

THE 1210 CAMPAIGN IN IRELAND: EVIDENCE FOR A MILITARY REVOLUTION?

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The title of this paper asks the question whether there was a 'revolution' in the way royal warfare was conducted in the early thirteenth century, and whether, in the campaign that John waged in Ireland in the summer months of 1210, we have any evidence for the kind of radical change the word implies.¹ Anyone who would seek to use the word 'revolution' in the context of English warfare in this period is inevitably going to run into serious problems. Most important is that over the last fifteen or so years, we have been taught to look for continuity in military structures throughout the period from the arrival of Norman kings on the throne of England (if not before) to the reign of Edward I and beyond. The literature stressing this continuity is very convincing and, quite justifiably, is winning the day.² To suggest that John's reign saw anything remotely like a 'revolution' is, therefore, to fly in the face of the current trend in historiography. Nevertheless, it is possible to suggest that in the early thirteenth century John did try to do something that was new. The plan of this paper is to argue that John, faced with a serious military problem inherited from his brother Richard I,³ attempted to solve that problem by throwing large amounts of money at it. And, in the course of throwing large amounts of money at the problem, John showed his successors a way of conducting warfare which was to reach its full fruition in the middle years of the thirteenth century, and in particular during the reign of John's grandson, Edward I.

Long gone are the days when historians laboured under the misapprehension that our forebears were too naïve to worry overly about the logistics of campaigning. It is well known by now that running any campaign, especially one which involves the transportation overseas of large quantities of men and machinery, animals and supplies, is very expensive and extremely complicated. If a commander did not want his

¹ I am indebted to those who heard and commented on this paper, especially to Ann Williams who, like the good teacher she is, gently reminded me of the lessons I should have learned in Allen Brown's diplomatic seminar in London, but which, out of idleness, I had forgotten. In addition I should like to thank David Carpenter, Susan Reynolds and Maria Quine, all three of whom added greatly to any qualities this paper may have.

² The literature is extensive and this is by no means an exhaustive list: J.O. Prestwich, 'War and Finance in the Anglo-Norman State', *TRHS* 5th ser. iv, 1954, 19-43; *idem*, 'Anglo-Norman Feudalism and the Problem of Continuity', *Past and Present* xxvi, 1963, 39-57; and most importantly *idem*, 'The Military Household of the Norman Kings', *EHR* xcvi, 1981, 1-35; M. Chibnall, 'Mercenaries and the *Familia Regis* under Henry I', *History* lxii, 1977, 15-23; S.B.D. Brown, 'The Mercenary and his Master: Military Service and Monetary Reward in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *History* lxxiv, 1989, 20-38; S. Morillo, *Warfare under the Norman Kings, 1066-1135*, Woodbridge 1994.

³ For the contemporary view that Richard and John were involved in a 'seven year war' see D.A. Carpenter, 'Abbot Ralph of Coggeshall's Account of the Last Years of King Richard and the First Years of King John', *EHR* forthcoming.

campaign to end in disaster, he and his lieutenants had much to do in the way of planning and preparation. For most of the middle ages, the evidence for the logistics of warfare eludes us, and it is not until the reign of Edward I that we get detailed contemporary records describing the actual costs, both financial and organisational, of medieval warfare. The elucidation of this record evidence was started by J.E. Morris in his detailed and still essential study of Edward's Welsh wars, published in 1901, and it was continued by many other historians, culminating at the end of this century in the work of M.C. Prestwich.⁴

At the heart of Edward's military machine lay the royal household which, besides catering for the day-to-day needs of the king and his entourage, also performed the duty of being the main spending body of the central administration.⁵ In terms of spending, the most important department in Edward's household was the Wardrobe. It was through the Wardrobe that Edward 'organised the affairs of his realm', both in times of war and in times of peace. It was through the Wardrobe that Edward organised and paid for his military campaigns. It was the Wardrobe, too, which paid the salaries and wages of the knights and soldiers of the royal household. The military element in the royal household not only provided the core of the army and the units that could be deployed at short notice before the main body of the army had been mustered, but it also played an important part in the staffing of the campaign headquarters and in the leading of troops during the campaign. The Edwardian household was, then, central to the way war was conducted in the last third of the thirteenth century, but there were other ways in which Edwardian armies were constituted which have implications for this paper. The so-called 'feudal levy' (those men who owed forty days' service at their own expense as a result of their land-holdings) had ceased to play any significant role in Edward's armies. The reduced service quota forced upon the English monarchy by the middle of the thirteenth century meant that even the very greatest of the king's tenants-in-chief owed a miserly service. Hugh de Courtenay, for example, who under the old quota would have owed some ninety-two knights for lands that he held from the king, was expected to produce just three knights as his quota of service. Moreover, few of the 'greater men' wished to do their forty days' service in person, preferring instead to send a deputy even if they themselves were active participants in the campaign and were receiving the king's wages. This is not to say, of course, that Edward ceased to issue summonses to the feudal levy: it gave him forty days' free service from men who would later serve for his pay; although there were serious limitations to how the levy could be used. In 1297, for example, Edward was forced to concede that no one was required to serve in Flanders unless it was for the king's wages. More importantly, however, in continuing to call out the levy, Edward was assisting his tenants-in-chief to maximise their revenue. The king could levy scutage only on the new, reduced service quota, making the potential returns on the issue of summonses very slight; his tenants-in-chief, nevertheless, collected their scutages from their tenants on the old service quota. Calling out the levy was, therefore, an act

