

THE ILLUMINATED EDITION

William Marshal

The Price of a Promise

About the illumination

William and Isabel with sword and sealed charter. An allegory of lordship and inheritance.

Historical source A2A

Visual exemplar A2B

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

Oathkeeper AI Studios

With thanks to Kevin Hicks

Kevin, thank you for inspiring us to choose William Marshal as the model for our AI persona. His honor, his sense of duty, and his loyalty gave us a standard to aim for. We want our Sir William to keep his word, see difficult work through, and stand by the people who count on him.

Oathkeeper AI Studios

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Orientation map



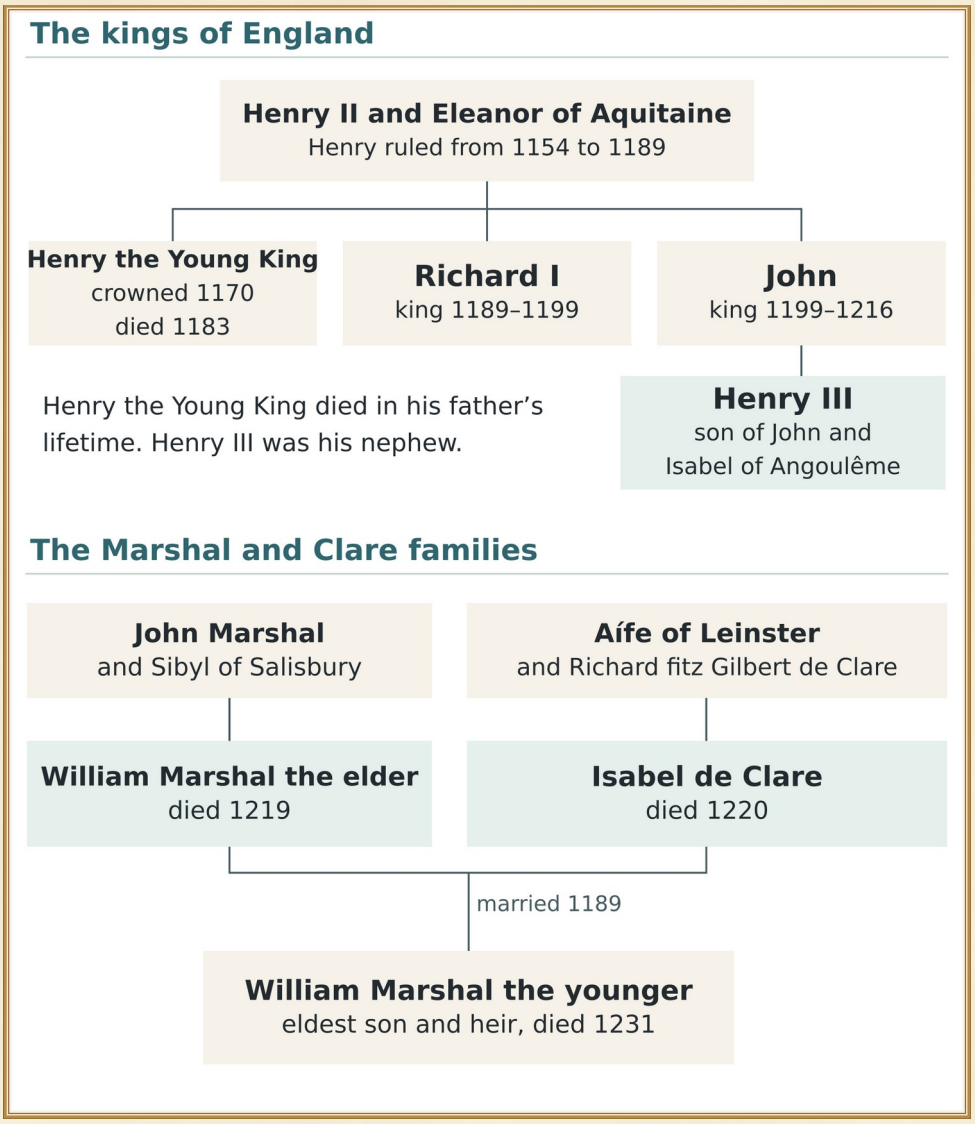
1189 Isabel’s marriage links the Marshals to Leinster, Chepstow and estates in Normandy.

1204–05 Philip takes Château-Gaillard and Rouen in 1204. In 1205 William does homage for his Norman lands.

