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Strickland, M.J. *Against the Lord's anointed: aspects of warfare and baronial rebellion in England and Normandy 1075-1265*. In Garnett, G. and Hudson, J. (Eds) *Law and government in medieval England and Normandy: essays in honour of Sir James Holt*, Chap 3, pages pp. 56-79. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1994)

<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/4579/>

28th August 2008

*Against the Lord's anointed: aspects of
warfare and baronial rebellion in England
and Normandy, 1075-1265*

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For who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's
anointed and be guiltless?¹

Within a framework of arbitrary, monarchical government, baronial rebellion formed one of the principal means both of expressing political discontent and of seeking the redress of grievances. So frequent were its manifestations that hostilities arising from armed opposition to the crown account for a large proportion of warfare waged in England, Normandy and the continental Angevin lands in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The subject of revolt, lying as it does close to the heart of crown-baronial interaction, is as fundamental as it is multifaceted, embracing many issues of central importance, for example the legal status of revolt and its complex relationship with concepts of treason; the nature of homage and fealty, and the question of the revocability of these bonds in relation to the king; the growth in notions of the crown, of *maiestas* and the influence of Roman Law; political theories of resistance and obedience; the limitations imposed by ties of kinship and of political sympathy among the baronage on the king's ability to suppress revolt and to enforce effective punishment; and the extent of the king's logistical and military superiority.

A detailed examination of such major themes is naturally beyond the scope of a single essay.² Elsewhere I have suggested how the context of revolt affected behaviour in warfare,

1. I Samuel 26: 9.

2. I hope to explore these themes further in a monograph, currently under preparation, on baronial rebellion and the nature of warfare in the context of revolt.

particularly in relation to conventions of war governing siege.³ What follows addresses the closely related question of how far the presence of the ruler - whether king, duke or count - affected the nature of warfare fought against rebellious vassals.

Whatever the underlying disputes that had led elements of the baronage to resort to arms, be it grievances over land, title or the disbursement of patronage, a desire for enhanced local autonomy, or support for a royal cadet or other dynastic rivals to the throne, the failure of the political process and reversion to the mechanisms of war confronted opponents of the crown with a formidable series of dilemmas. Whether their avowed aim was the deposition of the king for a rival claimant, or merely the enforcement of a reform manifesto such as Magna Carta or the Provisions of Oxford, the successful prosecution of their claims would almost certainly entail a direct military confrontation with the king. They would thus have to resist by force or actively assault the *christus domini*, the Anointed of the Lord, the divinely sanctioned receptacle of legitimate authority, who had been elected, proclaimed and consecrated.

The person of the monarch represented a fusion of two fundamental sources of authority, feudal lordship and sacral kingship.⁴ Hallowed by unction, set apart from and above other men, the king could command the fealty of all subjects, reinforced in the case of many if not all of the effective political nation by liegehomage.⁵ Such homage, frequently extracted as an integral part of the process of designation of an heir,⁶ might also be demanded by the king at times of political crisis as a deliberate counter to actual

3. M. J. Strickland, 'The Conduct and Perception of War under the Anglo-Norman and Angevin Kings, 1075-1217' (Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 1989), ch. 4 pp. 145-76.

4. For the nature of kingship see J.E.A. Joliffe, *Angevin Kingship* (London, 1955), and E. Mason, *Norman Kingship* (Bangor, 1991). Also, for example, E. H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, 1957).

5. For the celebrated oath of Salisbury in 1086, see ASC, 'E', s.a. 1086, and J. C. Holt, '1086', in *Domesday Studies*, ed. J.C. Holt (Woodbridge, 1987), pp. 41-64; and for submission and oath-taking as prominent features of the coronation ceremony see, for example, ASC, 'E', s.a. 1087 and 1100. Though not its principal aim, the inquest that resulted in the *Cariae baronum* of 1166 had as an important secondary purpose the discovery of undertenants who had not performed homage and sworn fealty to Henry II and his son, the young Henry, *Red Book*, I, 217, 400, 412, as did the Inquest of Sheriffs in 1170, Gervase, I, 217; Stubbs, *Charters*, p. 177, c. xiii.

6 See e.g. Robert of Torigny, in *Chronicles of Stephen, Henry II and Richard*, IV, 184, on 1155; *ibid.*, 296, on 1163; and 'Benedict', I, 6, on 1170.

or threatened rebellion.⁷ That Henry II kept a roll not only of those who had sworn him homage⁸ but also of those who had subsequently broken faith is strongly suggested by the extensive lists incorporated by Roger of Howden in his *Gesta Hennci* of those taken prisoner in the war of 1173-4, carefully stating date and place of capture and clearly drawn from an official source.⁹

Ecclesiastical writers, always quick to stress the enormity of violating such fundamental bonds, could be provoked to vociferous indignation by direct assaults on the person of the monarch during rebellion. Speaking of William Crispin's attack on Henry I at the battle of Bremule, 1119, where he succeeded in striking the king on the helmet, Orderic Vitalis exclaimed:

What a rash crime he had attempted, when brandishing his sword in his right hand, he raised it above the head that had been anointed with the holy chrism by the hands of bishops and crowned with the royal diadem, while the people rejoiced and chanted grateful praises to God.¹⁰

Orderic's sentiments were clearly coloured by his deep-seated admiration for Henry I. Yet a century later, Matthew Paris, who was no royal apologist, could share the view that it was unction that rendered the person of the monarch inviolate, even if that monarch was King John. Interpolating a no doubt apocryphal anecdote into Wendover's chronicle, Paris has William d'Aubigny, commander of the rebel garrison of Rochester, prevent one of his crossbowmen from firing at John with the words, 'No, no! Far be it from us, base villein, to cause the death of the Lord's anointed.'¹¹ This concept of unction as a potent mechanism for the hallowing and protection of kings had been inherited by the Norman rulers from their Old English predecessors in an already

7. See e.g. on 1209, *CM*, II, 525; *Annals of Waverley*, 262, Gervase, II, 104; cf. Holt, *Northerners*, p. 207. John again countered desertion in 1215 by requiring homage and a general oath of fealty, an act which the Barnwell chronicler believed to be a deliberate counterstroke to the baronial demand late in 1214 to confirm Henry I's coronation charter: *Memoriale fratris Walteri de Coventria*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols. (RS, 1872-3), II, 218; *CM*, II, 584.

8. Such a list is revealed by the 1166 *catla* of the archbishop of York: *Red Book*, I, 412. Such a roll might also be kept by honotiallords. See e.g. Orderic, III, 184-5.

9. 'Benedict', I, 45-7, 56--7.