⁴ J.E. Morris, *The Welsh Wars of Edward I*, Oxford 1901, repr. with a foreword by M.C. Prestwich, Stroud 1996; T.F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England: the Wardrobe, the Chamber and the Small Seals*, 6 vols, Manchester 1920–33. N.B. Lewis, 'The English Forces in Flanders, August–November 1297', in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to F.M. Powicke*, ed. R.W. Hunt et al., Oxford 1948, 310–18; M.C. Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance under Edward I*, London 1972; *idem*, *Edward I*, London 1988; *idem*, *Warfare in the Middle Ages: the English Experience*, London 1996.

⁵ What follows is a summary of Prestwich, *War, Politics*, 78–86.

of largesse on Edward's part, but the levy itself had little part to play in his armies. The bulk of the Edwardian army was made up of paid men, who included the household bannerets, knights and sergeants as well as mercenaries, foot soldiers, engineers, masons, carpenters and the like, and voluntary unpaid men, who included the great men of the realm and their retainers as well as the twenty-/forty-*librate* men.

Edwardian armies were, therefore, complex in organisation. They required large sums of money to keep them in the field. This money was channelled through the royal household and in particular through the accounts of the Wardrobe. At the core of these armies was the professional element made up of the household troops and paid soldiers; and, in addition, the army comprised an important voluntary unpaid element. The feudal element in Edward's army was small, no more than a quarter of the cavalry in the Scottish campaign of 1300, for example, while hardly anything at all in the Flemish campaign of 1297, and since the campaigns were usually longer than the forty days' service required of them, those who stayed beyond the forty days then received the king's pay.

What gives Edward I's reign its peculiar charm for the historian of medieval military organisation is that Edward's campaigns are, in M.C. Prestwich's words, 'the earliest ones for which a substantial bulk of account and pay rolls survive'.⁶ It may be that for the reign of King John there is no 'substantial bulk' of the type of rolls to which Prestwich referred, but it is possible to reconstruct the outline of how this king conducted his campaign in Ireland during the summer months of 1210 from the survival of a household account roll, known as the *prestita* roll, for the regnal year Ascension Day 1210 to Ascension Day 1211.⁷ This *prestita* roll has attracted little detailed attention from historians in part because it appears to be a straightforward document.⁸ Its editor described this roll as being a record of 'imprest, advance or accommodation' which made the man who received the payment 'accountable', by which he clearly meant indebted, 'for the same to the Crown'.⁹ But these words do not tell the whole story. The *prestita* rolls of John's reign were products of the royal household and thus anticipate some of the functions of the later Wardrobe accounts.¹⁰ They record the *prests* that the king gave to men to carry out his business and which, it has been assumed, the king expected to be returned to his coffers at some future date.

The *prestita* rolls of John's reign were clearly part of a pair of household account rolls which were produced by the household clerks each year, the other being the *mise* rolls.¹¹ Like the *prestita* rolls, the *mise* rolls do not survive in continuous sequence,

⁶ Foreword to Morris, *Welsh Wars*, v.

⁷ *Rot. de Lib.*, 172-253.

⁸ The one notable exception to this statement is J.C. Holt in *Pipe Roll 17 John and Praestita Roll 14-18 John*, ed. R. Allen Brown and J.C. Holt, PRS, ns xxxvii, 1961, where a detailed and illuminating discussion of *prestita* rolls may be found at pp. 71-80.

⁹ *Rot. de Lib.*, xviii and n. Its editor, that great man of the Public Records, Thomas Duffus Hardy, thought it important because it is the 'only roll of that year of all the Chancery records which now exists' (p. xix); Tout, *Chapters*, i, 44-5.

¹⁰ H. Jenkinson, 'Financial Records of the Reign of King John', in *Magna Carta Commemoration Essays*, ed. H.E. Maldon, London 1917, 299. Jenkinson's words on the *prestita* rolls of John's reign are still worth reading.

¹¹ Jenkinson, 'Financial Records', 298-300. Two *mise* rolls survive from John's reign, one for 11 John in *Rot. de Lib.* 109-71, and one for 14 John in *Documents Illustrative of English History in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, ed. H. Cole, Record Commission, London 1844, 231-69.

