determined to be fair to Rotrou. Thompson concludes by examining the familial and other connections between Count Rotrou and Robert, earl of Gloucester, suggesting that Robert's act of defiance in 1138, and its public nature, might have been influenced by conversations between the two men, that Rotrou's use of the term *diffidatio* was a clever legal defence against a clever legal attack, and that Rotrou might even have invented it. These arguments raise important issues concerning ideas about the limitations of subordination and loyalty in the relationship between lords and their men, and about the ways in which these men might seek to justify behaviour towards their lords that might be perceived to be dishonourable, treacherous and rebellious.

In addition to the actions of Robert, earl of Gloucester, in 'the Anarchy', the volume casts new light on the careers of two other prominent magnates who periodically opposed King Stephen: Geoffrey II de Mandeville, earl of Essex, famously described by Round as 'the most perfect and typical presentment of the feudal and anarchic spirit that stamps the reign',⁷ and Ranulf II, earl of Chester, whose actions during the civil war have also stimulated considerable debate. Judith Green takes a fresh look at Geoffrey II de Mandeville, primarily by exploring the evidence of his surviving charters, a calendar of which is provided.⁸ The picture of Geoffrey which emerges from this analysis 'further strengthens what might be thought of as the "revisionist" view ... that he was not an irredeemably bad baron as portrayed by the chroniclers and by Round, but a man who, like his contemporaries, faced a dilemma after the capture of the king in 1141' and 'succeeded in navigating the turbulent political events of that year almost too well'. His subsequent rebellion against the king in 1143 only occurred after Stephen arrested him and forced him to surrender his castles, and

⁷ Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, p. v.

⁸ Chapter 6; quotations at pp. 93, 102.

ended with his death from a wound received in combat. Although Geoffrey's '[d]eath as an excommunicate sealed his reputation in the eyes of the chroniclers, and this in turn was to shape the views of later historians', Green argues that 'it is clear that he was not the sole or even necessarily the primary cause of trouble'.

Graeme White also strengthens the 'revisionist' view of Ranulf II, earl of Chester, though in a different way.⁹ Ranulf inherited an extensive honour, spread over several English counties, which included 'significant elements of autonomy' from royal control within Cheshire but whose Lincolnshire possessions had become much more important since the first generation of Norman settlement. White argues that Ranulf sought to exercise aspects of his enhanced authority in Cheshire throughout his honour, but also made innovations in Cheshire's financial and judicial governance that set its administration apart from the rest of the honour, contributed to the emergence of 'palatine arrangements' in the thirteenth century and had ramifications that lasted until the nineteenth century. From this it emerges that although Ranulf's successors refined and developed his administrative structures and procedures, he nevertheless bequeathed to them a significant and enduring governmental legacy. In addition, White further elucidates Ranulf's geopolitical ambitions, showing that they included a desire to control important trading centres and sections of several key north-south routes through England, had important potential implications relating to the alliance of Henry of Anjou (the future Henry II) and King David of Scots in 1149, and included an independent policy towards Wales.

One of the most ardent baronial opponents of King Stephen was Brien (Brian) FitzCount, lord of Wallingford (Oxfordshire), who resisted royal sieges until he stepped down from his lordship c. 1148.¹⁰ Katharine Keats-Rohan casts further light on the key role played by the men of the strategically important castle and honour of Wallingford in the opposition to King Stephen, and on the significance of these men in Angevin court circles, by tracing their attestation of charters (mainly those of Empress Matilda) at a time when her son Henry of Anjou was seeking to assert his claims to the English crown.¹¹ In doing so, Keats-Rohan discusses the strategic and administrative importance of Wallingford during Stephen's reign, and reveals that 'the notion that Wallingford was a heritable baronial honour as well as a royal castle and borough, is misconceived', and that as a significant military centre it 'could only be put into the hands of trustworthy constables under royal supervision'. This first becomes evident when Brien FitzCount relinquished his position as constable of Wallingford c. 1148 and Wallingford castle 'became

⁹ Chapter 7.

¹⁰ On Brian's 'single-minded loyalty' to Empress Matilda, see E. King, 'The Memory of Brian Fitz Count', *Haskins Society Journal*, 13 (2004): pp. 75–98 at p. 87.