10. Orderic, VI, 238--g.

11. *CM*, II, 627. 'In this case', adds Paris, 'he was like David who spared Saul when he could have slain him. This circumstance was afterwards known to the king, who notwithstanding this, did not wish to spare William when his prisoner, but would have hung him had he been permitted.'

well-developed form.¹² The author of the *Vita Edwardi* stressed Godwin's deep reluctance to fight against his lord the king and, following his successful *revanche* in 1052, compared him at length to David sparing Saul as the Lord's anointed.¹³ Even William I's Norman apologists experienced some discomfort in the fact that Harold had been consecrated king, leading William of Poitiers to declare this unction invalid since it had been administered by the schismatic Stigand.¹⁴

To the author of the *Gesta Stephani*, by contrast, the enormity of the king's defeat and humiliation at Lincoln in 1141 lay less in the violation of his sacral kingship than in the fact that a liege lord had been overthrown by his own vassals.¹⁵ While one clearly cannot take at face value the sentiments of contrition ascribed by the *Gesta* to Stephen's opponents, his comments may well echo the feelings of shock and confusion that some, perhaps many, would have felt at this drastic inversion of the natural order.¹⁶ Even William of Malmesbury, Robert of Gloucester's apologist, felt obliged to offer a lengthy justification for Stephen's defeat and seizure at Lincoln.¹⁷

¹² Anglo-Saxon kingship in turn had been heavily influenced by Carolingian theory and practice. For the importance of unction for the legitimisation of the Arnulfing dynasty and in notions of Carolingian kingship in general see W. Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (London, 1969), pp. 53-4, 71-110. As Ullman (p. 54) notes: 'The Germanic Ruler embodied a sacred and magical mythos because of his blood kinship with distant ancestors; this was now replaced by an equally sacred mythos that was derived from divine sanction and grace.'

¹³ *The Life of King Edward*, ed. and tr. F. Barlow (London, 1962), pp. 27-30.

¹⁴ G. S. Garnett, 'Coronation and Propaganda: Some Implications of the Norman Claim to the Throne of England in 1066', *TRHS*, 5th ser., XXXVI (1986), 9B-9.

¹⁵ As in all probability a bishop himself, he reserved his homily against touching the Lord's anointed for Stephen's attack in 1139 on the Le Poer bishops, where the author quotes Zechariah 2: 8, 'He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye' and Psalm 105: 15, 'Touch not mine anointed.' He saw the king's subsequent defeat and capture at Lincoln as divine retribution for this act: *GS*, pp. xviii-xl, 76-7, 110-15.

¹⁶ *GS*, pp. 112-15: 'When at length they disarmed him and he kept on crying out in a humbled voice of complaint that this mark of ignominy had indeed come upon him because God avenged his injuries, and yet they were not innocent of a monstrous crime in breaking their faith, condemning their oath, caring nothing for the homage they had pledged him, and rebelling so wickedly and so abominably against the man they had chosen of their own will as their lord and king, they were all so much softened by tender emotions of pity and compassion that they not only broke forth into tears and lamentations but repentance was very deeply imprinted in their hearts and faces.'

¹⁷ *HN*, pp. 47-8. Equally, it was Malmesbury who noted that on his release Stephen laid a complaint before the Council of Westminster, summoned by his brother Henry of Blois, 'because his men had both captured and almost killed, by the grievous burden of their insults, one who had never refused them justice (p.62).

Such sentiments flowed naturally from the pens of ecclesiastics, not only imbued with Old Testament notions of kingship, but also who saw in the person of the monarch the most effective guarantee of order, stability and, above all, peace for Holy Church. Yet, if we seek a more official expression of such notions, we need look no further than the laconic statement in clause 61 of Magna Carta, which, while empowering the baronial committee of twenty-five to distrain John 'by seizing castles, lands, possessions, and in such other ways as they can', adds simply, 'saving our person and those of our queen and our children'.¹⁸

The inviolacy which unction conferred upon the person of the king, however, was not simply passive and defensive. The king emanated a potent 'mythos and aura',¹⁹ which might receive tangible expression both in his thaumaturgical powers or in concepts such as the king's hand-given peace.²⁰ So too in war, the power of the king's presence might assume an aggressive, offensive quality which one might almost term a 'military (charisma)'. Wallace-Hadrill, speaking of the early Frankish kings, described them as *Heerkonigen*, warrior kings, men who fused the roles of *rex sacerdos* and *dux*. Success lay in being possessed of *jortitudo* or military *virtus*, and *jelicitas*, that is a 'fruitful good luck that stems from *nobilitas*'.²¹ Naturally, the increasing sophistication of kingship by the twelfth century must qualify this parallel. But though the virility of the king might no longer be seen to bless the land with fecundity, there can be no doubt that one of the king's primary functions - arguably *the* primary function remained as a warleader, and that his *virtus* continued to be a vital ingredient in his military and political success, as it was still felt to be when Machiavelli wrote his *Prince*. And though perhaps not imbued with the same depth of meaning as to a Merovingian observer, contemporaries of the Anglo-Norman kings were clearly aware of a kind of *jelicitas*, an aura that accompanied a ruler

18 Holt, *Magna Carta*, pp. 470-1.

19 The phrase is Ullmann's: *Carolingian Renaissance*, p. 54.

20 See M. Bloch, *Les Rois thaumaturges. Etude sur la caractere supernaturel attribuei à la puissance royale particulièrement en France et Angleterre* (Strasbourg, 1924). For the concept of the royal *handgrith* or *mund*, see LHP, 10 I, 12 la, 13 I, Downer, pp. 108, 114, 116 (which draw on I Cnut 2 2 and I Cnut 3 3), and LHP68 2, Downer, p. 214. Violation of the peace given by the king's own hand was a crime unatoneable by money (12 la, Downer, p. 114) and might be punished by loss of limb (79 3, Downer, p. 246).

21. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 154-7, 163.

successful in war, be it as a general, a besieger or as an individual warrior.

It was this concept of royal *feticitas* that Orderic had in mind when, censuring William the Conqueror for his execution of Earl Waltheof in 1076, he noted that after this deed, the luck in battle that had always hitherto attended William disappeared through divine vengeance.²² William of Malmesbury was similarly conscious of William I's good fortune in war and conquest,²³ while Snorri Sturluson, though writing nearly two centuries later, regarded Harald Hardradi's 'great victory-luck' in war as one of his outstanding attributes.²⁴

Even in adverse situations, the king's person might still command a respect verging on awe. William of Malmesbury records how, during the siege of Mont-St-Michel against Prince Henry, Rufus, although alone, charged a group of Henry's knights, 'confident that none would resist him'. One of the knights slew his horse, however, and was drawing his sword on the prostrate monarch when Rufus shouted in alarm that he was the king. His erstwhile opponents drew back, then at once helped him respectfully to his feet and gave him a fresh mount. The king then asked which of the knights had unhorsed him, and received the reply from the knight who had, 'It was I, who took you not for a king but for a knight.' Rufus - and this was the reason for Malmesbury's anecdote - rewarded his courage and honesty by granting him membership of the *familia regis*.²⁵

The king's attendance or absence from a campaign was therefore of the profoundest importance. The king's presence bolstered the morals of royal forces and might intimidate the enemy. When in 1146 Ranulf of Chester attempted to persuade Stephen to accompany him against the Welsh, he stated, according to the *Gesta Stephani*, 'that the enemy would be alarmed merely by hearing the king's name' and 'that he [Ranulf] would dishearten them more by the dread of the king's presence than if he strove to bring with him many thousand fighters without

²² Orderic, II, 350-1. ²³ *GR*, II 317.

