

sworn to maintain the liberties in our Charter of the Forest and we wish them to be preserved unharmed.¹¹⁸ Thus Henry sought to sedate discontent before his departure and win God's favour for the coming expedition.

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1230

In the early months of 1230, Henry and Hubert did all they could to rally the earls and barons to the expedition. They welcomed them to court, gave them favours and took their counsel. On 7 February a decision was made at the exchequer by the king in the presence of Hubert and the earls of Chester, Cornwall, Gloucester, Surrey, Aumale, Hereford and Huntingdon.¹¹⁹ A particular effort was made to conciliate Richard of Cornwall, who became twenty-one in January, and was, of course, the heir to the throne. He was given 1,000 marks and the honours of Eye and Wallingford, Wallingford castle becoming one of his main residences. Although he had yet to receive anything in hereditary right, Richard had been prepared to witness the charter acquitting Hubert of accounts as justiciar.¹²⁰

It was at this moment that Simon de Montfort first enters English history. Simon was a younger son of the most famous French nobleman of the age: the Simon de Montfort who had led the Albigensian crusade and been killed in 1218 at the siege of Toulouse. Although in the allegiance of the king of France (his Montfort was Montfort l'Amaury near Paris), Simon the crusader had a claim through his mother, Amice, to the earldom of Leicester in England. (She was a sister of the childless earl Robert of Leicester who had died in 1204.)¹²¹ This claim King John had briefly recognized. Now, early in 1230, with clever timing, young Simon arrived in England and sought to recover his father's position, his elder brother Amaury having resigned the family claims in his favour. Henry wanted allies and was impressed by Simon. Some two years his junior, persuasive and plausible, here was someone who might give long years of faithful and fruitful service. In February it was agreed that Montfort could have the lands and rights enjoyed by his father once these had been resigned by the current tenant, the earl of Chester. (Henry had earlier agreed that Chester would not be dispossessed until he had recovered his lands in Normandy.) In April, after Montfort had promised 'to stand in the king's service in England and elsewhere', he was granted 400 marks a year

¹¹⁸ *CR* 1227-31, 274-5, 385; *CLR* 1226-40, 159; TNA E 368/11, mm. 4d, 5; *PR* 1230, 97, 245. For the forest eyre at this time in Nottinghamshire, see Winters, 'The forest eyre 1154-1368', 165.

¹¹⁹ TNA E 368/11, m. 5d.

¹²⁰ *Patent Roll* 1225-32, 313; *CR* 1227-31, 287; *CLR* 1226-40, 172; *RCWL*, i, 84.

¹²¹ The claim was only to half the lands of the honour of Leicester, the other half passing to Amice's younger sister Margaret, married to Saer de Quincly, earl of Winchester.

until he received the Leicester lands.¹²² It was the beginning of a fateful relationship.

Montfort did not come on the 1230 expedition but the muster at Portsmouth was joined by the earls of Cornwall, Pembroke, Chester, Derby, Gloucester, Aumale, Hereford and Huntingdon, as well as John de Lacy (soon to be earl of Lincoln) and the heirs to the earldoms of Norfolk and Winchester. As far as is known, the question of whether tenants-in-chief owed service overseas was not raised.¹²³ All told, letters of protection were issued to 370 barons and knights. With their retinues the total force must have been much larger. This time there was no problem over transport. Lists were drawn up of the ships and their masters (each was to carry at least sixteen horses), and Henry found himself with a surplus. The army was eventually carried over in some 230 ships with 160 being let go.¹²⁴ Evidently Henry would have liked a bigger army. With money from the scutage, a clerical aid, tallages levied on the Jews and the royal demesne, and 4,300 marks from Ireland, Henry took with him a treasure chest worth at least £20,400.¹²⁵ Given that it had taken a tax of £40,000 to save Gascony in 1225–6, the expedition was hardly adequately funded.¹²⁶

Henry himself arrived at Portsmouth on 17 April. Two days later he received the new regalia which he had ordered for the expedition: a royal robe of white silk, with sandals and gloves, and a crown, sceptre and rod of silver gilt. Henry then asked for his ring with the small ruby to be sent as well, adding that it was kept in the same box as his gold crown. He clearly recognized the importance of sitting in state and displaying the majesty of kingship. Henry also recognized the importance of gift-giving and took with him eight coffers filled with jewels.¹²⁷

The fleet set sail on 1 May: *Welfare*, *Goodyear*, *Goodchild*, *Falcon*, *Godale of Portsmouth*, *Countess*, *Stockstrong* were the names of some of the ships. ‘On the day on which he boarded his ship, led by a spirit of humility, the king kissed all the poor, infirm and lepers and caused many good things to be given to them’, recorded a mendicant chronicle.¹²⁸ This was the first time Henry

¹²² *Patent Roll 1225–32*, 124, 325; *CR 1227–31*, 316; Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, 8–9.