although they must at one time have done so; there is evidence, for example, that there was once a mise roll for John's twelfth regnal year.¹² In order to give a true valuation of the prestita roll which covers the period John was in Ireland, therefore, we need to know something of the type of material which would have been available to us had its partner, the lost mise roll for John's twelfth regnal year, survived. Fortunately, one of the two mise rolls which has made the perilous journey intact to modern times dates from John's eleventh regnal year (Ascension Day 1209 to Ascension Day 1210), which enables us to see what sort of material was enrolled on these documents at more or less the same time as our prestita roll was compiled.¹³ Even more fortunately, the compilation of this particular mise roll coincided with the campaign that John waged in Scotland during the summer months of 1209, a campaign which we know involved a considerable army not unlike the one which accompanied John to Ireland the following year.¹⁴ This makes the use of this surviving mise roll for comparative purposes even more appropriate. And what emerges from an examination of this mise roll is that one would be hard pressed to conclude that John was involved in any major military activity during the period when we know that this was precisely what he was doing. The mise roll records the day-to-day expenses incurred by the king, such as the cost of paying messengers, of giving *dona* (gifts) to household knights, of paying the expenses of some carpenters, and the cost of transporting the king's effects, but there is little in the way of what might be termed military expenditure.¹⁵ In short, the mise roll during the time John was conducting his Scottish campaign records little or nothing that would not be there at any time during the king's itinerary. If we had simply been left with the mise roll on which to muse, we would be forced to conclude that the royal household had little part to play in what is known to have been a significant, if uneventful, campaign. And, more importantly for the context of this discussion, it seems reasonable to conclude that there would have been little in the way of military expenditure to be found on the mise roll for John's twelfth regnal year had we been lucky enough to have it.

Even a cursory glance at the prestita roll which covers the period in which John was in Ireland would leave the reader in no doubt that John was conducting a massive campaign. At the simple numerical level, the sixty-three day campaign takes up a full fifty-seven pages of the 1844 edition, whilst the remainder of that year fills up only another nineteen pages. Much of this roll consists simply of lists of men and the amount of *prests* they received, which makes the document initially unrewarding. But once the significance of the payments is understood, the roll becomes an extremely valuable source, for what it demonstrates is that in the Irish campaign of 1210 we have an example of how the royal household conducted war in the reign of King John. It shows that John used something like seven hundred ships to transport his army across the Irish sea, and that these were paid for by the household officials, Geoffrey Luttrell and Henry fitz Count, and recorded on the prestita roll.¹⁶ The thousand or more sergeants and crossbowmen who made up the bulk of the army were paid by another of John's

¹² *Rot. de Lib.* 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 244, 245.

¹³ *Rot. de Lib.*, 109–71.

¹⁴ S.K. Mitchell, *Studies in Taxation under John and Henry III*, New Haven 1914, 95; A.A.M. Duncan, 'John King of England and the Kings of Scots', in *Essays on the Reign of King John*, ed. S.D. Church, Woodbridge forthcoming.

¹⁵ *Rot. de Lib.*, 120, 121, 123, 124, 125–6; cf. Tout, *Chapters*, i, 44–5.

¹⁶ *Rot. de Lib.*, 173, 174, 175, 176, 179, 185, 188, 194, 197, 202, 206, 208, 213–4, 227, 228, 229.

household officials, Henry de Ver.¹⁷ A body of household officials was responsible for overseeing the payment of *prests* to named knights who accompanied John on this campaign. This body included the earl of Salisbury, the king's half-brother and a constant member of the royal entourage,¹⁸ William of Harcourt, a steward of the royal household,¹⁹ Ralph Gernun, the king's nephew and a marshal of the royal household,²⁰ and the royal household knights John of Bassingbourn²¹ and Robert of Burgate.²² And supervising virtually all these *prests* to named knights on the campaign was one Richard Marsh, clerk of the Chamber and thus the main spending officer of the royal household.²³

Besides these campaign expenses, there were other types of expenditure recorded on the *prestita* roll and which one would expect to form part of the costs of war. The wages paid to the Irish sergeants and crossbowmen were done so by the view of John de Gray, bishop of Norwich and at that time justiciar of Ireland.²⁴ Equally important to any campaign that involved laying siege to towns and castles (and what campaign in this period did not?) were the full panoply of miners, carpenters, stone-masons and ditchers. These men, too, had their wages and expenses recorded on the *prestita* roll.²⁵ The costs for the carriage of the king's treasure from London and Bristol were recorded on this roll,²⁶ as was the cost for transporting the king's pavilion.²⁷ There is even an item for the cost of sending a half dozen ships under the command of Geoffrey de Lucy, another man close to John, to pursue pirates.²⁸ What is evident from these examples is that the king's officers were responsible for almost every aspect of the campaign and that the campaign was run through the accounts of the royal household. In almost every respect this is what Edward I would do. Far from having to wait for Edward's reign for the record evidence demonstrating how medieval kings managed war through their households, we have here in the *prestita* roll the detailed account of the financing, organisation, and execution of an early thirteenth-century campaign.

In so far as it gives us for the first time a record of the cost to the royal household of conducting war in the high middle ages, the *prestita* roll for John's twelfth regnal year is a remarkable document. But in the sense that it shows us that late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century kings ran their campaigns through their households, it has nothing new to say. It has long been known that the Norman kings conducted war

¹⁷ *Rot. de Lib.*, 172–3, 174, 176, 179, 181, 187, 188, 192, 194, 202, 206, 208–9, 210, 214. Perhaps there were as many as 4,500 of these men, if we allow ourselves to multiply the amounts paid over by the supposed daily wage-rate of sergeants mentioned at p. 188. This figure, however, is certainly too high because it inevitably counts some men more than once. A more realistic figure might be 1,500, if it is assumed that during this campaign these men would be paid two or three times each.