²⁴ *King Harald's Saga*, tr. M. Magnusson and H. Palsson (Harmondsworth, 1966), pp. 160, and 149. where at Stamford Bridge Harold Godwinsson is made to say of Hardradi, 'What a big, formidable man he is: let us hope his good luck has now run out.'

²⁵ *GR*, II, 364.

it'.²⁶ As late as 1513, Henry VIII's arguments to the Privy Council for leading the expedition to France in person were not only that there had been a long tradition of English kings leading their men to victory, but that defeats had been suffered because of the absence of the king. Men were eager to face death when led by their sovereign, whereas with any other commander, however able, troops would be milder in nature and fight badly.²⁷

Conversely, Richard of Hexham noted that the absence of Stephen from the royal army at the battle of the Standard in 1138 was a severe blow, the king being their *principem et conductorem belli*, and no doubt the vast armoury of spiritual weaponry in the shape of relics and banners mustered by Archbishop Thurstan was designed in large part to compensate for this handicap.²⁸ Similarly, in 1173 the royal forces under the justiciar, Richard de Lucy, marched to battle against the earl of Leicester's army at Fornham with the banner of St Edmund at their head.²⁹ One -potent source of psychological aid was needed to replace another.

Nowhere in war, moreover, was the king's presence more significant than in the context of rebellion. For while rebels were prepared *ipso facto* to defy the king's authority, some, perhaps even the majority, were reluctant to face the person of the king in armed conflict. When in her *Livre des faiz darmes* Christine de Pisan urged princes not to risk their lives in battle lest their deaths bring political and military disaster, she made the crucial exception of situations of revolt. Here kings should lead the army, 'since in the nature of things the subject fears to offend the majesty of his sovereign lord, especially when the latter is present in person'.³⁰ It was an acute observation. When during the mounting political crisis in 1051, Godwin and his sons mustered their forces, they were

²⁶ CS, pp. 193-4.

²⁷ *The Anglica Historia of Polydore Vergil, AD 1485-1537*, ed. and tr. D. Hay, Camden Soc., NS, LXXIV (1950), p. 197.

²⁸ *De gestis regis Stephani et de bello Standardii*, ed. J. Raine in *The Priory of Hexham, its Chroniclers, Endowments and Annals*, 2 vols., Surtees Soc., XLIV (1868), I, 87, 90-1. Similarly, in 1194, an Anglo-Norman force under Count John and the earl of Leicester felt unable to confront Philip's army which was operating in Normandy not simply because they were outnumbered but because they lacked the king's presence: Howden, **III**, 253.

²⁹ 'Benedict', I, 61.

³⁰ *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye Translated and Printed by William Caxton from the French Original by Christine de Pisan*, ed. A. T. P. Byles (Early English Texts Society, 1927), p. 19

nevertheless 'reluctant to stand against their royal lord' , and when Edward summoned all the thegns to his standard, Godwin's army melted away.³¹ Faced with the revolt of William of Arques in 1054, Duke William's men urged him to wait for the arrival of his main army before attacking Arques itself, but 'they were reassured by the reply that those rebelling against him would not dare anything when they saw he himself was present'.³²

That such an assumption was not simply the inflated rhetoric of William of Poitiers is suggested by other incidents. At the siege of Courcy in 1091, for example, Hugh de Grandmesnil offered his lord, Robert Curthose, two hundred *livres* if he would withdraw from the besieging forces for just one day, so that Hugh could sally out and attack Robert de Belleme in the duke's absence. 'It seems', Orderic has Hugh say to the duke, 'that Robert [of Belleme] trusts too much in your protection and keeps the besieged in check more through their respect for their fealty to their lord than from fear of enemy arms.'³³

Similarly, Joinville recorded how, in 1230, the young St Louis had marched to the aid of the count of Champagne against the baronial coalition headed by Peter of Brittany, and offered them battle. The barons, however, 'sent and begged him to withdraw himself in person from the fight', pledging that if he would do so they would give battle with the count of Champagne and the duke of Lorraine with 300 knights less than the count or duke. But Louis refused, saying 'that he would not let them fight against his men unless he himself was there in person with them', whereupon the baronial army withdrew.³⁴ Here, Joinville sought to stress the courage and puissance of St Louis even as a boy, just as Orderic had been eager to demonstrate the vassalic propriety of Hugh, a leading patron of St-Evroul. Yet both incidents show the constraints that might be placed on baronial action by the presence of king or lord, and the desire to proffer financial or military concessions to circumvent this problem.

Though space precludes a discussion of the relation in war between the Capetians and their Norman and Angevin vassals in

31 ASC, 'E', 'D', s.a. 1051. 32 GC, p. 56.

33 Orderic, IV, 234-5.

34 Joinville's *Life of Louis*, tr. M. R. B. Shaw in *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades* (Harmondsworth, 1963), p. 185.

this context,³⁵ one cannot here omit reference to Henry II's refusal to attack Toulouse in 1159 once his lord, Louis VII, had entered the city. Some French historians such as Boussard have dismissed this motive for Henry's withdrawal as merely an excuse for over-extended lines of communication and logistical problems.³⁶ In the light of these and other examples, however, one must be more circumspect. Henry was still young, and such acts of propriety may have featured strongly in his self-perception as a warrior, or indeed as a king himself. A revealing passage in FitzStephen's *Life of Becket* suggests that there was disagreement over Henry's actions within the army itself. Becket, then chancellor, had urged an assault on Toulouse, since the size of Henry's army guaranteed the capture of both the city and the French king. Henry, however,

followed the advice of others, and from foolish scruples and respect for the king of France his overlord, hesitated to attack the city, although the Chancellor argued to the contrary that the French king had forfeited his position as overlord by engaging in hostilities against the English king in defiance of existing treaties.³⁷

Similarly, William of Poitiers, anxious to stress his hero's propriety as a wronged vassal, recorded how Duke William opposed the attacks of King Henry I of France on Normandy, but 'not without showing ... the regard due to an old friendship as well as to the royal dignity. He carefully restrained himself from engaging in battle with the king's army, with him [Henry I] present, unless he was constrained only by necessity.'³⁸

Contemporaries, whether opponents or supporters of the crown, clearly distinguished between the gravity of varying acts of hostility in revolt. Thus in the incidents recorded by Orderic and Joinville, the baronial rebels had refused to fight against the person of the ruler, but were still prepared to engage with his forces in his absence. Such distinctions are seen still more clearly in 1233, when the political opposition of Richard Marshal and his supporters to Henry III degenerated into localised warfare in the

35 See, however, J. F. Lemaignier, *Recherches sur l'hommage en marche et les frontières féodales* (Lille, 1945)

36 J. Boussard, *Le gouvernement de Henri II Plantagenet* (Paris, 1956), p. 420 and n. I.

37 *MTB*, III, 334.