¹¹ Chapter 8; quotations at p. 133.

directly associated with Angevin lordship'. Keats-Rohan shows that careful arrangements were then made for the custody of Wallingford and its castle, identifies the men appointed to this role, and establishes that they had strong connections with the household of the empress that gave them, or their sons, entrance to the court of King Henry II.

'English politics was court politics', as Robert Bartlett once wrote.¹² The fundamental importance of royal and aristocratic courts and households in the rulership of the Anglo-Norman dominions is partly reflected by the criticism they attracted from clerical writers in the late twelfth century, including the philosopher and *curialis* of Archbishops Theobald and Thomas Becket, John of Salisbury, in his *Policraticus* and other writings. David Luscombe shows that, in John's eyes, those guilty of misconduct at the royal court included a number of its most prominent members, among them (probably) King Stephen and his son Eustace, and the justiciars Robert, earl of Leicester, and Richard de Lucy.¹³ Among them, too, were a group of earls described by John as 'public enemies', including Geoffrey II de Mandeville and Ranulf II, earl of Chester, and several other magnates who had exercised arbitrary power during Stephen's reign. John regarded the multifarious vices of courtiers as threats to good government. They included the use of magic and astrology to predict the future, various frivolous, excessive or immoral entertainments and pastimes, avarice, flattery, bribery and ultimately pride, ambition and envy. Luscombe adds his voice to those of scholars who have reacted against views that John did not understand how courts worked: the *Policraticus* was intended not only as recreational amusement for its readers, but also as a vehicle to highlight genuine grievances and concerns about rulership and government, and to offer constructive advice about proper conduct, urging the need for moderation, a 'knightly ethic and a clerical sense of canonical duty' with strong 'royal control'.

If the activities of courtiers posed serious threats to the *res publica*, so did full-scale rebellion, especially when supported by foreign powers. In 1173–74 the Anglo-Norman dominions experienced just such a threat when King Henry II's son, Henry the Young King, rebelled after the king announced plans to grant three important lordships in Anjou to his youngest son John. Paul Latimer shows that Henry II's government was already well placed to deal with rebellion before 1173. Employing pipe roll evidence, Latimer argues that although there was some administrative disruption in the North and in Kent during the rebellion, there was also a significant amount of highly effective administrative continuity, and casts important light on the measures taken by Henry II and his men to defeat

¹² *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075–1225* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 28–47 at p. 28.

¹³ Chapter 9; quotations at pp. 144, 160.

the rebellion.¹⁴ There are signs that the extent of rebellion amongst the magnates has been exaggerated, but Latimer also maintains that ‘although the pipe rolls show us a system operating through the writ and systematic accounting, we should not imagine that it is a system operated by bureaucrats and accountants’. Great men actually ran it, including Robert de Stuteville, sheriff of Yorkshire, and Ranulf de Glanville, custodian of the honours of Lancaster and Richmond, in northern England, and, even more importantly, the justiciar Richard de Lucy. Not only were Richard’s writs ‘everywhere throughout the pipe rolls of these years’, he also played an important role in the siege of Leicester, compelled the Scottish king to retreat back into Scotland in 1173 and fought at the battle of Fornham. Richard was ably assisted by the royal constable, Humphrey de Bohun, who played ‘a crucial military role’, and by the king’s loyal earls.