¹⁸ *Rot. de Lib.*, 174, 177, 179, 182, 185, 187, 189, 192, 195, 214, 218, 224.

¹⁹ *Rot. de Lib.*, 207–8, 212, 212–13.

²⁰ *Rot. de Lib.*, 187.

²¹ *Rot. de Lib.*, 177, 182, 185.

²² *Rot. de Lib.*, 173, 176, 178, 179, 181, 182.

²³ *Rot. de Lib.*, 177, 179, 185, 187, 189, 192, 195, 207, 210, 214, 218, 224.

²⁴ *Rot. de Lib.*, 178, 188, 202, 211, 213. For de Gray's career see G.M. Budge, 'John de Gray, Bishop of Norwich', Manchester University MA Dissertation, 1946; and for his collected episcopal acts, C. Harper-Bill, *English Episcopal Acta vi: Norwich 1070–1214*, Oxford 1990.

²⁵ *Rot. de Lib.*, 195, 196, 206, 209, 226–7.

²⁶ *Rot. de Lib.*, 173, 194.

²⁷ *Rot. de Lib.*, 208.

²⁸ *Rot. de Lib.*, 179. There was also some Norman naval activity on the Welsh coast, possibly sent by the French king to hamper John's cross-sea operations (p. 227).

through their households, as the work of Marjorie Chibnall and J.O. Prestwich has shown.²⁹ Although we have no documentary evidence, the testimony of Orderic Vitalis makes it clear that Henry I retained a large military household which played a central role in the defence of Normandy. Money, it has been argued, played an important role in the way that Henry I's troops were maintained in the field, but it is still sometimes thought that forces raised on a feudal basis also made a significant contribution to the armies of the Norman kings.³⁰ What the *prestita* roll covering the Irish campaign shows is that in John's reign, in overseas campaigns at least, the feudal levy had no part to play in providing knights for the army. In order to persuade the knights of the realm to follow him over the Irish sea, John was forced to provide some sort of financial inducement which may be equated with the payment of wages. And this suggestion that John paid the army which went with him to Ireland and that those serving for their fees had little or no part to play in the proceedings depends upon a reinterpretation of the *prestita* roll which covers this campaign. As was pointed out earlier in this paper, the generally accepted view is that the *prestita* rolls of John's reign record loans made out of the king's treasuries which, it is also argued, were supposed to be repaid into the king's coffers at some future date.³¹ But the relationship between the money recorded as being paid out on the 1210 *prestita* roll and the sense in which these payments were loans is much more complicated than at first it may seem.

The view that the payments made on the *prestita* roll had to be repaid is, in a few cases, easily demonstrable. For example, there are *prests* recorded on this roll which are specifically described as being *super feodum suum*;³² it is plain that these payments were made with the intention that the amounts be set against the money fiefs (that is, formally granted annual payments) these individuals received from the crown. On other occasions *prests* were cancelled by the scribes *quia solvit* or *quia reddidit*, since they had been repaid by the time that this roll was written up in the form which it comes down to us.³³ In each of these cases it is possible to see that the men who received the sums were to repay them. Nevertheless, in the vast majority of instances on this particular roll, what seems likely is that the loans recorded as being paid out during the Irish campaign were not due to be repaid. A few concrete examples may serve to illustrate this point. Many of the payments made and recorded on the *prestita* roll for

²⁹ Chibnall, 'Mercenaries and the *Familia Regis*', 15–23; J.O. Prestwich, 'The Military Household', 1–35.

³⁰ An assumption that, since it is so hard to find actual examples of the feudal levy in action, must be based on inferences from material such as the words of St Anselm as reported by his biographer: 'for a prince has different kinds of *milites* at his court: he has some who are active in his service in return for lands which they hold from him . . .' (*The Life of St Anselm by Eadmer*, ed. R.W. Southern, Oxford 1962, 94), or the famous 'three instances' identified by J.H. Round ('The Introduction of Knight Service into England', in his *Feudal England*, London 1895, 303–5) such as the 1072 writ of William the Conqueror calling out the feudal levy (*Regesta*, i, no. 63; *Select Charters and Other Illustrations of English Constitutional History*, ed. W. Stubbs, 9th edn, revised by H.W.C. Davis, Oxford 1921, 97, and translated in *EHD*, ii, no. 218), which, incidentally, may be a forgery (according to a paper delivered by David Bates to the American Historical Association in 1987 as reported in Morillo, *Warfare*, 55 n. 65). Morillo suggests that the phrase 'Normans and English' in the chronicles 'may indicate the participation of feudal troops' (*Warfare*, 55–7). It seems likely that Susan Reynolds' suggestion that 'military service was a serious and toughly imposed obligation . . . but the precise quantification of noble obligation . . . may always have been less important for military than fiscal purposes' holds the key to the true nature of feudal service in this period (*Fiefs and Vassals: the Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted*, Oxford 1994, 362).

³¹ *Pipe Roll 17 John*, 73.

³² To take just one of a number of examples, *Rot. de Lib.*, 192.

³³ E.g. *Rot. de Lib.*, 233 'quia solvit apud Notingham', 237.