¹²³ The early schedule of baronial demands in 1215, ‘the Unknown Charter’ (Holt, *Magna Carta*, 427, cap. 7), accepted that service was due in Normandy and Brittany, and Brittany was the immediate destination in 1230. For all Henry’s overseas campaigns (in 1230, 1242–3 and 1253–4), there are no detailed records of payments out of the wardrobe. There is, therefore, no means of knowing how far the armies were supported with money in the form of wages or loans (the latter much used by John). If Henry did give loans, he never sought their repayment. For the development of loans, see Church, ‘The 1210 campaign in Ireland’.

¹²⁴ *CR 1227–31*, 387; *Patent Roll 1225–32*, 344–6, 370–5.

¹²⁵ *CLR 1226–40*, 161; *CR 1227–31*, 302; *Patent Roll 1225–32*, 329–30, 335, 337–8, 341. Mitchell, *Studies in Taxation*, 180–95, analyses the taxation for the campaign.

¹²⁶ For other comparisons, see below, 568, 598.

¹²⁷ *CR 1227–31*, 323, 329, 335; *Patent Roll 1225–32*, 335.

¹²⁸ BL Cotton Nero A IX, fos. 69r–69v.

had been to sea. It must have been an exciting, perhaps alarming experience. Of course, had the old continental empire been still in place, he would by now have crossed to Normandy many times. As it was, he sailed past the Norman ports of Dieppe, Le Havre and Caen, where his ancestors had so often disembarked, rounded the Cherbourg peninsula and then, allowing part of the fleet to continue, put into Guernsey for the night of 2 May, the Channel Islands being the one part of the duchy of Normandy still in his hands. His reason was that his sister Isabella (brought along presumably with a view to some marriage) was seasick. Henry finally reached his destination, the Breton port of St Malo, around the third hour on 3 May. Already the alliance with Duke Peter was showing its worth. Without it, Henry's destination would have been Bordeaux.

Hearing of the king's landing, Duke Peter, in 'the march of Anjou', hurried to St Malo and arrived on 6 May. The next day there was a council of war. Its decisions shaped the whole future of the campaign. St Malo is in the north-eastern corner of Brittany hard by the Norman frontier. Peter already had a foothold over the frontier through holding the great castle of St James de Beuvron. Stretching northwards were the Norman dioceses of Avranches and Coutances, the very parts of the duchy the English government had hoped to retain in the peace proposals of 1228. In this area there were Norman nobles who might be tempted onto Henry's side. Henry at this moment had the initiative. At the time of his arrival, as a letter home reported, Louis IX was still 'in France preparing to come with an army to meet us'.¹²⁹ Clearly Louis would have to respond to whatever Henry did. His army, moreover, was riven by faction with conflicts swirling around the count of Champagne and the count of Flanders. It had taken a truce to bring it together at all.

In these circumstances, did Henry hope for an advance with all his forces into Normandy? If Louis came to meet him, as surely he would, might not some great battle in the Cherbourg peninsula reverse the verdict of Bouvines? If Henry argued for that, he soon gave way to other counsels. The decision taken was to split the army. Henry, Hubert, William Marshal and the great bulk of the English forces were to head south. The aim was to recover Poitou, not Normandy. Meanwhile, Duke Peter and Ranulf of Chester were to remain in the north-east of Brittany. There they could defend the duchy from French attack and try to regain the lands in Anjou of which Peter had already been deprived.¹³⁰ They also had more particular objectives. Duke Peter and Earl Ranulf had reached an agreement and done a swap. Peter gave Ranulf St James de Beuvron, which was an ancestral castle of the earls of Chester. In return, Ranulf gave Richmond castle and Richmondshire to Peter. So at last Peter had

¹²⁹ *DD*, nos. 218–20.