Latimer’s study of the 1173–74 rebellion is followed by three chapters that address important features of the troubled reign of Henry II’s son, John. The first of these, by David Crouch, discusses the succession dispute between two aristocratic sisters over the powerful honour of Leicester after the death of its lord, their brother, Robert IV de Breteuil, earl of Leicester, in 1204.¹⁵ Robert IV’s heirs were his sisters, Amice, countess of Montfort, and Margaret, wife of Saher de Quincy. Amice claimed the Norman honour of Breteuil and all her family’s Norman lands, which King Philip II of France had seized after the earl’s death, but Amice was also determined to assert her claims to the English lands of her dead brother. This family tension, Crouch shows, was complicated by the claim made by Countess Petronilla, mother of Amice and Margaret, to the entire inheritance, which was based on historic links between the Norman honour of Grandmesnil, which she had brought to her husband, Earl Robert III of Leicester, and the earldom of Leicester. Her claims were challenged by her younger daughter, Margaret, and Margaret’s husband, Saher de Quincy, who (like Petronilla) made monetary proffers to the king for the honour. Countess Amice’s delay in going to England to assert her claim enabled the king to keep the bulk of the honour, though he appears to have given Saher de Quincy a privileged position in its disposition. Amice eventually sent her son, Simon de Montfort, to make her claims in 1206. A final division of the honour of Leicester between Saher and Simon was made, probably in December 1207, by royal justices and several juries, and Crouch publishes for the first time the fascinating document which records it. The victors in this protracted dispute were Saher de Quincy and his wife, whose connections with the king and court had secured Saher effective control of all the English portion of the honour between November 1204 and August 1206, and enabled him to challenge the Montfort claims and help Countesses Petronilla and her daughter-in-law Loretta

¹⁴ Chapter 10; quotations at pp. 176–7.

¹⁵ Chapter 11.

de Briouze maximise their dower portions. But the sisters and co-heirs, Amice and Margaret, had been very active in this dispute and pursued their claims with vigour and ingenuity.

The dispute over the inheritance of the honour of Leicester was complicated by King John's loss of Normandy to King Philip II of France in 1204. Daniel Power explores another dimension of the impact of this political upheaval which has hitherto received little attention: how the loss of Normandy affected the nature and balance of royal and aristocratic power at the local level.¹⁶ The locality on which Power focuses is the English county of Northamptonshire, the tenurial landscape of which included estates belonging to the honour of Leicester and many other lordships, but his study also addresses the wider implications of this for the rest of England. The royal confiscation of the estates of Northamptonshire landholders who chose to remain in France in 1204 allowed some English lords to secure lands that they had claimed against these landholders. Some others were able to overcome by skilful manoeuvring the problems and challenges posed by the division of England and Normandy, and to retain landed interests on both sides of the Channel long after 1204. To do so, they invariably needed royal favour, but stood more chance of success if they were Flemings or Bretons rather than from Normandy, had contacts at the royal courts and were prepared to offer bribes. Power also shows that, overall, the scale of King John's seizure of the 'lands of the Normans' in England was not great, especially in the northerly and westerly regions of England, but its impact endured for decades after 1204, in some cases into the fourteenth century, as local communities came to terms with the political, seigneurial, tenurial and legal consequences of losing dispossessed lords.

The final chapter, by Nicholas Vincent, focuses on another historic landmark of King John's reign with an even more powerful and enduring political and legal legacy, Magna Carta and, more particularly, on the twenty-five barons referred to in its so-called security clause (61) who were supposed to enforce its terms.¹⁷ By comparing the 'Articles of the Barons' with Magna Carta, Vincent valuably illuminates the evolution of the negotiations between the king and the rebel barons between mid-May and mid-June 1215, and the 'watering down' of provisions originally intended to have the English archbishops and bishops support the twenty-five in preventing John from obtaining a papal annulment of the settlement. Challenging the established view that this number was influenced by close connections between the twenty-five and the men of London who had a tradition of being governed by twenty-five counsellors, Vincent notes that, even if this view is correct, there is still the question why the number twenty-five was chosen. He suggests that it might have been

¹⁶ Chapter 12.

¹⁷ Chapter 13; quotations at pp. 234, 241, 246.

influenced by the use of twelve jurors in English law, which could have owed something to biblical inspirations, and notes that the numbers twelve and twenty-four 'are to be found in standard medieval numerological treatises ... in the *Glossa Ordinaria*'s interpretation of the twenty-four of *Revelation* 4:4, in 'the standard medieval computistical division of each day and night' and in the common size of monastic communities. But Vincent also suggests that the number twenty-five might have been influenced by St Augustine's tractate or homily on John 25.6, glossing St John's Gospel 6:19, in which Augustine not only defines 'twenty-five as "the number of the law", but derives its meaning not from a duodecimal system (as, for example in Bede or Isidore, adding Christ to a combination of the twelve patriarchs and apostles) but from a system based upon the square of the number five (the number of the books of the law)'. Vincent points out that some of Augustine's writings on John's Gospel would have been widely disseminated in Lent 1215, when portions of this Gospel were read during Masses, and presents a compelling argument that political, governmental and legal developments in this period cannot be viewed in isolation from theological and philosophical considerations, the schools of Rome and Paris, the scholars and libraries of Flanders and Lotharingia and the ancient legal, patristic and biblical texts that were at the heart of scholarly investigation.