May 1217 Prince Louis holds London. At Lincoln, Henry III’s army captures or scatters many of the prince’s allies.

Across the Channel and the Irish Sea. Squares mark Falaise, which gained privileges in 1204, and the two Norman strongholds named in the panel. The coastline is modern. The region names locate the reader without assigning fixed frontiers to the lordships.
Map: editorial reconstruction. Coastline: Natural Earth. Towns: GeoNames, CC BY 4.0. A2C

Family connections



Three Henrys and two Williams. Selected lines of descent. Young Henry wore a crown while his father still ruled. Thirty-three years after his death, his brother John's son became Henry III.
Original editorial diagram based on Crouch, the Dictionary of Irish Biography and Westminster Abbey. A2D

The family diagram distinguishes three kings called Henry and two earls called William. The names below trace how the two families came to be connected.

The kings. The Empress Matilda was a daughter of Henry I. Her son Henry II married Eleanor of Aquitaine. Their children included Henry the Young King, Richard I, Geoffrey of Brittany and John. Henry was crowned during his father's lifetime and died in 1183, six years before him. Geoffrey's son Arthur was Richard's

nephew and John's rival. Henry III, the child king in 1216, was the son of John and Isabel of Angoulême.

The Marshals. John the Marshal and Sibyl of Salisbury were the parents of William the elder. William's older brother, also John, carried the spurs at Richard's coronation. A third John, John of Earley, served William and helped preserve the story of his life. William the elder married Isabel de Clare. Their eldest son, also William, died in 1231. He is the William amongst the guarantors on the baronial side in 1215 and the eldest son who later commissioned the account of his father's life. Its poet expected his brothers and sisters to hear it.

Isabel's family. Diarmait Mac Murchada, king of Leinster, was the father of Aífe. Aífe and Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare, known as Strongbow, were Isabel's parents. Land held through this descent linked the family to churches, towns and rivals on both sides of the Irish Sea and to interests in Normandy. Isabel's sons and daughters inherited through her as well as their father. Isabel of Angoulême and Isabel of Gloucester, both wives of King John at different times, were other women.

William's family in the Dictionary of Irish Biography A2E; Isabel's descent and property A2F.



PROLOGUE

A suitable place

About the illumination

John's notification names Isabel de Clare and Geoffrey fitz Robert as the people charged with selecting a site. The church and stream symbolise the future foundation.

Historical source A2G

Visual exemplar A2H

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

On 3 December, probably in 1200, King John approved a will at Hamstead Marshall in Berkshire. The man who had made it, William Marshal, wanted monks to have an abbey in Ireland. He had undertaken to endow them with thirty carucates of land. That was a substantial gift, measured by the work of plough teams rather than by the acre. There was one thing William had left for other people to decide. Where should the monks go?

The king's clerk had three words for the site: *in loco competenti*, in a suitable place. Then come the names of the people who were to choose it. Geoffrey fitz Robert, William's steward, was one. The other was Isabel. The clerk identified her as a countess and William's wife. A reader who knows her only by the second of those descriptions may wonder why she had a say in the matter. A reader who knows who her mother was may wonder why William did.A2J

Isabel's mother was Aífe of Leinster. Isabel's maternal grandfather, Diarmait Mac Murchada, had been king there. Her father was Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare, known to posterity as Strongbow. Restoring Diarmait to power had drawn fighting men across the Irish Sea. Strongbow was one of them. He married Aífe. The marriage left open two questions that mattered to their daughter Isabel. Who had the right to rule Leinster, and how much of that right could a parent pass on? By the time Isabel was old enough to marry, English kings claimed the right to arrange her marriage. In 1189 Richard I authorised her marriage to William. Richard could authorise a wedding. Putting William in possession of the lands Isabel claimed was another matter. His brother John, already lord of Ireland, had something to say about it; so did people who were on the ground. By the time John approved the will, he was king and William was an earl. Isabel still had to be named.A2K

In County Wexford the Irish house took root at Tintern. There was a Tintern already, on the River Wye, and its monks supplied the new house. Someone at home who heard the name had to ask which side of the sea was meant. Two places that lie on separate pages in a modern road atlas were related as mother house and daughter. A religious family crossed the water; so did a landed one. Each brought claims to property and obligations to people far from its new home. The nave, chancel and tower on the Irish site have a history extending far beyond the lifetime of the people who founded the abbey. A later family actually made its home in part of the church. The stone in a modern photograph attests how long it was possible to keep finding new uses for this ‘suitable place’. It cannot date the day someone first chose it.A2L