¹³⁰ Painter, *Scourge of the Clergy*, 131–2.

full possession of the honour of Richmond.¹³¹ Probably Chester's first move (as early as 17 May he was commanding his own section of the king's army) was to assert his control over St James and the surrounding area.¹³² Duke Peter and Earl Ranulf also had a mutual enemy in Andrew de Vitré. Andrew was lord of Vitré, near the Breton border with Maine, and had long been a thorn in Peter's side. He also held some of the earl of Chester's lands in Normandy.¹³³ Not surprisingly he now threw in his lot with the king of France. In revenge Peter and Ranulf destroyed his castle at Marcillé-Robert and engaged in concerted action against Vitré itself.¹³⁴

Henry and his army, meanwhile, headed south. The plan was for him to go first to Dinan to see his mother, who was expected there on 11 May. He would then go on to Nantes to meet his stepfather Hugh de Lusignan.¹³⁵ If he could win them over, he would have struck a major blow towards the recovery of Poitou. Henry was indeed at Dinan on 11 May and at Nantes on the 17th. But there is no sign that he met Hugh and Isabella there. He did, however, have the opportunity of meeting someone else, for Louis had now arrived with 'a large army'. On 8 June he was astride the Loire at Champtoceaux only twenty miles from Nantes.¹³⁶ Henry thus had the chance to fight the great battle for the recovery of his empire.

But Henry never stirred. He remained stationary in Nantes from 17 May until the end of June. His strategy was absolutely the reverse of seeking battle. It was explained with crystal clarity by Hubert de Burgh in a letter home to Chancellor Neville. The king had stayed at Nantes, he reported:

... because of the arrival of the king of France and his army, who staid in those parts both to obstruct our way and prevent us proceeding further, and to tempt us by diverse means so that through an attack of our own, or in some other way, he might find a chance of attacking us.¹³⁷

The 'proceeding further' here meant proceeding further into Poitou, and at least something was being done on the diplomatic front to further that strategy. 'The king has stayed at Nantes for three weeks,' the king's steward Ralph fitzNicholas reported on 8 June, 'waiting for and drawing to him the magnates of Poitou.' FitzNicholas then gave a long list of those who were expected to come into the king's service. Unfortunately the

¹³¹ Wendover, iii, 198; *CR 1227-31*, 410-11. See Eales, 'Henry III and the end of the Norman earldom of Cheshire', 105-6.

¹³² *CR 1227-31*, 410.

¹³³ Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, 335-6, assuming that Andrew retained the lands granted by Philip Augustus to his father.

¹³⁴ *DD*, nos. 221, 223; Wendover, iii, 195; *Layettes*, ii, nos. 2057-8.

¹³⁵ *DD*, no. 219.

¹³⁶ *DD*, no. 220; Painter, *Scourge of the Clergy*, 68.

¹³⁷ *DD*, no. 223.

biggest prize had already slipped away. 'You should know,' fitzNicholas confessed, 'that [Hugh de Lusignan] has wholly departed from the fealty of the king and rides with the king of France since [the latter] has given him great gifts and a new convention has been made between them.' This was all too true, the agreement, reached on 30 May, being essentially a renewal of the 1227 treaty of Vendôme.¹³⁸

A letter home on 20 June from the royal clerk Geoffrey of Wolford shows there was disquiet at this stationary strategy: 'one thing you should know displeases the world here as is openly said both by our circle and by others, namely the king's long delay at Nantes. As a result some of our French adherents . . . have lost hope in us, men who are anxious for our welfare and progress, because we are spending the time idly doing nothing.' Similar reports reached Roger of Wendover: the king's army, he opined, remained idle at Nantes, drinking, womanizing and consuming treasure.¹³⁹

Wendover blamed Hubert de Burgh for this situation: he would not permit the earls and barons to move arms against the enemy. There are some signs that Henry was frustrated by this inaction. In July, in a letter to Chancellor Neville, he denied that 'sharp words, verba aspera' had passed between him and his justiciar. 'We have never held him so dear as we do now, as he who, above all our faithful men, attends to our affairs most diligently and devotedly'.¹⁴⁰ The implication was surely that sharp words had indeed passed between them. Henry, moreover, sought to find a way out of the impasse, though it was hardly a military one. At the end of June, Hubert's chaplain, Richard de St John, wrote an anxious letter to Neville. The king, 'I do not know by whose devious and sinister suggestion' and 'against the wise counsel of the justiciar and everyone else', had insisted (the 'royal will bursting out in such fervour') on dispatching envoys to Rome asking for Cardinal Giovanni de Colonna to be sent to England as a legate. St John was horrified at the possible consequences for the English church but 'neither through myself nor through the justiciar was I able to change the king's intention while he waxed hot in the matter'. The heat, however, did not last and St John was able to report that, in the end, Henry had backed down, persuaded by Hubert's 'various clever arguments' to do so. Unfortunately it was too late to recall the envoys and the pope expressed astonishment at Henry's change of mind.¹⁴¹

At this very time, however, the clouds were clearing. Henry and his army had not been mindlessly stationary in Nantes. They had been playing a waiting game. They knew that the fragile truce holding the French army together was due to expire on 1 July. As early as 20 June there

¹³⁸ *DD*, no. 220; *Layettes*, ii, no. 2052. Louis also reached an agreement with another great Poitevin baron, Raymond, vicomte of Thouars: *Layettes*, ii, nos. 2055, 2060–1.