Ranging chronologically from the Norman Conquest and *Domesday Book* to Magna Carta, and embracing discussions relevant to several major aspects of rulership and rebellion in this period, including the operation, efficiency, shortcomings and transformation of central government, the role of negotiation and peacemaking in political disputes, baronial behaviour, ambitions and resistance to royal authority, the nature and limitations of allegiance between lords and their men, the capacity of the crown and its administrative system to cope with major revolts, the impact of the loss of Normandy, the role of aristocratic women and the crown in complex aristocratic inheritance disputes and the profound influence of theological and philosophical thinking on political, legal and governmental developments, this volume offers a significant contribution to the history of the Anglo-Norman world. It is also a greatly deserved tribute to a highly respected scholar who, as the list of his distinguished publications at the end of this book shows, has done much to illuminate that world and many other aspects of medieval history.

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Chapter 1

Edmund King: an Appreciation

Sandra Raban

It gives me great pleasure to write in appreciation of Edmund and his work not least because, although we share many interests and long years of collaboration and friendship, I am no expert in the twelfth century and would otherwise have been unable to contribute to this richly deserved tribute. We come from the same academic stable, Cambridge in the early 1960s when the economic historian M.M. (Mounya) Postan was a dominant figure among medievalists. Although Postan was Edmund's official PhD supervisor, it was the outstanding supervision of Marjorie Chibnall that provided his day-to-day support. I am sure Edmund will not mind if I spend a moment in the wake of her recent death to acknowledge the debt we and all her other students owe to her firm but humane guidance in the ways of true scholarship.¹

Edmund belonged to a stellar generation. At St Benedict's, Ealing, where he was at school between 1949 and 1959, he was taught by a trio of gifted historians whose pupils went on to Oxford and Cambridge. Among Edmund's near contemporaries were Peter Linehan, David d'Avray and Peter Biller, all of whom became distinguished medievalists. Christopher Patten was admitted to Balliol College, Oxford, to read history, even though in the words of Peter Linehan, 'he was more intent on making history rather than studying it'. Edmund's fellow students at St John's College, Cambridge, where he came under the benign influence of Edward Miller, were equally illustrious. As well as Peter Linehan, who followed him to Cambridge, there was the modern historian Peter Clarke with whom he shared a flat as a research student and Timothy Clark the art historian. Other medievalists elsewhere in Cambridge were also embarking on their careers; David Luscombe at King's College and a clutch of Marjorie Chibnall's pupils at Girton; Wendy Childs, Sally Thompson, Nicola Coldstream and myself.

Edmund's academic career has a certain symmetry, beginning and ending with Peterborough Abbey. This house was so wealthy that its endowment ranked eleventh in value out of the 45 oldest houses in England in *Domesday Book*. One of the three richest Fenland abbeys, it was alone in remaining without

¹ I am grateful to Edmund's friends, including other contributors to this volume, who have helped with some of the information found in the following pages.

a study of its estates when Edmund began his research in 1963.² In addition to an outstanding series of registers and chronicles, its substantial archive included a small number of detailed enrolled accounts for the abbot's share of the demesne manors together with some original charters and court rolls. From these sources Edmund harvested a prize-winning thesis, subsequently published as *Peterborough Abbey 1086–1310: A Study in the Land Market*.³ At the time, authors of monographs were under heavy pressure from Cambridge University Press to produce small volumes. Edmund responded with a masterpiece of concision which already demonstrated assurance and maturity of judgement. Despite its brevity, the book managed to cover a remarkable amount of ground. As one might anticipate, it dealt with abbey administration and estate management, but also matters of wider academic debate at that date, notably the fate of the small knightly tenants of which Peterborough had acquired an embarrassingly large number in the post-Conquest period. At this early stage in his career, Edmund naturally enough leaned towards economic matters. It is worth remembering that had things turned out differently, he might well have become an outstanding economic historian.

