

marriages and money almost as he pleased. And there was nothing in the Charter about the direction of policy. Henry might be unwise to make war and peace without the consent of a great council, but the Charter did not say so.

Another framework of Henry's rule was provided by the growing strength of English national feeling. Here the loss of Normandy in 1204 was important.¹⁶¹ It meant there was no longer an elite, a hundred or so strong, of great barons who held land in both the kingdom and the duchy and probably felt Anglo-Norman rather than exclusively English. Henceforth the nobility of England would live and be born in England. They could share the Englishness of the county knights, the bedrock of local society, and the Englishness of the free tenants and peasants, free and unfree, beneath them. These feelings of Englishness were strengthened under John and during the minority by the belief the country was under threat from foreigners. The aliens, Peter des Roches and the rest, inserted by John into the government, had been followed by a war portrayed as rescuing England from the French.¹⁶² And then there had been the politics of the minority where, or so it could be thought, a gang of foreigners led by Bishop Peter and Falkes de Bréauté disturbed the peace of the kingdom and had to be repressed by Hubert de Burgh and Archbishop Langton. The way Langton celebrated Becket as the great English martyr saint, following on from St Alphege and St Edmund, was another strand in the growing sense of national identity.¹⁶³ How far a great baron such as William Longespée, earl of Salisbury, identified with England is shown by his reaction to Falkes de Bréauté's outburst.¹⁶⁴ Falkes had declared, so Longespée told Hubert de Burgh, that 'all *we* native born men were traitors and wanted war'. Clearly Longespée included himself (and Hubert) in the 'we'.¹⁶⁵ Born and living largely in England, Henry was well placed to exploit this sense of national identity. Unfortunately it grew in strength during his reign in reaction to rather than in support of his policies.

The minority had given Henry a grounding in England's administrative and social structure. From the summer of 1222, he spent a great deal of time at Westminster, the base of the bench of judges hearing civil pleas according to the forms of the common law.¹⁶⁶ He must equally have been

¹⁶¹ For a sketch related to what follows, see Carpenter, *Struggle for Mastery*, 4–11, 269. The major study is Thomas, *English and Normans*.

¹⁶² Carpenter, *Minority*, 29. The war is described as being 'between the English and the French' in a charter of 1217 in which the former rebel Geoffrey de Say (captured at the battle of Lincoln) makes an agreement with the regent's nephew John Marshal: BL Add. MS 27982, fo. 21v (a discovery of Nicholas Vincent).

¹⁶³ Eales, 'The political setting of the Becket translation', 137–9.

¹⁶⁴ For Longespée, see Strickland, 'William Longespée'.

¹⁶⁵ *RL*, i, 220–1.

¹⁶⁶ Henry was 111 days at Westminster in 1223, 149 in 1224, 199 in 1225 and 149 in 1226: Craib, Brindle and Priestley, *Itinerary of King Henry III*, 10–11. For the contrast with John and the pre-eminence of Westminster in the minority, see below, 351. For the common law legal procedures, see Hudson, *Formation of the English Common Law*.