¹³⁹ *DD*, no. 221; Wendover, iii, 199.

¹⁴⁰ *DD*, no. 224.

¹⁴¹ *DD*, no. 222. For Giovanni, see *DD*, nos. 19, 168; *Reg. Gregoire IX*, no. 3298.

were rumours Louis was planning to return to France. By the end of the month he was gone and his army had disintegrated with one faction launching an attack on the count of Champagne.¹⁴² At last the way was open for Henry, but where should he go? In June, Duke Peter and Earl Ranulf had been in negotiations with the Norman noble Fulk de Paynel. He was the lord of a substantial barony in the diocese of Coutances centred on La Haye-Pesnel. Towards the end of June he and his brother William, and 'a great part of the knights of his family' (as a letter home put it), entered Henry's allegiance. According to Wendover, they begged Henry to invade Normandy 'with the certain hope of subjugating the land'. Henry, Wendover says, was up for this only for the justiciar to quash the idea. It was far too dangerous. So Poitou remained the priority with Normandy a poor second. As Henry explained, the submission of the Paynels meant that 'having finished our business in Poitou, we will be able to approach the march of Normandy, and it is believed undoubtedly that many more will come to us'. It hardly sounded as though he was thinking of advancing very far into the duchy.¹⁴³

THE MARCH THROUGH POITOU TO GASCONY

On 1 July, therefore, Henry left Nantes and set out for Poitou. His excitement must have been great. As well as Hubert, he had with him William Marshal, the earls of Derby and Hereford, and John de Lacy. There was a real sense that something 'big' was about to happen. Hubert wrote home to Chancellor Neville asking for his prayers and hoping that God, without whom nothing could be achieved, would grant 'prosperity and happiness to our expedition'.¹⁴⁴ Henry had many of the barons of Poitou in his pay and promises from others. Yet it soon became clear that he was engaged in a promenade through the county not a war of conquest. As Ralph fitzNicholas observed, the king 'will be able to ride well and safely through the parts of Poitou to the parts of Gascony and, if it is necessary, he will easily be able to return to the parts of Brittany'.¹⁴⁵ Was that all it was about? Indeed, it was.

There were two reasons for these limited ambitions. The first was the result of Louis IX securing Hugh de Lusignan. His castles ran through Poitou and formed a barrier to any outright conquest.¹⁴⁶ Hugh also held Saintes, the capital of the Saintonge. The clerk Geoffrey of Wulford, writing on 20 June, thought there was a 'certain hope' of Hugh coming

¹⁴² *DD*, no. 221; Wendover, iii, 196.

¹⁴³ *Patent Roll 1225-32*, 382; *DD*, no. 224; Wendover, iii, 197-8; Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, 324; Stevenson, 'England and Normandy 1204-1259', 335-454.

¹⁴⁴ *DD*, no. 223.

¹⁴⁵ *DD*, no. 220.

¹⁴⁶ For Lusignan castles in Poitou see below, 248-9, 256.

over, but he never did.¹⁴⁷ The second reason was so obvious and irremediable that it was not mentioned in any of the letters home. Poitou was dominated by its towns. The king of France had held Poitiers itself since 1204. The conquest of 1224 had brought him Niort, St Jean d'Angely, and finally the great port of La Rochelle, the key, as everyone acknowledged, to Poitou. In 1230 all the towns were held firmly for Louis IX. Henry did not go near them, let alone put them under siege. Although, moreover, many of the Poitevin barons had entered Henry's allegiance, their loyalty was fragile. It rested on pensions and promises. These men were very aware that they might be in difficulties once the king was gone. Essentially, therefore, in his progress through Poitou, Henry avoided the towns and moved from the castle of one questionable supporter to that of another. He was like a man crossing a fast-flowing stream by jumping from one wet and slippery stepping stone to another, in the process avoiding a series of large rocks.