Tintern in County Wexford. Photographed in 2022. Monks from Tintern on the Wye established this daughter house around 1200 on land held through Isabel de Clare. The Colclough family later adapted part of the church as a home.
Photograph by Zairon, 2022. CC BY 4.0. A2M

William has been famous enough to put his name on both the gift and the story that grew round it. Geoffrey deserves an introduction of his own. His name means Geoffrey son of Robert. He was a man of Wiltshire who came to hold land and exercise authority in Leinster. At Kells in County Kilkenny he founded a religious house himself. John’s notification names Geoffrey as William’s steward. An undated charter for Kilkenny, generally placed about 1207, tells us something about the

authority he exercised there. Each townsman holding a plot owed a shilling a year at a rate Geoffrey had fixed. The charter does not say when he fixed it. William's dependence on the people who worked for him is easiest to see where their own work survives.[A2N]

Geoffrey and Isabel might have had various opinions about what made a good site. The document gives them the job and keeps their advice to itself. It has no estimate for timber or masonry, no account from a monk who first saw the ground. There is no record here of a tenant agreeing to leave. What survives is John's notice approving William's will. In it he orders that the will be carried out and singles out the Irish abbey for particular attention. Anyone who meant to obstruct the gift could now be faced with the king's written approval. Any one of them could still ask what precisely William had the power to give.

John began by telling his readers who he was. King of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine and count of Anjou: the time it takes to get through his titles is a first intimation of the sort of life William led. John claimed those places in different capacities. The duke of Normandy had a king of France to reckon with. The king of England did not hold England from the French king. A lord of Ireland might give orders that his servants in Leinster would enforce if they could, and that Irish rulers might have excellent reasons to resist. The king who approved the will was all these people at once. William held property in the Anglo-Welsh March, the border lordships between England and Wales. There and in England, Ireland and Normandy, his rights came to him on more than one footing, from more than one person. How he acquired a right mattered when a king required him to give it up.[A2P]

It matters here that William did not begin as an earl. He was a younger son of a man with an office in the royal household. His own name came out of work. When he went to live in a great household in Normandy, skill with horses and arms was one part of the equipment he needed. A patron able to introduce him to someone, a kinsman who would acknowledge a claim upon him, a lord who could pay a ransom, a fellow knight willing to divide the proceeds of a tournament: each of these could change what happened to him next. There would be a time when an English king would need William's word to get an order obeyed. The journey between the two conditions was much less straightforward than the titles at the head of John's notification make it look.[A2Q]

Earlier that same year, if the notification is correctly dated, William had put his word behind an agreement between two kings. In May 1200 John and Philip, king of France, made a treaty at Le Goulet. Arthur, John's nephew and a rival for the lands of John's dead brother Richard, had to have a place in the agreement. There was to

be a marriage between Philip's son and John's niece, Blanche. Once the two kings had settled terms for lands, fortresses and a marriage, they still had a difficulty. Who could hold a king to his promise? Among those named on John's side is William Marshal.A2R

Philip's act says that John gave him nine guarantors. They had sworn that if John broke the peace they would go over to Philip with their fiefs on the French side of the Channel. Philip supplied nine guarantors of his own. William had fought Frenchmen for one English king. Now the peace his new king wanted rested in part on William's promise to change lords if John himself broke it. If William changed sides, John stood to lose the service that went with William's French lands. As a young knight William had needed a lord to stand behind him. Now a king needed other men to know what William could take away.A2S

What the act gives us is the obligation. It leaves us the question of how much danger anyone thought there was of its being invoked, whether the guarantors lost sleep over it, whether either king ever expected a marriage in his family to prove less effective than these hard conditions. Five years later William did homage to Philip for lands he held in Normandy through Isabel. Doing homage meant acknowledging a lord in return for the right to hold of him. John resented what he had done. It is tempting to put the two pieces together and turn the undertaking at Le Goulet into a permission slip produced by a far-sighted William. No record so far known supports that little drama. What the treaty does establish is more interesting. Requiring a man with land in two countries to envisage a choice of lords was quite within the political imagination of both kings, however inconvenient a particular choice might turn out to be.A2T