Peterborough was not abandoned with the publication of this first book. At intervals during the following years, Edmund returned to the abbey and associated Northamptonshire subjects. In articles directly arising from his thesis he examined two early twelfth-century surveys of the military potential of the abbey known as the *Descriptio Militum* and also offered a fuller exploration of the land market in order to assess how far knightly tenure was under threat from the encroachment of large landowners. He engaged briefly with Peterborough's mid-thirteenth-century estate management at the time of the baronial reform movement.⁴ His lively curiosity focused on a variety of subjects ranging from the early medieval development of the town of Peterborough and Northamptonshire's medieval wall paintings to the origins of

² The other two comprised E. Miller, *The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely* (Cambridge, 1951, repr. 1969) and J.A. Raftis, *The Estates of Ramsey Abbey* (Toronto, 1957). For the ranking, see D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England; A History of its Development from the Times of St Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council, 940–1216* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 1963, repr. 1966), App. 6, pp. 702–3.

³ *Peterborough Abbey 1086–1310: A Study in the Land Market* (Cambridge, 1973). His PhD thesis won the Ellen McArthur Prize for Economic History, 1969.

⁴ 'The Peterborough *Descriptio Militum* (Henry I)', *EHR*, 84 (1969): pp. 84–101; 'Large and Small Landowners in Thirteenth-Century England', *Past and Present*, 47 (1970): pp. 26–50, revised and reprinted in T.H. Aston (ed.), *Landlords, Peasants and Politics in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 141–65; 'Estate Management and the Reform Movement', in W.M. Ormrod (ed.), *England in the Thirteenth Century* (Stamford, 1991), pp. 1–14.

the Wake family.⁵ However, a combination of the tenurial complexities he was unravelling in Northamptonshire and neighbouring counties and his teaching duties increasingly shifted the main thrust of his interest from the abbey and its environs to the wider theatre of the Anglo-Norman realm. Only now, after the appearance of his widely acclaimed study of King Stephen in 2010, has he been at liberty to return to his early intellectual pastures. He is currently putting the final touches to a definitive edition of the three important texts which comprise Peterborough Abbey's house chronicle. This edition is sorely needed. Although Mellows published the first text, the chronicle of Hugh Candidus, shortly before his death in 1950, the remaining chronicles of Robert of Swaffham and Walter of Whittlesey have long been available only in Joseph Sparke's old and inaccessible edition published in 1723.⁶

The biography of King Stephen, Edmund's most lasting contribution to the history of the mid-twelfth century to date, marks the culmination of decades of work which have redefined much of that century for the current generation.⁷ He set out the stall for this new phase of his career in his article on 'King Stephen and the Anglo-Norman Aristocracy' published in 1974.⁸ This surveyed the historiography of 'the anarchy' and proposed a more nuanced interpretation of magnate behaviour. His initial article was followed by what David Bates has described as 'a remarkable series of publications'.⁹ Those from the early 1970s in particular have become the starting point for any discussion of the interplay between local and national politics. One might also mention his influential article on dispute settlement published in 1992.¹⁰ His unrivalled knowledge of the convoluted tenures at a time of great turbulence and insecurity, combined with an imaginative insight into baronial attitudes have enabled him to create a plausible interpretation of events which had been distorted both by the propaganda of Stephen's successor, Henry II, and by the historical orthodoxy of earlier historians. One task remains. After the sustained effort expended on Stephen, one can only hope that Edmund will find the strength to tackle the biography he has proposed of Stephen's brother, Henry of Blois, bishop of

⁵ 'The Town of Peterborough in the Early Middle Ages', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 6, no. 4 (1980–81): pp. 187–95; 'Medieval Wall-Paintings in Northamptonshire', *ibid.*, 7, no. 2 (1984–85): pp. 69–78; 'The Origins of the Wake Family; the Early History of the Barony of Bourne in Lincolnshire', *ibid.*, 5, no. 3 (1975): p. 166–76.