Having left Nantes, Henry thus moved to Luçon where the lord Aimery de Thouars had just accepted a fee of 100 marks a year. He then moved to Marans where he promised its lord, William de Mauzé, a fee of £50 a year if he lost his land in the king's service. Here Henry was twelve miles from La Rochelle. But that was close enough. He gave the town a wide berth and headed on south to Tonnay at the mouth of the Charente, where the lord, Hugh de Tonnay, had been in receipt of gifts since 1227. Henry now faced another barrier to any recovery of the Saintonge, for he had yet to reach an agreement with Geoffrey de Rancon, whose great castle of Taillebourg, fifteen miles away, controlled the passage up the Charente.¹⁴⁸ From Tonnay, therefore, Henry, avoiding both Taillebourg and Saintes, moved on south to Pons, having secured the allegiance of its lord, Reginald de Pons, with a promise of 200 marks a year until (optimistically) land could be given him 'in the areas of our conquest'. Still Reginald, leader of the opposition to Hugh de Lusignan in the Saintonge, was worth buying. Henry stayed in the castle at Pons with its great keep from 15 to 19 July and there reached an agreement with Iter de Barbezieux, promising him a lump sum of 1,240 marks and 200 marks a year. Henry de Trumbleville, as seneschal of Gascony, was to put a large garrison into Barbezieux castle for the duration of the war or 'until the march may be further enlarged', a striking indication of the shaky military situation.¹⁴⁹

Having done what he could on the line of Charente, Henry moved south towards Gascony. At Mirambeau, just to the east of the Gironde estuary, having summoned help from the Gascon towns, and borrowed mangonels

¹⁴⁷ *DD*, no. 221.

¹⁴⁸ *CLR* 1226-40, 37; *Patent Roll* 1225-32, 384. For offers to Geoffrey, see *CR* 1227-31, 423-4; *Patent Roll* 1225-32, 392.

¹⁴⁹ *Patent Roll* 1225-32, 387; *Layettes*, ii, no. 3049. See Chenard, *L'Administration d'Alphonse de Poitiers*, 200.

and a trebuchet, he took the castle after a ten-day siege (21–31 July), his only military activity in the campaign.¹⁵⁰ He then headed south again, reaching Bordeaux on 5 August. Henry was at last in the great capital of Gascony. The Gascons had long cried out for his presence. Would he now make Bordeaux his base and tour the duchy, reasserting his authority? The answer was no. Henry stayed in Bordeaux for just five days (5–9 August). He then set off back to Brittany, at the same time arranging a short truce with King Louis and Hugh de Lusignan. ‘The reason we will tell you when we next see you,’ Henry told his supporters, somewhat shamefacedly. The reason was to allow him a safe exit from the Saintonge and Poitou.¹⁵¹

Henry had not merely decided to return to Brittany. He had also decided, doubtless with Hubert’s counsel and consent, to return home altogether. Henry announced the decision on 6 September by which time he was back at Luçon. Ten days later, now at Nantes, Henry explained himself. He was acting on the counsel of his earls and barons and Duke Peter. The reason was an illness. Although he had now recovered, he could not ‘spend this coming winter safely in parts overseas’. Henry wanted his home comforts. At the end of the month, Henry gave another reason, one more designed to encourage his Poitevin supporters. He was departing ‘especially so that we can make provision against a future time both in men and money, so that we may be able to return . . . to resist our enemies more strongly’.¹⁵²

There was something in both these explanations. Illness had indeed ravaged Henry’s army. The earl of Gloucester, Nigel de Mowbray, Maurice de Gant, Geoffrey de Say, Thomas Basset and William de Coleville of Bytham all died during the expedition. Richard of Cornwall and several others fell ill. Henry had also run out of money. ‘If we had an abundance of money instead of suffering from its lack’, we could succeed in everything, he told the regents in a letter of 18 July. Two days later Ralph fitzNicholas was more forthright. The king was ‘astonished’ that since his departure he had received no money at all: ‘if he had an abundance of money, he would recover the greatest part of his land’. As it was, not until early September did fresh supplies arrive from England, and then only to the tune of £6,000.¹⁵³

At least Henry did not depart leaving his allies entirely in the lurch. Out of the money arriving from England, he ordered around £3,000 to be paid out to his ‘Poitevin barons’. Failing any success in negotiating a truce, he promised Duke Peter 6,000 marks and a force of 400 knights and 100 horse

¹⁵⁰ *CR* 1227–31, 422; *Patent Roll* 1225–32, 388; Wendover, iii, 198. The castle was on the hill above the town. The site, with views over the estuary, is now occupied by a Renaissance chateau converted into a luxury hotel.

¹⁵¹ *CR* 1227–31, 446; *Patent Roll* 1225–32, 394.

¹⁵² *Patent Roll* 1225–32, 395–7; *CR* 1227–31, 450–1.