If we had royal acts alone, we could do quite a lot with this life. We could see the man's title change, find him among the witnesses to the business of his time, follow some of his property, discover what help he expected for his wife and his abbey, and watch the power to speak in a king's name come into his hands. We should never know that, on one glorious occasion when people went looking for the outstanding fighter at a tournament, the place to try was the smithy. William was there with his head on the anvil. At least, that is where his biographer says they found him. His helmet had taken such a pounding that he needed help getting out of it. The story has lasted, with its joke on the difference between what it took to win a prize and what a winner looked like afterwards, because the earl had children.A2U

His eldest son, also William, commissioned a verse life of his father. Written in French in the 1220s, it is called the *History of William Marshal*. Long enough to occupy an audience for a great many evenings, it has come down to us in a single known medieval manuscript, now in New York. Among its sources was John of

Earley, who had served the elder William. Editions and translations have multiplied. The one manuscript has not. When two biographies and a television programme repeat the tale of the smithy, one can quite reasonably credit it. Counting them as three different men who saw William with his helmet in that condition is another matter. We owe almost everything we know of William's early life to this family undertaking. His children gave stories like the one at the smithy a future. They also had a stake in which stories people told about their father.[A2V]

The poet himself knew the difference between having a fine opportunity to tell a story and having the information necessary to tell it. On the death of one of his first masters, William undertook to carry a cross to Jerusalem. An outside chronicler confirms the dying man's commission. An accomplished storyteller could have done a great deal with that journey. The family poet gave it little space and owned that he lacked material. In the fighting at Lincoln, where one might suppose a great many men of the household could give the whole story, the poet acknowledged that different people told him different things. It is a curious intimacy across the centuries to meet a biographer frustrated by his sources. He could call on men now long dead. Sometimes they would have disagreed just as inconveniently if we had been able to ask them ourselves.[A2W]

The same author could be wonderfully certain in his account of an affair to which other people had a quite different claim. In the parts of the poem concerned with Ireland, the vassals of William, the friends and enemies of an English king, and certain great families take up a good deal of space. An Irish bishop who accused the earl of wrongfully withholding church land makes a remarkably small impression there. His name was Ailbe. Evidence of the dispute he pursued is preserved by precisely the kinds of office that found it worth remembering the approval of William's will. One institution preserved the names of those who might choose a site; other institutions preserved evidence that a man might go all the way to the papal court to recover land in the same part of Ireland. If we can ask what an earl wanted done for his own soul, we can also ask what he did when another man's church wanted its property back.[A2X]

The king's notification brings four people together in a few lines. John gives an order. William had made a promise. Isabel and Geoffrey must exercise their judgement if the promise is ever to be performed. Monks would have something to say about where they lived, too. Once those distinctions are made it becomes harder to imagine that a single virtue could explain how a knight from a comparatively modest family acquired an earldom and ended by helping to preserve an English dynasty. He could keep faith with quite remarkable tenacity. Sometimes the real

question was with whom he proposed to keep it, at whose expense, and whether the other person could speak for himself.

At the end of his life William was one of two men whose seals authenticated promises made by a king who had no great seal of his own. Henry III, John's son, had been crowned when he was nine. The document known as the Charter of the Forest named the two men who vouched for him. One of the seals still hangs from the Durham copy. It belonged to Cardinal Guala, the pope's representative in England. William's has gone. A reader might look for the great man's seal, find his name in the text, and, seeing the one piece of wax that the conservators have kept safe, mistake it for his. In the few inches of material that separate a lost seal from a surviving one there is room for an entire other history: church authority, the survival of a child king, and a government held together by doing what no man in it could have done alone.A2Y

In the family story of William as a child, it is someone else's promise that is in question. His father had the keeping of a castle. A king required an assurance that he would do what he had agreed. The father gave him a boy.



CHAPTER 1

The child given in pledge

About the illumination

William and King Stephen play at being knights with two plant stems. The Marshal family told this story about William's time as a hostage at Newbury.

Historical source A2Z

Visual exemplar A3A

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

At Newbury in 1152, the Marshal family's story tells us, King Stephen held young William as a hostage. The king had asked for a guarantee before he would grant a truce. John Marshal had given him a son. The men inside the castle needed food. John said he needed time to consult his lady, the Empress Matilda. The king had reason to doubt that a letter from this particular man was worth very much. A boy he could hold in his hands was another matter. For a few days, what happened to William depended on what his father did in his absence.A3B

There is a shorter account of the same siege. Henry of Huntingdon, already an old man when it took place, wrote a history of the English people. Under the year 1152 he recorded that Stephen attacked the castle of Newbury and ultimately took it by assault. William does not appear in the entry. Nothing in it tells us how long Stephen kept him, or whether Stephen ever did keep him. If the family book had disappeared, the capture of Newbury would still have a place in the history of the reign. The child would have vanished.A3C