38 *GG*, pp. 28-9.

south-west marches of Wales. The Marshal had surrendered his castle of Usk to the king on a pledge, ratified by the bishops, that Henry would return the fortress to him within fifteen days. When Henry failed to honour this agreement, Richard stormed the castle, killing several of the king's knights, then proceeded to launch concerted attacks on Henry's Poitevin mercenaries either in pitched battle or in ambush, giving no quarter to these alien stipendiaries.³⁹ Nevertheless, when his Welsh and baronial allies planned to attack the king as he lay before Grosmont castle, Richard refused to take part. On subsequently being accused of treason by Henry's partisans for assaulting the king's person, he vehemently insisted on his own absence from the engagement at Grosmont. He added that if by chance any of his household had been present, they had not attacked the king's person but only his following, and that with ample justification.⁴⁰

These distinctions between holding a castle against the king's authority, waging localised warfare or joining battle with royal forces in the king's absence, and the far more serious offence of attacking the person of the monarch himself receive more concrete expression in the *Dictum of Kenilworth*, 1266. Here the ransoms to be paid by rebels to regain their lands differed markedly according to their actions in the war of 1264-5. Culpability was graded, with the most serious offenders being those who had fought in the main engagements of the war, and who were distinguished from those who had either lent moral support if not active aid to the rebels, or those who had participated out of coercion, with the penalties diminishing accordingly.⁴¹ At the head of the list are cited:

Those who fought at the start of the war and are still in arms; those who held Northampton violently and maliciously against the king; those who fought and assailed the king at Lewes; those who were captured at Kenilworth after having sacked Winchester; those who have in other ways opposed the king and have not been pardoned; those who fought at Evesham; those who were in the battle of Chesterfield ... shall pay five times the annual value of their land.⁴²

³⁹ *CM*, III, 252-6. ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 253, 258, 260.

⁴¹ *Documents of the Baronial Movement of Reform and Rebellion*, 1258-1267, selected by R. H. Treharne and ed. I.J. Saunders (Oxford, 1973), pp. 324-5, 332-3.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 324-5. This clause covers all the main acts of resistance and aggression from the start of the war, which the royal justices adjudged to have begun on 4 April 1264.

The phraseology itself distinguishes between Lewes, where the active nature of the rebel assault and its direction against the king is stressed, 'expugnantes et debellantes regem apud Lewes', and, the engagements at Chesterfield and Evesham where the baronial forces were themselves attacked, where the language is more passive - 'qui fuerunt apud Chestrefeud in bello', 'bellantes apud Evesham'.⁴³

That these distinctions were far more than dry theory is suggested by the striking fact that the great majority of engagements which occurred in the context of baronial rebellion were fought in the absence of the king. The battles of Fagunduna, 1075, Bourghtheroulde, 1124, Dol and Fornham, 1173, and the second battle of Lincoln, 1217, were fought only against the kings' representatives - especially vice-regents, units of the *familia regis*, Brabancon mercenaries, the justiciar or the *rector regis et regni*, William Marshal, and his colleagues. On all these occasions, moreover, it seems that the decision to offer battle lay with the royalist forces.

Pitched battles fought by rebels against kings were extremely rare: Gerberoi, 1079, Lincoln, 1141, Wilton, 1143, and Lewes, 1265, stand in virtual isolation. The major engagements of Stephen's reign, moreover, were fought in exceptional circumstances, due to Robert of Gloucester's consistent ability to field forces that equalled if not outmatched those of the king, and to their context being more that of a civil war between two contending claimants than an extended revolt. But even here it should be noted that the battle of Lincoln was won by men who had little or nothing to lose - Robert of Gloucester, irrevocably committed to his sister's cause, Ranulf of Chester, whose castle and family were under siege, the 'disinherited' and Welsh auxiliaries.⁴⁴ According to Orderic, Stephen had believed they would not dare fight, while William of Malmesbury states that Stephen's earls expected only desultory jousts to win ransoms and glory and were taken completely unawares by a full-scale attack.⁴⁵

In those engagements where rebels did fight against the king,

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 324. A number of rebels were singled out for higher ransoms, notably Ferrers and those among the garrison of Kenilworth who had been responsible for the mutilation of a royal messenger: pp. 326-7.

⁴⁴ Orderic, VI, 538-43.

⁴⁵ Orderic, VI, 540-1; *HN*, 49'

moreover they were often part of an army consisting of external opponents, as for example at Gerberoi, where Robert Curthose was backed by the elite French knights of the garrison of Gerberoi,⁴⁶ Bremule, where William Crispin and other disaffected Normans were but part of Louis VI's main army,⁴⁷ and Grosmont, where Richard Marshal's baronial allies were strongly supported by the forces of Llewelyn ap Iorwerth.⁴⁸

In contrast to Stephen and Henry III, William Rufus, Henry I, Henry II and John never had to fight an equivalent rebel army in open battle. No major engagements took place involving the king in person during the rebellions of 1088, 1095, 1173-4 or 1215-17. Orderic encapsulates this notion when describing the defence of Rocestre against Rufus in 1088: 'For although the rebels were numerous and well supplied with treasure and arms and abundant equipment, they did not dare to engage the king in open battle in his own kingdom [contra regem in regno suo preliari]'.⁴⁹

Underlying and reinforcing any scruples against resisting the king *qua* "lord or sovereign were, of course, more pragmatic military considerations. The reluctance of any medieval commander to hazard the risks of battle except in the most favourable circumstances is now a well-established theme.⁵⁰ In the case of rebel lords such natural dictates of fear were enhanced by a clear recognition both of the severe penalties of failure and the frequent - though not automatic - superiority in numbers and military proficiency of the royal forces.

Such superiority is most evident at the battles of Bourgtheroulde, 1124, where the professionalism of a unit of Henry I's *familia regis* triumphed over the charge of Waleran of Meulan's knights;⁵¹ of Dol, 1173, where Henry II's Brabancon mercenaries defeated the coalition of Ralph de Fougeres, Hugh of Chester

46 Orderic, VI, 108-II. 47 Orderic, VI, 236-7.

48 *CM*, III, 253; F. M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward* (Oxford, 1947), p. 131.

49 Orderic, IV, 126-9.

50 See especially J. Bradbury, 'Battles in England and Normandy, 1066-1154', *ANS*, VI (1983), 1-12; J. Gillingham, 'Richard I and the Science of War in the Middle Ages', in *War and Government in the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Gillingham and J. C. Holt (Woodbridge, 1986), pp. 78-91; *idem*, 'William the Bastard at War', in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. C. Harper-Bill, C. J. Holdsworth and J. L. Nelson (Woodbridge, 1988), pp. 141-58; *idem*, 'War and Chivalry in the History of William the Marshal', in *Thirteenth Century England*, II, ed. P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge, 1988), pp. 1-13.