¹⁵³ *DD*, nos. 224–5; *Patent Roll* 1225–32, 397–8.

sergeants, although only 100 knights were immediately available.¹⁵⁴ Henry also persuaded William Marshal to stay as 'captain' of the king's forces, 'making war in our place'. In return, the Marshal was to hold in hereditary right the royal demense manor of Awre in Gloucestershire. The earl of Chester, with St James de Beuvron to protect, also remained, and was promised 1,000 marks.¹⁵⁵

After being detained by adverse winds, Henry finally set sail from St Pol de Léon on 26 October, reaching Portsmouth on the following day. In his absence, William Marshal and Earl Ranulf led raids into Anjou and Normandy, destroying both the castles of Châteauneuf-sur-Sarthe, north of Angers, and that of Pontorson, close to St James de Beuvron just over the Norman border. 'So,' as Matthew Paris commented, 'more seemed to be done with the king absent than present'.¹⁵⁶

THE FAILURE OF THE 1230 CAMPAIGN

Henry had one solid achievement to show from the 1230 campaign. He had managed to wrest the isle of Oléron from Hugh de Lusignan and place it under his seneschal of Gascony, Hugh de Trumbleville.¹⁵⁷ Given its strategic situation, the isle would facilitate a blockade of La Rochelle in any future campaign.¹⁵⁸ For the rest, however, the 1230 expedition was rightly judged an abject failure. Henry had crossed to Poitou with a large army, commented the Margam annalist, 'where he lost many of his men, expended a great deal of money, and recovered little or nothing of his lands'.¹⁵⁹ Henry himself later wrote feelingly of how he had suffered 'grievous harm to our body and irreparable loss of our magnates and men'.¹⁶⁰ But the loss had been due not to fighting but to illness, or, in the case of Hubert's nephew Raymond de Burgh, accident. He was drowned trying to ford the Loire on horseback. In melancholy fashion the bodies came back for burial in England: Raymond and Geoffrey de Say to Hubert's foundation the Maison Dieu in Dover; Maurice de Gant to Bristol, where his body was divided between the priory of St Augustine's and the Dominican friars; and Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester, to Tewkesbury, where he was patron of the monastery.¹⁶¹

Henry left Brittany uttering brave words about a return with fresh forces. There was every reason for that given a French descent on the duchy was generally expected. In March 1231, Henry tried to muster forces

¹⁵⁴ *CR* 1227-31, 430-2; *Patent Roll* 1225-32, 399-400, 403.

¹⁵⁵ *Patent Roll* 1225-32, 400-1, 404; *CChR* 1226-57, 174.

¹⁵⁶ Wendover, iii, 200; Paris, *HA*, ii, 329.

¹⁵⁷ *Patent Roll* 1225-32, 387-8, 490.

¹⁵⁸ See below, 248.

¹⁵⁹ Margam, 38.

¹⁶⁰ *CR* 1234-7, 169.

¹⁶¹ Tewkesbury, 76; Winchester, 85; Dunstable, 125; Wendover, iii, 199.

to go out and help Duke Peter, later expressing surprise and astonishment at the poor turnout. But he made no move to go himself. When the French invasion came in June 1231, it was Duke Peter and Ranulf of Chester who led the resistance, resistance which resulted in a three-year truce being concluded on 4 July.¹⁶² So at least for the next three years Peter continued to hold Brittany from the king, and the Poitevin barons remained in Henry's pay and allegiance. The failure of the 1230 expedition, nonetheless, marked a sea change in Henry's approach to his lost continental empire. Down to 1230 he had actively planned its recovery and summoned army after army to go with him overseas to bring it about. After 1230 such planning virtually ceased. It was to be more than ten years before Henry summoned an army to go with him again. This was not because he had given up hope of recovering his empire. He continued to make substantial payments to nobles in Poitou and the Saintonge. When the opportunity came in 1242, he was as enthusiastic as ever. Rather it was because there seemed no prospect of gaining the necessary allies. The year 1230 had clearly shown that Duke Peter alone was not enough. Henry had also learnt just how thoroughly unpleasant a continental campaign could be.