The family book survives in the single manuscript now in New York. When its poet began work, the boy who had been at Newbury had gone to his grave, leaving children old enough to remember their father as an old man. His eldest son, another William, helped commission the work. The poet could find men who had fought with the dead man. An account of a siege from more than seventy years earlier reached him by a different road. To say that the story belonged to a family is to say something about the intimacy of that road, and something about its length. One can hear how the Marshals wanted the story told. One cannot hear the words a frightened or angry father actually sent across a siege line.A3D

The war behind the family's hostage story began before William was born. At issue was who should succeed Henry I. Henry I had wanted his daughter Matilda to

succeed him. Her first husband had been a Holy Roman emperor. She retained the title of empress through her widowhood and her second marriage, to Geoffrey, count of Anjou. Angevin means 'of Anjou'. The name would follow their descendants into England. Men who had an interest in good relations with Henry I promised to recognize the daughter he had chosen. When they swore to support Matilda, her father was still alive to hear them.A3E

In December 1135 he died. His nephew Stephen of Blois reached England and got himself crowned in that same month. He had been among those who swore the oath to Matilda. Now a man in England had been anointed and possessed the means to pay and reward the men who came to his court. On the continental side of the Channel Matilda could command powerful support, and she had friends and a half-brother in England. On the English side the usual business of a new reign began. A man might receive from Stephen an office that fed his family. Another might hope to recover from Matilda the land Stephen had given away. Which ruler could make a grant good in the countryside was precisely the question yet to be settled.A3F

John knew what a king's household could give. His father Gilbert had held the office from which the family name came. A marshal had work to do about the king's horses and the movement and ordering of his household. The court carried its business with it. Getting it from one place to another required men, animals, fodder and shelter. An office that looks modest beside the great titles could put its holder constantly in the way of the people from whom grants and commands came. Under Henry I, John was already a senior marshal. Under Stephen he appears among the witnesses to royal charters. Marlborough, the town and its royal castle, came under his control. So did rights in the surrounding Wiltshire countryside. Long before William helped a king do business in writing, his father had made himself useful at the king's court.A3G

A man holding Marlborough did not cease to have neighbours. The Salisbury family had interests to the south. At Ludgershall the land John acquired had once belonged to them. Grants that look generous from a royal court can look quite different from either side of a local boundary. Nor did swearing to a king oblige John to welcome every man the king proposed to advance. By 1140 John was among the men of Wiltshire who objected when Stephen attempted to impose a new earl. John appears on Stephen's side earlier that same year. By 1141 he was consistently supporting the empress. To tell his story simply as the progress of a hereditary servant of the rightful line would cost us the actual choices that made it possible for his son to serve that line at all.A3H

The year 1141 made plain how much a captive could be worth. In February Stephen fell into his enemies' hands at Lincoln. The empress came to Winchester.

For a time her friends could imagine her coronation within reach. Stephen's wife, Queen Matilda, was countess of Boulogne in her own right. She went on working for her husband while he was a prisoner. The empress was driven from London. Later in the year the fighting at Winchester ended in a disastrous retreat for her party. Among the captives was her half-brother Robert, earl of Gloucester. Now each side held a man the other badly needed. They exchanged Robert for Stephen. Queen Matilda recovered her husband and the empress recovered her half-brother. The war went on.A3J

The family poet gave John a place in the retreat. He had the empress entrust herself to John, while the opposing party pursued. The later reputation of William's father owed something to the danger he ran to get her clear. Other people in the neighbourhood could see less gallant uses for his energies. In the course of his quarrel with Patrick of Salisbury the poem describes the men killed and captured, the women left widowed, the girls left without fathers and the damage to their chances of a marriage. It is easy to read past those women on the way to the next mounted encounter. Their existence matters to the argument the same poet is making for the Marshals. When the losing side had to provide money for a release or the next generation lost the means to establish a household, the cost of a fight passed through the survivors. The victors, meanwhile, could use what they had taken to attract more fighting men.A3K