John's twelfth regnal year, and which have already been used to demonstrate that the campaign was run through the royal household, were not loans because it was clear that the men who received them were not required to repay them. The £3,837 10s 3d paid over by the clerks of the royal household to Geoffrey Luttrell and Henry fitz Count for the hire of the seven hundred or so ships that John used in the campaign is one such example where it would be difficult to sustain an argument which required that this sum was to be repaid. Another example is the payments made by Henry de Ver to the sergeants and crossbowmen in John's army amounting to some £2,382 14s 4d. A clue as to the real nature of the money that Henry dispensed to those sergeants and crossbowmen is given early on in the *prestita* roll when the scribe used the word 'liberaciones' for the payment Henry was to make, rather than the more usual *prestita*;³⁴ the term *liberaciones* in this instance meaning wages. These particular payments could never be recovered by the king and both John and the scribes who interpreted his will in recording these payments on the *prestita* roll must have known this. It is possible that these paymasters were required to account for the sums they had paid out; that is that they were accountable in the sense that they had to explain where the money had gone rather than in the sense that they were 'indebted to the Crown' and had to pay them back. There is, however, no evidence to substantiate this suggestion, plausible though it may seem.

On a more personal level, it is plain that some of the payments called *prestita* and made to named knights on the Irish campaign were not going to be repaid. The ten knights deputed to act as John's bodyguard for the duration of the king's stay in Ireland were obviously not expected to return the £10 *prest* they shared between them.³⁵ Equally the *prests* made over to household knights such as Alberic de Marines,³⁶ Walter de Verdun,³⁷ and Henry IV de la Pomeroy³⁸ were never recalled. Evidently, the term *prestutum*, commonly understood to mean an imprest, advance, or loan, had a much more flexible meaning in the household accounts of John's reign than we normally allow. Moreover, these examples of payments which were not loans invite the question that if the payments made to sailors, sergeants, crossbowmen, and the household knights were called *prestita* but in no way could be construed as loans in the sense that they had to be repaid, what, then, were the *prestita* paid to the mass of the knights who accompanied John to Ireland? These were the eight hundred or so named individuals in receipt of *prests* on the campaign, who, in the view of Sanders and others, would have represented the reduced service quota of the feudal levy. This is not an idle question. If the items recorded on the *prestita* roll were to be seen as loans, due to be repaid at some future date, then we can sit back safely in the knowledge that the idea of the feudal levy serving at its own expense for the first forty days is intact. If, however, what were recorded by the household clerks were not loans but payments akin to wages, then the feudal levy, that is, men serving because they owed service for the land that they held of the king, is banished from the ranks of John's armies, at least while he was involved in campaigns that took him overseas.

An examination of the pipe rolls shows that the ordinary knights who were recorded as receiving payments called *prestita* in Ireland during 1210, like the sergeants,

³⁴ *Rot. de Lib.*, 172-3.

³⁵ *Rot. de Lib.*, 191.

³⁶ *Rot. de Lib.*, 178, 205, 212, 226.

³⁷ *Rot. de Lib.*, 193, 213, 223.

³⁸ *Rot. de Lib.*, 205, 221.

crossbowmen, sailors, and household knights, do not seem to have been expected to repay those *prests*. There are, as one would expect, references to *prests* outstanding on men's accounts on the pipe rolls. A number of these *prests* relate to the sixth scutage which John levied to support his aborted attempt to regain his lost continental lands (but only a half dozen or so).³⁹ Other *prests* formed part of the money John lent out at various points in his reign to men who were in need of subvention. Hubert de Burgh, for example, owed two hundred marks which had been lent him to help with the ransom he had to pay for the release of some of his men from captivity in Flanders.⁴⁰ Walter de Gray, future bishop of Worcester, owed the king £100 in *prests*, and the abbot of Bindon, Dorset, owed forty marks.⁴¹ There is only one reference in the pipe rolls of John's reign to *prests* which were paid out to knights on the campaign which appear in the rolls as owing to the king, and that is the £10 that the knights of Baldwin de Béthune, count of Aumale, received, namely, £6 on 28 June at Dublin and six marks on 22 August also at Dublin.⁴² Why the *prests* paid to Baldwin's six knights should be recalled is beyond me, especially as the £15 of *prests* paid to Baldwin himself in Ireland were not recalled.⁴³ But, apart from this isolated example, there is nothing else in the pipe rolls that relates to the thousands of pounds in *prests* paid out on the Irish campaign and recorded on the *prestita* roll, whether to the named knights or to the unnamed rank and file who followed their king across the Irish sea. When John returned home from Ireland in the late summer of 1210, he did not have the *prestita* roll passed (or even summarised and passed)⁴⁴ to the Exchequer officials for the alleged debtors to be summoned to account for the loans they had received. The three-fold division of payments suggested by J.C. Holt – 'mercenaries receive *liberaciones*, military tenants *prests* or if not required to account *dona*' – seems not to hold true for this *prestita* roll at least.⁴⁵ The obvious question to ask is why this should be so: just what was John doing seemingly making loans and yet not recalling them? In order to answer this question, we need a brief excursion into the reigns of John's predecessors, his father Henry II and his brother Richard I.