The course of the campaign had been governed by two critical decisions. One was to sit tight in Nantes instead of bringing Louis IX's army to battle. Without knowing the respective size of the two forces, how justified this was we cannot know. It may well be that Louis's army, riven though it was by faction, was very much bigger, as certainly were his financial resources. The English did not want another Bouvines. The other decision was to prioritize the recovery of Poitou over that of Normandy. This was understandable too, given the paucity of Henry's Norman support and the number of his potential allies in Poitou. Normandy's revenues, towns and castles made it far and away the most valuable part of the old Angevin empire, but by the same token it was by far the most difficult to recover. Already, in the proposals for a settlement in 1228, the English government had accepted that for the most part it was lost, though it was true that the events of 1204 had far from severed all the connections between England and the duchy.¹⁶³ In 1227 a burgess of Caen wrote to Henry explaining how Normandy might be recovered. In 1230 itself Henry gave licence to ships from Caen, Barfleur and Dieppe to carry on trading throughout his power. Indeed, ships from Barfleur and Dieppe helped to ferry over Henry's army.¹⁶⁴ But the fact was that the king of France held Normandy in a vice. Many of the royal officials established after 1204 came from the French royal demesne. That might make them unpopular as outsiders but it also meant they were fiercely loyal. For the

¹⁶² *CR* 1227–31, 579–80; *Layettes*, ii, 2144.

¹⁶³ The subject is studied in Stevenson, 'England and Normandy', and in Power, 'The treaty of Paris'. More publications from Power are forthcoming.

¹⁶⁴ *Patent Roll* 1225–32, 323, 369–70, 413.

few nobles who did go over to Henry, retribution was swift. Thomas de Gorges, Enguerrand de Sancto Philiberto and others lost their lands and had to flee Normandy, taking refuge in England or the Channel Islands.¹⁶⁵

For the burgess of Caen, writing to Henry, the route to the recovery of Normandy was easy. Henry should promise the Normans the restoration of their lands in England and the English the restoration of their lands in Normandy.¹⁶⁶ It was far from as simple as that. The kind of neat swap made by the earl of Chester and the duke of Brittany was rarely possible. The fact was that any reunion of kingdom and duchy would open a Pandora's box of conflicting claims to land: far better, many must have thought, to keep it firmly shut. Normans who had lost lands in England knew those lands were hardly being kept warm in the king's hands all ready to be given back. Many had been given away by John and Henry III to ministers and magnates to reward their service and consolidate loyalty.¹⁶⁷ True, in nearly all cases, tenure was only to last until Normandy was recovered. The implication was that the Normans would then recover their English estates. But how easy would that be to effect? The experience of Fulk de Paynel himself was hardly encouraging. His lands in England were held by his kinsman Hugh de Paynel and two household knights, Nicholas de Lettres and William de Gaugy, both of whom went on the 1230 expedition. Henry felt unable to dispossess these men of their lands and had to fob Fulk off with promises. And this was how he treated his greatest Norman supporter! Not surprisingly in 1231 Fulk returned to the allegiance of the king of France. The episode revealed another problem. Henry had promised Lettres that if he did lose his Paynel estate, he would be given compensation. Such promises were common and meant that the dispossession of those holding lands of the Normans would be a costly exercise for the king.¹⁶⁸ The French king, meanwhile, was adept at using the lands seized from the English in Normandy to keep on side those who counted most. Andrew de Vitré, on the face of it, should have been temptable into the English camp for he had lost lands in Cornwall after 1204. Philip Augustus, however, seeing the danger, had compensated him with

¹⁶⁵ Stevenson, 'England and Normandy', 231–2; *Patent Roll 1225–32*, 405; Strayer, *Administration of Normandy*, 6.

¹⁶⁶ For discussion and more detail, see Power, 'The treaty of Paris', and for the lands of the Normans, see Moore, 'The loss of Normandy and the invention of *Terre Normanorum*', behind which is Power's AHRC-funded 'Lands of the Normans' project.

¹⁶⁷ A survey in 1237 covered about 120 properties from the lands of the Normans in fifteen counties with an estimated value of about £3,000 a year. Most had been given away to reward royal servants: Power, 'The treaty of Paris', 150.

¹⁶⁸ *Patent Roll 1225–32*, 357–8, 362, 399–400, 403; *CChR 1226–57*, 84, 132; *CPR 1258–66*, 165–6; Stevenson, 'England and Normandy', 452. For Bingham, the property granted to Nicholas de Lettres, see Crook, 'The "lands of the Normans" in thirteenth-century Nottinghamshire', 102–3.

lands of the earl of Chester in Normandy. In 1231, Louis IX added the honour of the Mowbrays.¹⁶⁹

On the English side, many of those taking part in the expedition had little to gain from a reunion of England and Normandy. This created a virus affecting the very top of the expedition. William Marshal himself must have been perfectly content with the status quo. His father, the old regent, almost uniquely amongst the great Anglo-Norman barons, had managed to retain his Norman lands, and they were now held by William's younger brother Richard. The earl of Chester had certainly lost extensive lands across Normandy, but having obtained St James de Beuvron, through his deal with Duke Peter, he concentrated on defending that. Another baron on the expedition with nothing to gain was William Bardolph. In a very unusual and surprising way, he had recovered his father's estates at Beronville and Putot. This was surely thanks to the influence of Bardolph's stepfather, none other than Hubert de Burgh. Hubert indeed took a close interest in these Norman estates since one of his knights was a William de Putot.¹⁷⁰ When in 1229 Henry accused Hubert of being in the pay of the king of France, perhaps he was not so wrong.