One alliance ended this waste at another woman's expense. John's wife was called Adelina. She had borne him sons. John parted with her and married Patrick's sister Sibyl. The poem says the marriage made lasting peace. The editor of the surviving family acts places Robert of Gloucester among the makers of the settlement, probably in the mid-1140s. Sibyl brought an interest in the Wiltshire manor of Mildenhall. The Salisbury family's title there was itself open to dispute. To draw a clean line under a feud might mean putting a difficult piece of property into somebody else's keeping. Nothing tells us how Adelina learned of the decision or where she was living when it was carried out. The settlement held well enough for Sibyl's brother eventually to take one of her sons into his own service.A3L

That son was William. John and Sibyl had another John before him, and after him sons called Ansel and Henry. Henry became a bishop. William's sisters appear in the poem without names in the account of their births, though later the wants of one sister's household would come sharply into view. A deed recording the sale of land at Nettlecombe in Somerset supplies information missing from the recital of family affections. It names Gilbert, John, Walter and William among John's sons. Gilbert and Walter were sons of Adelina. William, the second son of Sibyl, was at least the

fourth son of his father. William thus had at least three older brothers with claims of their own. His father's office offered little prospect of a living for him.A3M

The poet disposes very beautifully of the two half-brothers. One falls ill at Salisbury. The other, sitting at chess, learns what has happened by the face of the young man who comes to give him news. He refuses food and drink and dies of grief. The death of one beloved brother seems quite enough to explain the death of the other. A deed tells us what the family story leaves out. Gilbert lived into Henry II's reign and inherited property. The record is insensitive to the brothers' feelings and excellent for this one purpose. It prevents us from mistaking William's eventual importance for the place into which he was born. Brothers with competing claims can remain important after the most memorable story about them is over.A3N

William was born in the 1140s. An exact year cannot be pulled out of the story of Newbury by deciding how old a child ought to have been to behave in the manner described. Nor do we know enough to take a visitor to the spot where Stephen's camp stood. Earthworks survive at Hamstead Marshall, west of modern Newbury. Archaeologists have examined the possibility that a siegework there faced a nearby stronghold. Other identifications put the castle nearer the town. Neither the terse chronicler nor the expansive poet mentions men building the surviving earthworks. A view from a particular mound would make an attractive beginning for a modern life. It would give the reader a certainty the medieval witnesses cannot supply.A3P

Inside the story we have, the king's men appeared before the defenders had time to provision their stronghold. Stephen demanded to know whether the constable intended to surrender. The garrison resisted an assault and asked for a day's truce to send to its lord. The men behind the walls were hungry. Their lord, John, was elsewhere. So was his son. By buying a day they transferred a difficult decision to a lord outside. John asked for a further interval and had William handed over when the king insisted on an acceptable hostage. The king withdrew far enough to let food, archers and fighting men reach the castle. At the end of the interval the stronger garrison stayed where it was. Only William's situation had worsened.A3Q

Stephen's advisers, as the poet tells it, urged him to hang the boy. A threat carried to John produced the most famous remark in his family's history. He still possessed the anvils and hammers with which he could forge better children, he is said to have answered. He spoke as if children could be made to order in a smithy. In the poem it is the king who hears it and becomes angry. Nobody asks Sibyl whether the workshop in which John proposes to replace her son is his to promise. The poet gives her concern an entirely different expression before the episode is done.A3R

The boy was carried towards the gallows in company. Stephen went too. William noticed the handsome missile the earl of Arundel was holding and asked if he could have it. That brought the first threat to an end. The poet takes us back towards the camp and a stone-throwing engine being prepared for an assault on the walls. Advisers suggested sending the child over in its sling. The boy looked at something remarkably like a swing. Again Stephen intervened. A third scheme would put the child in front of the attacking men under a protective screen. From the wall the defenders suspended a millstone. William wanted to know the name of this game. At last the poet's king gave him an assurance worth hearing. Whatever other men intended, William would never die by Stephen's doing.A3S

These successive perils have the unmistakable shape of a story polished in the telling. One threat might be carried out. Three allow an audience to discover what the grown men want before the child knows enough to be afraid. They also give the king room to change. The man who began by saying he would accept nothing less than the security he demanded ends by forbidding his own side to use it. The capacity for pity gives Stephen an honourable place in the history of a family that had fought against him. His enemies have preserved a scene that people still tell in his favour. It would survive the removal of the dialogue as evidence of something the Marshals wanted their descendants to recognize in a king.A3T