51 Orderic, VI, 348-51.

and others;⁵² Fornham, also 1173, where the earl of Leicester's Flemings were overwhelmed by the numerically superior cavalry of Richard de Lucy;⁵³ and, much later, to quote the chronicler Robert of Gloucester, 'the murder of Evesham, for battle none it was'.⁵⁴ In addition to his ability to command the knight-service of kingdom or duchy, the king's resources allowed him to hire mercenaries on a larger scale and for longer periods than his rebel opponents, be they the thousand knights envisaged in Henry I's indenture of 1101 with the count of Flanders,⁵⁵ William of Ypres's Flemings,⁵⁶ or the Brabancon and other routiers employed by the Angevin kings as one of their most effective measures against rebellious lords.⁵⁷

The king enjoyed the same advantages in siege warfare as in campaigns of movement. He could usually command an effective siege train, with professional engineers, sappers and other specialists.⁵⁸ At Dol in 1173, and Nottingham in 1194, for instance, the king brought siege engines to the besiegers already *in situ*,⁵⁹ and at the latter siege, Richard employed Greek fire against the rebels.⁶⁰ John's siege of Rochester, and later Henry III's siege of

52 Torigny in *Chronicles of Stephen, Henry II and Richard*, IV, 260; Diceto, I, 377-8, who notes that Leicester's force was numerically superior in terms of infantry, containing 3,000 Flemish mercenaries, but that in terms of knights he was outnumbered fourfold by the army of the justiciar. As a result, Henry II's men defeated the rebels 'in momento, in ictu oculi'; 'Benedict', I, 61-2.

53 'Benedict', I, 61; Gervase, II, 246; Ralph of Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Stevenson (RS, 1875), p. 17; *Jordan Fantomes Chronicle*, ed. R. C. Johnston (Oxford, 1981), 11. 1002-85.

54 *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, ed. W. A. Wright, 2 vols. (RS, 1887), 11, 765, 1. 11,734.

55 *Diplomatic Documents, 1101-1272*, ed. P. Chaplais (London, 1964),

pp. 1-4. 56 J. Beeler, *Waifare in England, 1066-1189* (Cornell, 1966), pp. 300-3.

57 For the routiers see H. Geraud, 'Les routiers au XIIe siecle', and 'Mercardier. Le routiers au XIIIe siecle', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, III (1841-2), 125-47, 417-43;]. Boussard, 'Les mercenaires au XII siecle. Henri II Plantagenet et les origines de l'armee de metier', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, III (1945-6), 18g-224. On mercenaries in the eleventh and twelfth century in general see J. Schlight, *Monarchs and Mercenaries* (Bridgeport, 1968), and S. Brown, 'Military Service and Monetary Reward in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *History*, LXXIV (1989), 20-38.

58 For these royal *ingeniatores* see R. A. Brown, 'Royal Castle-building in England, 1154-1216', *EHR*, LXX (1955), 36g-74.

59 'Benedict', 1,57; *PR 6 Richard*, pp. 175-6. Present at Nottingham was Master Urric, one of the king's *ingeniatores*, who seems to have regularly accompanied the royal siege train and specialised in the construction of engines.

60 *PR 6 Richard*, p. 175. It is likely that Richard had obtained this technology - which would be lacking to John's garrisons - from his experience on the Third Crusade, where the Turks had made extensive use of Greek fire, notably in the defence of Acre (*Itinerarium perigorinorum et gesta Regis Ricardi*, ed. w. Stubbs (RS, (864), pp. 81, 85, 105, III, 113, 220-1). Intriguingly, the Pipe Rolls not only reveal the expenses paid for crossbowmen sent to Nottingham, but also those of 'quodam Saraceno et quodam Griffon'. Greek engineers, some of whom Richard may have encountered in Sicily or Cyprus, were regarded as highly skilled siege technicians; see e.g. William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, tr. E. A. Babcock and A. C. Krey, 2 vols. (Columbia, 1941: repr., New York, 1976), 11, 15.¹⁶

Bedford in 1224⁶¹ revealed that, given sufficient time and resources, the king could take the strongest of castles. Little wonder, then, that as the Barnwell annalist noted, the fall of Rochester undermined many men's faith in the efficacy of their fortifications.⁶²

In terms of defence against rebellion, not only were many royal castles superior in size and design to baronial strongholds,⁶³ but the; rebels themselves frequently lacked siege engines. In May 1215, in the brief campaign culminating in the granting of the Charter, both Wendover and the Barnwell annalist noted explicitly that the barons failed to take Northampton and Bedford because they lacked engines.⁶⁴ That Prince Louis had no access to native expertise once he had landed in England is suggested by the fact that he had to ship his engines from France.⁶⁵ It was the great trebuchet Malvoisin, requested for the siege of Dover, that weighed down Eustace the Monk's ship almost to the gunnels, and on which he himself was beheaded when the ship was captured by the English off Sandwich in 1217.⁶⁶

Yet, for all such purely military considerations, one returns to the overwhelming impression that the factor which most frequently terminated rebel resistance was the impact of the king's presence. Nowhere is this more strikingly demonstrated than in Richard's campaign of 1194 to subdue those garrisons in England holding out for Prince John. Merely the news of Coeur de Lion's return is said to have caused the rebel castellan of St Michael's

61 For a discussion of these two sieges see R. A. Brown, *English Castles*, 2nd edn (London, 1976), pp. 190-4. References to the siege of Rochester are conveniently collected in S. Painter, *King John* (Baltimore, 1949), pp. 361-4, while for a detailed account of the logistics of the siege of Bedford see G. H. Fowler, 'Munitions in 1224', *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society*, v (1920), 117-32.

62 Waiter of Coventry, *Memorial*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols. (RS, 1872-3), II, 227: 'Pauci erant qui munitionibus se crederent'.

63 Brown, *English Castles*, pp. 71--92: *idem*, 'Royal Castle-building', 354-98.

64 Waiter of Coventry, II, 219: *CM*, II, 586.

65 *Chronicon Anglicanum*, p. 172.

66 *L'Histoire de Guillaume 1^{er} Marechal*, ed. P. Meyer, 3 vols., Societe de l'Histoire de France (1891-1901), II, 17387--96, 17450-5.

Mount, Henry de Pommeroy, to die of shock.⁶⁷ Be that as it may, the great strongholds of Nottingham and Tickhill still held out resolutely. The latter had been besieged by the bishop of Durham, but on hearing reports of the return of the king himself, the garrison obtained licence from the bishop to send two knights to see for themselves. Immediately they found the news to be true they offered up the castle to Richard.⁶⁸ The garrison of Nottingham, however, continued to resist, not believing that the king had actually come, and hoping that instead this was simply a ruse by the royalist nobles to induce their surrender. Intensification of the siege, however, led them to send out two messengers, who were granted an interview with the king. On confirmation of Richard's presence, the garrison capitulated almost immediately, putting life, limb and possessions in the king's mercy.⁶⁹ Nothing could illustrate more clearly the intensely personal nature of authority and its enforcement; both the garrisons of Tickhill and Nottingham had to see Richard in the flesh before they would capitulate, but once they had done so surrender was almost instant.