Enthusiasm for the recovery of Norman estates was also dulled by the commensurate prospect of losing the lands of the Normans in England with which some leading nobles had been compensated for their Norman losses. Geoffrey de Say and the earls of Gloucester and Hereford were all in that position, as was William de Warenne, earl of Surrey. Perhaps the fear of losing Stamford and Grantham in Lincolnshire explains his absence from the expedition. There was also a large body of barons and knights on the campaign, headed by Hubert de Burgh himself, and including the stewards Ralph fitzNicholas and Godfrey of Crowcombe, who had no land to recover in Normandy, yet much to lose from the lands of the Normans in England.¹⁷¹ If then the magnates and ministers on the expedition had limited enthusiasm for the recovery of Normandy, that was even more true of Anjou and Poitou, counties in which they had no stake at all and could hardly hope to gain one. Geoffrey of Wulford might have said that the king's delay in Nantes displeased all the world, but he added that 'the greater part of our magnates' seemed to care little about it.

¹⁶⁹ Andrew's sister still held land in both England and Normandy: *RLC*, i, 207, 407, 541b; Stevenson, 'England and Normandy', 484–5; Stapleton, *Magni Rotuli*, ii, xlvi; Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, 336, 346, 356. For families profiting from land confiscated in Normandy, see Power, 'The treaty of Paris', 147–8.

¹⁷⁰ Stevenson, 'England and Normandy', 395, citing Stapleton, *Magni Rotuli*, ii, ccxvii; *BF*, i, 270. For Putot attesting a charter of Hubert, see Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library, Dean and Chapter Register B, fo.404, a reference I owe to David Crouch.

¹⁷¹ The list includes the earls of Cornwall and Derby, Roger de Quincy (heir to the earldom of Winchester), Peter de Brus, Philip de Aubigny, Richard de Argentan, Gilbert Basset, Drogo de Barentin, William de Cantilupe, Engelard de Cigogné, John fitzPhilip, Luke de Drumare, John de Plessis, William Talbot and Ralph de Trumbleville.

The one person who had everything to gain from a victorious battle, from a Crécy, Poitiers or Agincourt, was Henry himself. Instead, in those June days in 1230, as the tide flowed up and down the Loire, with the armies only twenty miles apart, the life flowed out of the Angevin empire. Whatever the material calculations, the earls and barons of England had come with Henry on the expedition. They had not quibbled over this being service overseas. The king's household knights had come too. These men were brought up to bear arms. They were frustrated by Henry's repeated ban on tournaments in England. Their heroes were men like the old William Marshal who had won fame through deeds of derring-do. It was up to Henry to exploit these feelings and galvanize his army into action. Even if there was no full-scale battle, he could surely lead into French territory the ravaging expeditions so central to the exercise of war. Yet Henry did none of these things. Neither the letters home nor the writings of the chroniclers suggest any kind of personal military effort.

Writing shortly before the launch of the expedition in 1230, a poet in the circle of Savary de Mauléon wrote optimistically about its potential results. The great Poitevin nobles would join the king, Poitiers itself would be his:

Now that the king is young and vigorous he should come and make war on the king of France, engage in assaults and combats, equip his troops well, give great blows and strike with his hands. For a young king who breaks his lance well, who is brave, gallant, courageous, wise and generous, charming and intrepid, of him it is said that a land is well placed in his hands.

Alas, the poet already suspected Henry was not like that:

Good sauce, clear wine, white bread, chambers and tapestries, and the like, to drink, to consult with quibblers, to ride like a dean on docile mounts, the king loves better all that than to put on a coat of mail. Hauberks and haberjons, helms, cuirasses, pourpoints, and hoquetons, would be far better for him now while he has neither thinning hair nor a grey beard. Ah king of England do not be either cowardly or indolent, it is not thus that you will take La Rochelle. It is necessary to have archers, and Brabançon mercenaries, knights and master engineers, who will give you a better counsel than lawyers.¹⁷²

The poet's fears could not have been more justified.

¹⁷² Jeanroy, 'Un sirventès politique de 1230', 277–8.