Henry II was the creator of a huge trans-Channel empire which lacked many of the qualities of a truly unified state and exhibited the type of particularism which, it has been argued, made its disintegration almost inevitable. Nonetheless, while it existed, it had to be defended, and its defence was centred on the duchy of Normandy. It was from here that the Angevin kings could gain speedy access to all the likely trouble spots within the empire and it was, before 1204, here that the Angevin kings wanted their soldiers.⁴⁶ But the problem arose of how to persuade the flower of English

³⁹ *Pipe Roll 12 John*, 21, 47, 85, 162, 198.

⁴⁰ *Pipe Roll 12 John*, 39. It seems that John let him off this debt the following year (*Pipe Roll 13 John*, 80).

⁴¹ *Pipe Roll 12 John*, 177, 75.

⁴² *Rot. de Lib.*, 183, 226. On the second occasion the scribe noted that there were six of them. The amount shows as being owed on *Pipe Roll 12 John*, 12, and cleared the following year on *Pipe Roll 13 John*, 140.

⁴³ *Rot. de Lib.*, 214 (100 shillings and handed to Ralph Gernun, a king's marshal), 226 (15 marks and handed to Everard de la Beuvrière, a king's household knight). The details of these payments do not inspire confidence in the fact that Baldwin was actually present on the Irish campaign (but cf. B. English, *The Lords of Holderness, 1086–1260: a Study in Feudal Society*, Oxford 1979, 35, who suggests that he was there leading his knights).

⁴⁴ *Pipe Roll 17 John*, 74.

⁴⁵ *Pipe Roll 17 John*, 79.

⁴⁶ 'Here' being a twenty mile stretch of road between Rouen, the ducal capital, and Orival, on the border

chivalry to make the crossing to the continent to defend Normandy. By the time of Henry II, family ties with the duchy were disintegrating. The result of this drifting apart was that men were becoming less willing to follow their king overseas.⁴⁷ To counteract this tendency, as I.J. Sanders noted, Henry II took to summoning only a proportion of the kingdom's service quota. Richard I likewise summoned only a fraction of those knights who were owed him in 1191, 1194 and in 1198. In 1198, for example, Richard demanded that only one knight in ten should attend his campaign in Normandy.⁴⁸ Apart from the problem of persuading English men to serve overseas, there was also the consideration that the feudal levy was required to serve at its own expense for a period which by the thirteenth century was just forty days, and which is likely to have been little longer in the twelfth century.⁴⁹ This was hardly long enough for a king to have these men transported to the centre of trouble on the continent and to fight a campaign. Perhaps Henry II had little need for large armies on the continent, at least for the majority of his reign, but both Richard and John needed men in considerable numbers and for long periods of time in an increasingly desperate war for the defence of their lands against the forces of the king of France, a rising power which would eventually eclipse that of the Angevins. And finally there was the 'quality question'. Knights had an extremely important role to play in the judicial and administrative functions of the English shires, and, although administrative knights and fighting knights never constituted two strictly divided and distinct groups, inevitably some knights found that their inclinations lay in the field of local government rather than in the field of war.⁵⁰ Moreover, there were always going to be those who held knights' fees who were ill-equipped to fight because of old age, infirmity, gender, or youth. It must never have been possible to call out the full service quota in any age.

So how did the Angevin kings overcome this problem of getting unprofessional knights to campaign overseas for long periods of time? Sanders argued that in order to get their English knights to serve in Normandy, kings like Richard I and John were forced to accept a reduced service quota. This reduced service quota, made up, we must presume, of the better armed and more willing knights, could then be persuaded to serve for longer periods of time, whilst those who remained at home were made to contribute to the upkeep of those who went overseas. This particularly suited the king's needs, since it brought in revenue in the form of scutage which could be used to finance royal campaigns. In any case, kings like Henry II were mindful of the unsuitability of country knights for long and distant campaigns.⁵¹ So, for example, in 1205 John ordered that one knight in ten was to come to do military service whilst the other nine contributed to the one's campaign expenses. In this practice, John appears to have followed the principles laid down by his brother, Richard I, though in the 1205 example chosen by Sanders we should perhaps note that the call to arms was very unsuccessful.⁵² But it appears that John had another trick up his sleeve. In 1964, J. C. Holt argued

between Normandy and the lands of the king of France (J. Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*, London 1984, 53-4).

⁴⁷ J.C. Holt, 'The End of the Anglo-Norman Realm', in his *Magna Carta and Medieval Government*, London 1985, 23-65.

⁴⁸ I.J. Sanders, *Feudal Military Service in England*, Oxford 1956, 50ff.

⁴⁹ Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, 362.

⁵⁰ P.R. Coss, *The Knight in Medieval England*, Stroud 1993, 31-44.

⁵¹ 'The Chronicle of Robert of Torigni, Abbot of the Monastery of St-Michael-in-Peril-of-the-Sea', in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, ed. R. Howlett, RS LXXXII, 1889, iv, 202.