If such incidents highlight once more the importance of the king's presence, they again raise considerations of military reputation. The garrisons of Tickhill and Nottingham must have been fully aware of Richard's renown as a besieger, which had recently been augmented by the fall of Messina, several Cypriot fortresses and the great city of Acre. As the admiring Richard of Devizes noted, Richard 'knew nothing better than storming cities and overthrowing castles'.⁷⁰ Such a reputation had begun early in Richard's military career. While his elder brother Henry was establishing himself as the darling of the tournament circuit in northern France, the young count of Poitou was cutting his teeth in real warfare in the course of the endemic localised revolts in Aquitaine. He had demonstrated his military ability in the campaign of 1176 in which in addition to several castles he took both Limoges and Angouleme,⁷¹ but it was the storming in 1179 of

67 Howden, III, 238⁸. 68 *Ibid.*, 237-8.

69 *Ibid.*, 237-40

70 *Chronicon Richardi Divinensis de tempore regis Ricardi primi*, ed. and tr. J. T. Appelby (London, 1963), p. 24

71 'Benedict', I, 120-1.

Tallembourg, the great fortress of Geoffrey de Rancon which was deemed to be impregnable, that really established Richard as a leading commander. Its storming after a sustained assault, which as Ralph of Diceto noted had been 'a most desperate enterprise, which none of his predecessors had ventured to attempt'⁷² greatly enhanced his prowess and earned him a triumphal reception by his father.

More immediately, the shock and fear at the fall of such a strong castle caused the collapse of further resistance. Geoffrey's other main castle at Pons, which had successfully resisted Richard before the siege of Taillebourg, now surrendered immediately, since their lord had been captured. Within a month, the other leading rebel, Vulgrin of Angouleme, gave up his city and the castle of Montignac to Richard.⁷³ Similar factors are visible at work in other campaigns where a combination of successful sieges and the personal arrival of the ruler resulted in a chain reaction causing a landslide of surrender. The wholesale capitulation of rebel garrisons in England following Henry II's arrival in 1174,⁷⁴ Richard's re-establishment of control in the Angoumois in 1194,⁷⁵ John's Poitou campaign of 1214,⁷⁶ and almost total collapse of resistance during John's northern campaign of 1215-16 following the fall of Rochester⁷⁷ are but some of the more prominent examples of this widely occurring phenomenon. As the author of the *Gesta Stephani* put it, describing how Baldwin de Redvers fled from Stephen despite having heavily fortified the Isle of Wight, God brought it about that 'he and his adherents should be smitten with despair of resistance to the king'.⁷⁸

So far, we have examined those factors that made men reluctant to face the king in battle or siege. But important as these considerations were, we must not over-stress them. The high incidence of revolt in the eleventh and twelfth centuries clearly demonstrates that there were many who did not scruple to violate the bonds of homage and fealty, though conversely, the ease with which many rebellions were suppressed and the readiness of many

⁷² Diceto, I, 431-2.

⁷³ 'Benedict', I,

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 72-3.

⁷⁵ Howden, III, 256-7.

⁷⁶ *CM*, 11, 572-3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 636-42; for further references and a useful summary of this campaign see Painter, *King John*, pp. 368-71.

⁷⁸ *CS*, pp. 44-5.

rebels to capitulate swiftly indicates that here was a crucial disparity between the avowed aims of many of the insurrections and the desire to maintain effective opposition against the king.

Yet a number of rebel lords, perhaps even a considerable number, were prepared to carry their enmity to its logical, even regicidal conclusion. This they might seek to achieve by a plot or ambush rather than openly face the king in arms. Thus, in 1095, Robert of Mowbray and his supporters had planned to ambush Rufus in woods bordering Mowbray's lands: This very attempt, however, caused an erstwhile plotter, Gilbert de Tonbridge, to throw himself on the king's mercy and reveal the whole conspiracy.⁷⁹ Henry I was only saved from an assassin's arrow by the quality of his hauberk when he was fired upon en route to Wales,⁸⁰ while it was the opportunity provided by John's campaign against the Welsh in 1212 that led a group of barons headed by Eustace de Vesci and Robert FitzWalter to plan his assassination.⁸¹

Others were more open in their attempts on the king's life.

At the battle of Bremule in 1119, William Crispin succeeded in striking Henry I on the helmet before being overpowered,⁸² while Stephen was wounded during an ambush by Ranulf of Chester in 1147.⁸³ Examples of such personal assaults are rare largely because of the rarity with which rebel forces engaged the king in battle. In siege warfare, however, the king's life was frequently threatened by missile weapons. In 1183, whether by accident or design, the men of Limoges had twice fired upon Henry II and came close to killing him,⁸⁴ while the rebel garrison at Nottingham in 1194 shot arrows close enough to Richard to kill a knight standing beside him.⁸⁵ At Chaluz in 1199, Richard was not so fortunate, and died from the wound of a bolt.⁸⁶

It is interesting to note the prevalence of missile weapons in such attacks on the king. Bow, crossbow, javelins or stones were, of course, the principal means of defence for a besieged garrison. Unless as at Bourguignon, 1124, and Lincoln, 1217, where bowmen were specifically ordered to aim not at the knights but at

⁷⁹ Orderic, IV, 280-1. ⁸⁰ *GR*, II, 477-8.

⁸¹ Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 80-2. ⁸² Orderic, VI, 238-9.

⁸³ *GS*, pp. 200-1. ⁸⁴ 'Benedict', I, 296.

⁸⁵ Howden, III, 238.

⁸⁶ See J. Gillingham, 'The Unromantic Death of Richard I.', *speculum*, LIV (1979), 18-41.

their horses,⁸⁷ there could be no half measures with such lethal weapons; bolts or arrows took no prisoners. But may there also have been a sense in which the immediacy and enormity of physical assault on the king's person was somehow distanced by the use of such missile weapons? Although Malmesbury relates, with Henry of Huntingdon and Orderic, that at Lincoln in 1141. Stephen was physically overpowered and taken prisoner,⁸⁸ it is the Angevin apologist who ascribes the king's ultimate fall to an inanimate object, thrown by an anonymous hand: Stephen was felled by a stone, 'and it is not known who dealt the blow'.⁸⁹

Degrees of readiness or reluctance to wound or kill the king can be explained both in personal terms and in the immediacy of lordship. When covering Henry II's retreat from Le Mans in 1189, it was not by chance but by design that William Marshal slew Richard's horse and not the rider.⁹⁰ William's intense loyalty to the House of Anjou, let alone his own sense of honour, would have made it inconceivable for him to have harmed the Angevin heir. It is equally clear that both Henry I's forces at Tinchebray and those of Robert of Gloucester at Lincoln in 1141 had no intention of killing either Robert Curthose or Stephen, despite the potentially awkward problem of how to dispose of a captured ruler. Similarly, at Lewes in 1264, it seems that the lives of Henry III, Richard of Cornwall and the Lord Edward were never in serious danger. By the time of Evesham, however, the political situation had become such that de Montfort may well have sought the king's death by having the captured Henry III armed in a suit of de Montfort's own armour and placed in the line of battle, so that he might fall victim to royalist swords.⁹¹

Where ties of lordship were weak or in dispute, the monarch's life was far more at risk. In 1099, despite having received a magnanimous grant of a day's respite from William Rufus, the Manceaux garrison of Mayet hurled a rock at the besieging king and nearly killed him, while in 1183 the citizens of Limoges fired

⁸⁷ Orderic, VI, 350-1; *CM*, III, 21.