⁶ *The Chronicle of Hugh Candidus A Monk of Peterborough*, ed. W.T. Mellows (London, 1949); N. Karn and E. King, 'The Peterborough Chronicles', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 61, (2008): p. 17; J. Sparke (ed.), *Historiae Anglicanae Scriptores Varii* (2 vols, London, 1723), vol. 2, *Historiae Coenobii Burgensis Scriptores Varii*.

⁷ *King Stephen* (New Haven and London, 2010).

⁸ *History*, 59 (1974): pp. 180–94.

⁹ Reviewing *King Stephen* in *EHR*, 127 (2012): p. 682.

¹⁰ 'Dispute Settlement in Anglo-Norman England', *ANS*, 14 (1992): pp. 115–30.

Winchester, an able and intriguing figure who badly needs a full-scale study. In the meantime, we have a foretaste in his article on Henry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.¹¹

The new edition of William of Malmesbury's *Historia Novella* which appeared in 1998 belongs very much to Edmund's mid-twelfth-century oeuvre.¹² It also represents an important aspect of his scholarship; that of making texts available to fellow scholars in good modern editions with full supporting analysis. The *Historia Novella* had been edited and translated by K.R. Potter for the Nelson's Medieval Texts Series in 1955, but was unsatisfactory in several respects. Edmund's edition, while retaining Potter's translation with annotations, established a much improved text. He also added a substantial introduction discussing Malmesbury himself and the writing of the *Historia Novella*, together with a detailed survey of the extant manuscripts and the historical value of the chronicle. Paul Dalton justly described it as 'a skilful, astute and original work of scholarship' in his review for the *English Historical Review*.¹³ Less well known are Edmund's editions of a number of short but useful documents which at the time were hard to access. The *Descriptio Militum*, copied into the unpublished Black Book of Peterborough, was otherwise available only as an appendix to the Camden Society edition of the *Chronicon Petroburgense* edited by Thomas Stapleton in 1849.¹⁴ Similarly, the two short mid-thirteenth-century estate inventories, now in print, were at the time only to be found in the British Library.¹⁵ To this day, the surviving estate records of the Hotot family of Clapton, rare evidence of the private dealings of a small knightly family, remain accessible only in Edmund's edition.¹⁶ His latest project, the Peterborough chronicles, has been undertaken in the same spirit. In this respect, as in several others, he could be described as a historians' historian.

Edmund is a prodigiously energetic researcher. Close attention to contemporary witness is his forte. David Crouch called his article on Mountsorrel and its region 'one of the most dazzling displays of historical detection ever published'.¹⁷ It is noticeable that as his work has evolved, it has tended to go

¹¹ 'Blois, Henry de (c. 1096–1171)', in *ODNB*, vol. 6, pp. 238–42.

¹² William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella: The Contemporary History* (Oxford, 1998).

¹³ *EHR*, 115 (2000): p. 185.

¹⁴ Society of Antiquaries, MS 60, fols. 14r, 18r; T. Stapleton (ed.), *Chronicon Petroburgense*, Camden Society (1849), pp. 168–75.

¹⁵ BL, Cott. Vesp. E xxii, fol. 41v; S. Raban (ed.), *The White Book of Peterborough*, Northamptonshire Record Society (NRS), 41 (2001), nos 103–4.

¹⁶ 'Estate Records of the Hotot Family', in E. King (ed.), *A Northamptonshire Miscellany*, NRS, 32 (1983), pp. 1–58.

¹⁷ In his review of *King Stephen*, www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1038. The article was 'Mountsorrel and its Region in King Stephen's Reign', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 44

straight to the sources and place less emphasis on historiography. This has not met with universal approval, although David Carpenter, for one, welcomed his avoidance of the 'buzzing hive of historians'.¹⁸ The advantage of this approach is that it not only confers depth and immediacy on his writings; but that it means that they are likely to prove enduringly useful rather than be swiftly superseded by the next intellectual fashion. This is not of course to deny that Edmund's arguments are fully informed by their historiographical background. Evidently they are, as his earliest publications on the subject testify. Indeed, he has gone further than he needed in acknowledging the contribution of his predecessors with his interest in John Horace Round, not at first glance the most alluring of subjects. He initially contemplated a full-scale assessment of Round's life and work and collected a good deal of his surviving correspondence to that end. Apart from short biographies in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and *The Blackwell Dictionary of Historians*, this remains to be achieved.¹⁹ However, his article on the compilation of the *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France* is much cited, not least because it foreshadows an awakening of interest in the work of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars.²⁰