⁵² Sanders, *Military Service*, 50.

that John invented the system of giving *prests* to his military tenants in order to defer some of the costs associated with campaigning.⁵³ This, then, was a new method of 'subsidising the feudal host', designed by John to meet the specific needs of the defence of Normandy in the years leading up to 1204. Where the Irish campaign of 1210 is concerned, however, the evidence may be taken further than this: John did give *prests* to those knights who followed him overseas on campaign, but these were not *prests* in the sense that they had to be returned to the royal coffers at some future date. The *prests* paid to the eight hundred or so knights who joined John's Irish campaign were not meant as advances to help them with their campaign expenses until they could collect their scutages from their tenants: rather they represent a payment for the services of the men on campaign over and above the sums they could collect in scutage once they had received their writs from the crown. The army that went with John to Ireland in 1210 was a paid army in which men serving because of the knights' fees they held and for an initial period before going home or taking royal pay had no part to play. This is a point made more clear by the fact that the process of paying *prests* was started before the army had embarked for Ireland. At Cross-on-the-Sea near Pembroke, the place of embarkation and, presumably, the place of muster where service was to commence, seventy or so knights received their pay. The day after the army arrived at Waterford, another seventy or so knights received their pay. At Dublin four days later, another one hundred and sixty odd knights received their pay, and so the list could continue.⁵⁴ These men were in receipt of money which I have argued was akin to wages from almost the beginning of the campaign. In any event, they did not have to serve for what had become a standard forty days before they received the king's pay.

As we have seen, John, just like his grandson Edward I, ran his campaigns entirely through his household, a conclusion that is hardly surprising given what we know about the way in which the Norman kings ran their campaigns. What the *prestita* roll under discussion shows is the detail of how the Irish campaign was financed and organised. More importantly, however, is that this *prestita* roll shows that John paid for the services of the majority of knights who followed him on campaign. There was little or no feudal element in the army that went to Ireland in the summer months of 1210.

There are, however, three important caveats to be added to this main conclusion. Firstly, that the men who would have served in any feudal army continued to serve as paid troops in John's army in Ireland: the personnel remained the same, but the conditions of service had been modified to meet the changed demands of the crown and the increasing unacceptability to the English of serving overseas. Secondly, that there must have been an unpaid element which went with John to Ireland, as there was in the armies of Edward I.⁵⁵ Quite how large this unpaid element was, however, is difficult to determine. It is not possible, of course, to prove a man's presence on campaign by his receipt of a writ quitting him of his scutage unless he was recorded as receiving a *prest* in person. It could have been that he sent another in his place. Nonetheless, the receipt of such a writ may be suggestive of a man's attendance. So, for example, the earl of Chester received quittance of his scutage but did not receive

⁵³ *Pipe Roll 17 John*, 80.

⁵⁴ *Rot. de Lib.*, 177-8, 179-81, 182-5.

⁵⁵ *Prestwich, War, Politics*, 67-74.

a *prest*. William Marshal also received quittance of his scutage⁵⁶ and likewise took no *prests* from the king in Ireland.⁵⁷ And thirdly, following on from the first two caveats, it is clear that by the reign of King John, the link that had existed between scutage and knight-service obligation had been partially severed. Scutage was still levied from tenants-in-chief on the knight's fee, but military service was no longer required from the knight's fee in the way that has been traditionally accepted. It was, to all intents and purposes, the situation as it existed under Edward I, albeit the payments in his reign would not be called *prestita*, but wages.⁵⁸

The proposition that the knights who followed John to Ireland were paid money disguised as loans is all very well, but it leaves us with the awkward question of why the clerks of the household would draw up a document which historians have argued purports to record loans rather than wages. It seems unlikely that the king intended the payments to be seen as wages, and the clerks, with little experience of recording the payment of wages, used the wrong roll. There was at one time a roll in existence which recorded the *liberaciones* that certain men received from the king and which could easily have been used if it had been clear to the clerks that the payments made to the knights on campaign were indeed wages.⁵⁹ Neither is it likely that the clerks misinterpreted the king's will. The men who drew up the Angevin administrative documents were well-trained and intelligent men who knew their business. Of course they made mistakes. During John's reign the royal administration was in the process of experimenting with new methods of record keeping.⁶⁰ In the *prestita* roll of John's twelfth regnal year, we have one of those new types of document which had yet to become fixed in its form or, indeed, its content.⁶¹ By the time that the forms of royal documentation had been established, the *prestita* rolls were, quite clearly, recording advances and loans made out of the king's treasuries and nothing else.⁶² It was the Wardrobe accounts which recorded the main spending activity of the household.⁶³ But

⁵⁶ *Pipe Roll 12 John*, 32. There were, however, great magnates who received quittance for their scutages and *prests* on the Irish campaign. The earl of Hereford, for example, was recorded as receiving a *prest* in Ireland worthy of his rank and was made quit of his scutage (*Rot. de Lib.*, 213; *Pipe Roll 12 John*, 32). His 30 mark payment was collected by his man, Richard de Vihin. This makes one wonder just how large this unpaid element might have been.

⁵⁷ The problem with taking this discussion too much further is that the close rolls, on which we would expect to find notifications that writs had been issued for the allowance of scutage to the king's tenants-in-chief, are lost for this year, and only under Norfolk and Suffolk in the pipe roll for Michaelmas 1210 are writs of quittance enrolled.