⁸⁸ Orderic, VI, 544; *GS*, pp. 112-13; *HH*, p. 274

⁸⁹ *HN*, p. 49.

⁹⁰ *Guillaume le Marechal*, II, 8831-47.

⁹¹ *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, ed. H. Rothwell, Camden Soc., LXXXIX (1967), p. 201. For Lewes and Evesham in general see D. A. Carpenter, *The Battles of Lewes and Evesham*, 1264-65 (Keele, 1987).

on Henry II and came close to killing him.⁹² Where no ties of homage or fealty interposed, moreover, men might not hesitate to attempt the life of an opposing ruler. At Bouvines in 1214, Philip Augustus was saved from the attacks of the imperial infantry only, according to William le Breton, by the quality of his armour and his strong right arm,⁹³ while in turn the French knights made a sustained effort to kill the Emperor Otto.⁹⁴ Earlier that year, a lone French crossbowman on the walls of Roche-aux-Moines had devised an ingenious plan to fire on John as he reconnoitred the walls, attaching yarn to a bolt which he fired at the king's shield bearer. Though he succeeded in pulling both bearer and pavise into the moat, John himself escaped.⁹⁵ Long before his own demise at Chaluz in 1199, Richard had been wounded in the knee at the siege of Gaillon by a crossbow bolt fired by the routier captain Cadoc. That the wound was not more serious was probably only due to Cadoc's defective aim.⁹⁶

Underlying readiness to capitulate was the fear of royal vengeance and the desire to avoid the harsh penalties which failed rebellion might incur. For Anglo-Norman and Angevin kings regarded - and sought to punish - rebellion as *proditio et infidelitas*, a breach of the most sacrosanct bonds of homage and fealty. Thus Robert Curthose had the garrison of St-Ceneri mutilated in 1088.⁹⁷ At ~hrewsbury in 1138, Stephen hanged Arnulf de Hesdin and nirlety-three others, while Richard hanged the garrison of Chaluz in 1199, and Henry the defenders of Bedford in 1224.⁹⁸ In many instances, however, a combination of realpolitik, military pragmatism and the extensive ties of kinship in existence between the Anglo-Norman nobility acted as potent constraints on the king's ability to punish rebels by death or mutilation. At Rochester in 1088, and Exeter in 1136, for example, intense pressure from the nobles in their camp forced Rufus and Stephen respectively to spare the lives of the vanquished rebels, whom they had initially

92 Orderic, v, 258-61; 'Benedict', I, 296.

93 *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton*, ed. H. F. DeLaborde, 2 vols. (Paris, 1882, 1885), I, 282.

94 *Ibid.*, 283-4; *CM*, II, 580-1.

95 *Chroniques des comtes d'Anjou et des seigneurs d'Amboise*, ed. L. Halphen and P. Pourpardin (Paris, 1913), pp. 252-3.

96 *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton*, I, 135 (*Phillipidos*, v, ll. 258-67).

97 Orderic, IV, 154-5.

98 Orderic, VI, 520-3, and 522, n. 2; Howden, IV, 82-3; *CM*, III, 86, 89.

been intent on executing as an example.⁹⁹ When after the fall of Rochester in 1215 John wished to hang William d'Aubigny and his fellow baronial rebels, he was prevented from so doing by the pragmatic arguments of the leading Poitevin noble, Savaric de Mauleon:

My lord king, our war is not yet over, therefore you ought carefully to consider how the fortunes of war may turn; for if you now order us to hang these men, the barons, our enemies, will perhaps by a like event take me or other nobles of your army, and, following your example, hang us. Therefore do not let this happen, for in such a case no-one will fight in your cause.¹⁰⁰

This combination of factors, moreover, not only limited the severity of royal retribution against insurgents, but frequently hampered the king's ability to successfully prosecute war against rebels in the field. That the close-knit bonds of kinship and political empathy between the Anglo-Norman nobility went far to limiting the extent of bloodshed in situations of civil war was apparent to contemporaries. 'This indeed was more than a civil war,' noted Orderic of Henry I's war in 1118 against William Clito, 'and ties' of blood bound together brothers and friends and kinsmen who were fighting on both sides, so that neither wished to harm the other.¹⁰¹ In certain instances, such as at Alton, 1101, and Crowmarsh, 1153, the magnates succeeded in preventing dynastic rivals from joining pitched battle.¹⁰² Where such engagements did occur, they were singularly unbloody, as the absence of noble fatalities at Tinchebray, 1106, Bourgtheroulde, 1124, and Lincoln, 1141, demonstrated.¹⁰³

In such circumstances, however, where the cross-channel aristocracy was repeatedly confronted with the painfully and potentially ruinous problems of divided allegiance, it was but a

⁹⁹ Orderic, IV, 128-35; *CS*, pp. 38-43.

¹⁰⁰ *CM*, n. 626. Exactly the same argument was used by Sir Waiter Manny to intercede with Edward III on behalf of the garrison of Calais in 1347: Froissart, *Chronicles*, ed. and tr. C. J. Brereton (Harmondsworth, 1968), p. 106.

¹⁰¹ Orderic, VI, 200-1.

¹⁰² For the events at Alton, where the magnates prevented battle between Henry I and Robert Curthose, see C. Warren Hollister, 'The Anglo-Norman Civil War', in his *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions in the Anglo-Norman World* (London, 1986), p. 90; for Crowmarsh, *HH*, pp. 287-8.