Later in the royal tent, William began gathering the stems of a plant whose little heads could be struck off. He and the king each took one and played at knights. The king's knight lost its head first. From the bedding of a temporary camp the poet had drawn a plant capable of enacting a tiny tournament long before William would enter one. While Stephen and the boy played, a familiar face appeared through an opening in the tent. The visitor belonged to Sibyl's chamber. William called out to him and began asking for news of his mother and the other children. The man ducked out of sight before Stephen's people could find him. According to this family, William's mother had sent somebody to learn whether her son was alive.A3U

Those are things a family might remember. It is also possible to see why a family would put them together. The child who could not protect himself beat a king in play. The father who had staked him was absent. The mother, unable to give an order to either camp, still had a person she could send. Much later, William would have servants who could do a great deal more for him. Here his whole power of action, on recognizing a friend, amounted to calling a name. A historian who throws away a good story on account of its shape loses the people who told it. A historian who treats it as a witness statement asks more of their memories than anyone is likely to have asked in their own hall.

How did William get home? Here the family memory puts us in definite trouble. The poet ties the release of hostages to transactions surrounding the capture of Stephen at Lincoln and the exchange for Robert of Gloucester. Those belonged to 1141, eleven years before Henry of Huntingdon recorded Stephen's attack on Newbury. The real settlement of the succession came in 1153. Stephen remained king and recognized as his successor the empress's son Henry, already duke of Normandy. The boy's return to his mother and brothers is perfectly possible. The neat political explanation offered for his release is impossible as it stands. No length of earnest attention to the dialogue can mend the missing years.[A3V]

For men like John who had accepted gifts from one ruler and then served another, the settlement answered a practical question. Whose orders would they follow when Stephen died? When Stephen died in 1154, Henry succeeded. The empress did not become queen of England. Her son became Henry II. John, who had served the new king's mother and had previously taken gifts from the old king, was still a man with access to court. A charter or a local office could preserve what a family had gained through a change of reign, though not all gains lasted. The new king expected to recover rights and revenues that had escaped royal hands in the years of war. John's usefulness and his claims still had to be made good in a world in which his children would find fewer opportunities for sudden local conquest.[A3W]

For William, homecoming was no settlement of his own future. The marshalship was spoken for. He had a family that could do things for him, uncles and cousins on both sides of the water, and the particular good fortune that one powerful man had decided against making an example of him. No estate or office follows him when he next steps into view. His father had to find him a place where a growing boy might learn a trade worthy of his birth. Beyond the Channel, a kinsman kept just such a household. From England the youngster went to him with two attendants. On this occasion he could leave the family under his own power.[A3X]



CHAPTER 2

A horse to ride

About the illumination

In the family poem William makes a difficult horse rideable by lengthening its bridle before a tournament.

Historical source A3Y

Visual exemplar A3Z

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

There were people at Tancarville who would gladly have sent William back to his mother. To hear his biographer tell it, the boy was good at two things, sleeping and eating, and his host's servants would have found him less objectionable if he had been able to do both at once. Whenever somebody repeated these complaints to the chamberlain of Normandy, William's kinsman and master, he smiled. He knew what he was feeding. From the young men's point of view the really irritating thing was that William went on getting good pieces of meat from the lord's own table.A4A

It is an unexpectedly domestic start for a man who would become a byword for strength. Someone had to be persuaded to keep him until he had grown into his limbs. Someone had to find him a place at dinner. The handing of a particular portion across the table was an act that other young men could see and remember. One thing William was learning in Normandy was what happened to a favourite when he did not yet appear to have done much for his favour. As it happened, he would have a much harder time with the same difficulty when his accomplishments were beyond dispute.

A Norman lord's household included the people a boy would need from the day he arrived until the day he could undertake a piece of work for the lord on his own. The English word *household* can be deceptive. A group of men following a banner out of town could belong to a household as thoroughly as the people who prepared a meal in its hall. In return for feeding, housing and equipping fighting men, the chamberlain could expect to have them about him when he needed to take the field. When a poor relation became old enough to be of use, the kinship with which he had arrived had the chance to turn into employment. If he left too early he lost the benefit of what others had invested in him. If his lord let him go at an awkward

moment he might leave with little more than a reputation. One can follow both risks in what happened to William's horses.[A4B]

The routes that mattered to this English boy make odd sense on a map coloured country by country. His father had sent him into the household of a Norman cousin while an English king ruled Normandy as its duke. The English Channel was a crossing people had to make, at the mercy of wind and ships, and quite a poor guide to where a family connection might end. A man from England might travel through Normandy into Maine, spend part of his working life in Flanders, return to an uncle in England and cross again to Poitou. With each move he needed a welcome, an introduction or enough ready resources to attempt the next part. William's poet, praising the lands where his fame was heard, turned such a working circuit into a roll of honour. Before he had announced himself to anyone outside Tancarville, the essential fact was that he had found a place to grow up.[A4C]