⁵⁸ Prestwich, *War, Politics*, 159–67. In Edward's reign, the cavalry element might be paid *prestita* which would then be set against future wages. The term *prestitem* had by Edward I's reign a clear and unambiguous meaning. It seems likely that in my interpretation of *prests* in 'The Rewards of Royal Service in the Household of King John: a Dissenting Opinion', *EHR* cx, 1995, 277–302 (at 284–5) I was far less aware of the problems surrounding this word than I should have been.

⁵⁹ *Rot de Lib.*, 231, 233, 235, 244. For the view that these rolls of *liberaciones* would have recorded payments of wages to men of 'lesser' rank see Church, 'The Rewards of Royal Service', 285.

⁶⁰ Jenkinson, 'Financial Records', 300.

⁶¹ We have other examples of documents starting life as composite records only later splitting into separate sections to deal with particular types of receipt and expenditure. Writs of liberate, for example, are to be found on the close rolls in John's reign but came to be recorded separately early in the reign of Henry III. There is an earlier *prestita* roll from 7 John printed in *Docs of English History*, 270–6.

⁶² Tout, *Chapters*, i, 49.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, ii, 132–44.

in John's reign, as we have seen, the expenses of war, although also channelled through the royal household, were recorded on the prestita roll. And the household clerks who recorded these payments on the prestita roll did so for a very sound reason: they were attempting to put their king's wishes into effect, and to assume anything else would be extremely unwise. But is it possible to fathom those wishes from this document or at least to speculate about what those wishes might have been?

Part of the answer to this question, it seems to me, lies in the nature of early thirteenth-century society. It is all very well for a lowly sergeant or sailor or even carpenter or engineer to receive money for his services described as wages. But unless a knight, who had, under the influence of the Church, come to see himself as a noble warrior, even a *miles Christi*, wanted to be disparaged by his colleagues as a stipendiary knight, a man who served for filthy lucre, he could not possibly serve in return for wages. Orderic Vitalis, in a vivid, and hence well-known, account, tells of the attitude of the general mass of the knights who took pay for their services. At a battle near the village of Bourghéroulde on 26 March 1124, the stipendiary knights in the pay of Henry I lined up against the 'flower of knighthood of all France and Normandy'. Whilst Henry I's knights dismounted to await the onslaught of their enemy, the French and Norman knights contemplated the coming battle. It is at this point that our chronicler, Orderic Vitalis, puts words into the mouths of the French knights: 'heaven forbid', they are made to say, 'that these *pagenses* and *gregarii* should frighten us into changing our route, or that we should shrink from fighting them'.⁶⁴ In other words, because they received pay for their services, they, the knights of Henry I, were the lowest of the low. John, in order to persuade the chivalry of England to serve in his campaigns overseas, had to pay them money, but society looked down on those who served *pro stipendiis*. In order to persuade the feudal levy to serve for money, he therefore had to disguise these payments as *prests*. In giving 'loans', therefore, King John was operating as a beneficent lord in a society that recognised good lordship as one of its key pillars. Moreover, those who received his 'loans' were in his debt even if they were not required to pay back the money they had received. And John could always threaten to recall this money if he so wished. We have an army, invented in John's reign because of the need to have a constant supply of knights to defend Normandy, which although sharing the attitudes and characteristics of the old feudal levy, had now seen its conditions of service modified to include payments for the cost of campaigning.⁶⁵ A military revolution had been effected much earlier than perhaps we have been willing to allow.

There is a footnote to this paper. In the late 1220s, when the regime of Henry III was in financial difficulties, someone, possibly a household clerk imbued with a historical bent and a sense of humour, thought it would be a good idea to pass the prestita roll for John's twelfth regnal year to the Exchequer clerks for collection.⁶⁶ The men who were summoned to account for what were usually their predecessors' debts

⁶⁴ Orderic, vi, 348–50.

⁶⁵ Interestingly, even the Flemish knights who received their money *super feodum suum* were in receipt of *prests* rather than wages. For the use of money fiefs in this context see Church, 'Rewards of Royal Service', 279–82; B.D. Lyon, 'The Money Fief under the English Kings, 1066–1485', *EHR* lxxvi, 1951, 161–93.

⁶⁶ The first appearance of these *De Pluribus Prestitis Factis Tempore Regis Johannis* is on the 1229 pipe roll (PRO, E372/73), but may be more easily followed in the printed roll for the following year (*Pipe Roll 14 Henry III*). The general resurrection of debts from John's reign was, it seems, the brainchild of Hubert de Burgh.

were not amused, and rarely consented to cough up the money that was 'owed'.⁶⁷ It is a salutary reminder of the dangers of taking money from an Angevin king which was to be understood as a 'non-returnable loan'. A later generation of knights demanded that their payments be called exactly what they were supposed to be – wages for services rendered.

⁶⁷ We, however, should be grateful to this clerk, since his actions probably saved this prestita roll from the fate suffered by many of its fellows, as can be seen from the way in which the debts in 1229 correspond to the payments made in 1210.

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