¹⁰³ Equally, at the second battle of Lincoln, 1217, Fawkes de Breauté ordered his cross-bowmen to shoot the chargers of the Franco-baronial army, not their riders, and considerations of kinship allowed many to escape from the rout (*CM*, III, 21).

short step for erstwhile supporters of one dynastic claimant to secretly favour the cause of his opponent. Speaking again of Henry I's campaigns of 1118 against those Norman lords who had risen in favour of William Clito, Orderic commented:

At that time King Henry could not support a long siege, because in the general confusion that always occurs in conflicts between kinsmen he was unable to trust his own men. Men who ate with him favoured the cause of his nephew, and, by prying into his secrets, greatly helped these men.¹⁰⁴

His fears were still greater during the revolt of 1123, and during his siege of Pont Audemer, Henry 'held suspect a number of men who fawned on him like devoted followers, for he knew their secret plots and judged them to be traitors in reality'.¹⁰⁵

Because the investment of a castle was usually a lengthy process, siege offered far greater opportunities for collusion and covert aid to the defenders than campaigns of movement and open engagement. During Rufus's siege of Rochester in 1088, Roger de Montgommery and 'many Normans who were assisting at the siege, attempted to help the besieged secretly as far as they could, but they dared not raise arms openly against the king'.¹⁰⁶ Though the castle was forced to capitulate, these nobles succeeded in pressuring Rufus against his will to spare the garrison. During his suppression of Robert of Mowbray's rebellion in 1095, however, the king was in a far stronger position to resist such a fifth column within his army. At the siege of Bamburgh, 'those who were conscious of their treachery and their adherents kept silent for fear of discovery; pale with fear because they realised their attempt had failed, they mingled with the royal forces and readily entered the service of the man whose ruin they had planned'.¹⁰⁷ Pinned up within the castle without the aid he had expected, Mowbray found this intolerable, loudly shouting to his conspirators by name and openly inciting them to respect the sworn conspiracy they had made. Hearing this, the king and his faithful vassals smiled to themselves, while the conspirators, knowing that their guilt was made public, were tormented by fear and shame.¹⁰⁸

104 Orderic, VI, 200-1.

105 Orderic, VI, 340-1. Orderic's comment is corroborated by SD, II, 274.

106 Orderic, IV, 126-g.

107 Orderic, IV, 282-3. 108 *Ibid.*

Since many 'rebellions' between 1088 and 1154 were in fact risings on behalf of dynastic rivals such as Robert Curthose, William Clito or the Angevins who had as strong if not a superior claim to legitimacy than the ruling king, these factors of baronial kinship and political empathy undoubtedly compromised the psychological advantages otherwise enjoyed by the ruler in warfare against erstwhile vassals, thereby further hindering his effective prosecution of war.

Such considerations were given an added dimension and potency should the insurrection be headed by a royal cadet who was heir to the throne. In circumstances such as Robert Curthose's rebellions against his father, and still more prominently in the revolts of Angevin cadets between 1173 and 1194, the supporters of the present king were acutely conscious that in supporting the father against his rebellious sons they were in all probability waging war against their future sovereign.

By mid-1189, for example, the speed and totality with which resistance crumbled in the face of the assaults of Richard, the *de facto* if not unequivocally *de jure* heir to Henry II's empire, and his Capetian ally reveal the extent to which the majority of Henry II's erstwhile supporters had bowed to the inevitable and deserted the sick, and ageing king. The *Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal* graphically conveys the fear and uncertainty experienced by those who, in opposition to the count of Poitou, had remained with the Old King to the last, not least William the Marshal, who had most cause for concern since he had personally unhorsed Richard outside Le Mans.¹⁰⁹ As it was, Richard instantly pardoned those who had stood by his father, valuing their loyalty and rather contemning those who had deserted Henry *in extremis*.¹¹⁰

But men could not always be certain of such magnanimous treatment. Thus in March 1193, on being informed of Richard's imminent release by the German emperor, the regency council decided to lay siege to John's main castles. Despite the fact that Windsor was on the verge of surrender, however, news that

¹⁰⁹ *GuiUaume le MaTticha*~ II. 8773~34I.

¹¹⁰ 'Benedict', II, 72. When three prominent lords, Guy de Valle, Ralph de Fougeres and Geoffrey de Mayenne, who had deserted Henry just before the fall of Le Mans, came to Richard seeking a reward and a reinstatement of the lands and castles taken from them by the Old King, Richard disseised them, saying they were traitors who had deserted their lord in his hour of need.

Richard was being detained once again led Walter of Coutances and his colleagues to make a truce with Count John, which left Nottingham and Tickhill still in his hands.¹¹¹ They could not afford to alienate John completely while there was still a substantial risk that Richard might not return.¹¹² That the king was not in fact released till February 1194 showed the wisdom of their caution. Immediately on receiving confirmation of the king's liberation, however, the regents dispossessed John and again laid siege to his castles.¹¹³ Despite the complete legitimacy of quelling rebellion against their lord the king, the successful prosecution of war against the heir apparent was only expedient if it seemed to the king's supporters that their present master would sit securely on the throne for the years to come.

Let us conclude with the most striking example of all, which demonstrates both the consternation men might feel at having fought against the heir apparent, and also the disquiet at taking up arms against an anointed ruler. For when the young Henry Plantagenet, crowned and anointed in 1170, rose against his father in 1173-4 and again in 1183, Henry II's *familiars* were placed in an unenviable situation. Their successful resistance to the Young King was completely within the bounds of vassalic propriety for, ~en, they had performed homage and fealty to him, it had been expressly saving that owed to the Old King, his father. Yet it was undeniable that young Henry was a king, whose special status, once created, could not be ignored even in the circumstances of revolt.¹¹⁴ Despite the essential illegality of the Young King's rebellion, moreover, Henry's supporters had cause to fear the recriminations of the man they had defeated in war if later he succeeded to the throne. These fears are clearly voiced in Jordan Fantosme's poem on the 'great war', which not only urges reconciliation between father and son, but seeks to demonstrate to the Young King the courage and fidelity of Henry II's *familiars*,

111 Howden, III, 206-7.

112 Despite incurring the charge of being traitors to the king and his realm, Hugh Bardulf and William de Stuteville had already refused to allow Geoffrey, archbishop of York, to lay siege to Tickhill, 'because they were liege men of Count John', Howden, III, 206.

113 Howden, III, 236-7.

114 In the aftermath of the war of 1173-4, Henry accepted the homage of Richard and Geoffrey, but at first refused that of the younger Henry 'quia rex erat' ('Benedict', I, 79, 82-3).

stressing that they are his natural counsellors, who will in turn stand by him should he merit their fidelity.¹¹⁵

Most eloquent of all, however, is the peace treaty of 1174 between father and son. Despite Henry II's overwhelming victory over the coalition that had been leagued against him, the treaty not only pardons those who had taken up arms against the Old King, but contains a reciprocal provision securing the Young King's pardon and future good will to all those who had aided his father against him.¹¹⁶ In the light of these considerations, Henry II's unequivocal and ultimately disastrous prevarication and obfuscation over nominating Richard as his principal heir after the death of the Young King in 1183 become more understandable. Though in the end his failure to allow the baronage to perform homage to Richard engendered the rebellion that caused his downfall and death, Henry was adamant that any future insurrection should not be headed by a man who, like himself, was also the anointed of the Lord.

115 M.J. Strickland, 'Arms and the Men: War, Loyalty and Lordship in Jordan Fantosme's *Chronicle*', in *The Ideas and Practice of Medieval Knighthood*, IV, ed. C. Harper-Bill and R. Harvey (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 187-200.

116 'Benedict', I, 77-3.