The other outstanding aspect of Edmund's scholarship is what one might term his individual voice. In a discipline which is no longer generally seen as an art form, it is refreshing to read work written with elegance, a wide frame of cultural reference and lively expression. Only Edmund could describe the *Liber Vitae* of Thorney Abbey as 'a most superior early visitors' book' or cite a character from an Evelyn Waugh novel to illustrate the disadvantages besetting younger sons.²¹ This zest explains the success of his general book *Medieval England*, which went through five editions (including one in Japanese) and was the 'Editor's choice' for The Ancient and Medieval History Book Club in 1988. Most of us at one time or another have attempted to mediate serious historical research to a popular audience, but few have enjoyed quite such success. So, a historians' historian, but one eminently well qualified to communicate academic writing to the wider public in a vivid and witty fashion.

It is the mark of the finest scholars that they not only engage in the furtherance of their own research and reputation, but that they also have a care for the profession as a whole. Medieval history has a long tradition of those who

(1980): pp. 1–10.

¹⁸ In his *Times Literary Supplement* review of *King Stephen*, 30 December 2011, p. 15.

¹⁹ J. Cannon (ed.), *The Blackwell Dictionary of Historians* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 360–361.

²⁰ 'John Horace Round and the "Calendar of Documents Preserved in France"', in *ANS*, 4 (1982): pp. 93–103, 202–4; J.H. Round (ed.), *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France, AD 918–1206* (London, 1899).

²¹ 'The Foundation of Pipewell Abbey, Northamptonshire', *HSJ*, 2 (1991): p. 172; 'Large and Small Landowners in Thirteenth Century England', in *Landlords, Peasants and Politics*, p. 161.

have given unstintingly of their time and energy in order to extend and improve the tools available to others. Edmund has been outstanding in this regard. In addition to his own editions of texts already mentioned, he has made his fair share of contributions to the great scholarly undertakings of the day. Chief among these is the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. In addition to Henry of Blois and John Horace Round, he profiled 13 other individuals, reflecting once more the wide range of his interests. He is also a generous source of information and help to fellow scholars, helped by what appears to be a vast and meticulous record of all his past correspondence and notes.

A particularly exacting duty, cheerfully undertaken, has been his service to the two local record societies closest to Peterborough; Lincoln Record Society and Northamptonshire Record Society. Such bodies, often venerable institutions operating on the slenderest of budgets, are the jewels in the crown of English local history. Without the texts they have made available in good printed editions, the work of historians would be a great deal more difficult. To sit on their Councils and deliver the occasional lecture is no great hardship, but to serve as a General Editor is an altogether more demanding task. Not least of the difficulties for a medievalist is the members' proverbial dislike of volumes in Latin. There is a fundamental tension between the serious scholarly purpose for which the societies were founded and the preference of those whose subscriptions pay for the publications for something more accessible and pertinent to their interests. Already in the 1920s this issue was rearing its head at Lincoln.²² Northamptonshire Record Society attempted to resolve the problem with *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, a more popular publication under separate editorship, containing articles on a wide range of local subjects. Many of these deal with topics closer to the present day, but there are also useful medieval contributions, many of which have been written by Edmund. This does not altogether prevent the refrain that 'members hate Latin volumes' at Council meetings, while some members even go so far as to return their copies in grumpy complaint.

Edmund served as General Editor for Northamptonshire Record Society for nearly a quarter of a century between 1970 and 1994 and, against slightly mutinous trench warfare, mounted a long and doughty defence of its core function. As many an editor will tell you, presenting other people's work for publication can be ten times more demanding than preparing one's own. The luxury of copy editors is not for local record societies; the General Editor performs this service as well as having to ensure a balanced programme of publications, each following the other at regular intervals so as to honour the terms of the annual subscription. Edmund's long tenure saw the publication of a wide variety

²² N. Bennett, *Wonderful to Behold: A Centenary History of the Lincoln Record Society, 1910–2010*, Lincoln Record Society, 100 (2010), pp. 46, 56.