He learned to deal with animals whose behaviour could decide whether he had a living the next day. He learned to be where the other men expected him when a group changed direction, to keep hold of a weapon from the back of a horse and to recognize when to get another mount. Under pressure a man's shield had to hang where he could use it and the straps securing his headgear had to hold. Not much of his apprenticeship survives as a distinct story. When the poet was ready to put him into action, he felt obliged to admit that he did not mean to count up the precise years William had served as a squire. Even the text at that point is difficult. A reading that would give him twenty whole years in that capacity has prompted an editor to wonder whether a scribe misread eight. Those who would put a number on the candles at William's first birthday in Normandy have to take their reckoning from material of this kind.[A4D]



A rider's spur. A fixed goad projects from this copper-alloy spur. The holes at the ends took the straps that held it to the rider's foot. Possibly British, eleventh or twelfth century, 14.9 centimetres long. Its rider is unknown.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Thomas E. Kirby, 1921 (21.183.5). Public domain, CC0. A4E

At Drincourt, the place now called Neufchâtel-en-Bray in eastern Normandy, the chamberlain girded him with a sword. That is what the household biography says. Almost immediately the newly made knight had a chance to use it. A force including the counts of Flanders, Boulogne and Ponthieu was approaching a town which had something to fear from fire. Some of the men who might have defended it had an interest in getting clear before the invaders arrived. Its inhabitants had much better reasons for staying. The story gives room to a disagreement among officers about whether to undertake its defence at all. The chamberlain chose to ride in. That put his men, William among them, on the side of householders about to discover what military protection bought.A4F

Pinning a year on this encounter has tried the patience of more than one good historian. Paul Meyer, the French editor who first made the poem widely available, thought an engagement in the rebellion of 1173 had slipped back into William's younger days. Georges Duby found significance in the rearrangement. As John Gillingham reports his argument, the poet wanted a splendid military occasion to mark the admission of a hero to knighthood. Such a desire is entirely credible. It only explains this particular error if the error really happened. Gillingham went back to the men posted on either side of the town. In 1173 William was in the Young King's service. The count of Flanders was allied with that prince. William ought to have been outside Drincourt with the Flemings. The poem puts him inside, fighting against them. Gillingham proposed a campaign in 1167. David Crouch has proposed

an earlier encounter in the 1160s. The ground is firm enough for the experience of a first fight to have a place here. It is too yielding to let an exact year stand without a question.A4G

The chamberlain came across a man on the bridge prepared to defend it. This was William de Mandeville, later earl of Essex. There was a real advantage in holding a narrow passage when the enemy riders had greater numbers. The chamberlain had his men with him. The younger William pressed up alongside. The poet places each man so precisely that the scene feels remembered. It also shows a storyteller's skill. The men of consequence were talking. William's concern was getting a turn.A4H

The townspeople joined the defence. Watching the defenders make a fight of it, townsmen came forward with axes and other weapons. Women brought out clubs and sticks. They attacked the intruders in the streets, where local people had the immense advantage of already being at the scene. The knights helped clear the town. The poet gave his hero first place among them. Yet he actually tells a story in which the initiative passes back and forth. If the chamberlain left, local people would face the fire. Once he showed there could be a fight, the people whose houses were at stake joined in. When they joined in they gave a depleted group of mounted men the chance to do what they had set out to do. The townspeople had helped save their own homes.A4J

The townspeople brought wine and fruit to the chamberlain afterwards. In the poem he paid well for good food, let people eat, and offered the first meal to a company reckoned at eighty knights. Men who had seen what happened told the others. Praise went to the young William for standing his ground, knocking men down and helping deliver the place. It was the kind of report his family might have been pleased to receive at home. It was at this point that William de Mandeville asked him for a present. He would be satisfied with some piece of horse harness, even an old collar. William could oblige him with neither. Did he really mean to say that a man who had encountered so many horses that day had nothing to give away? The people who understood the joke began to laugh.A4K

William's mount had continued under him while losing blood from its wounds. It died. In a more generous story that death might have been the occasion for a lord to put a splendid new animal into a hero's hands at dawn. The Tancarville story takes its time over something quite different. When there was talk of a tournament, William had a riding horse and little else. He raised twenty-two Angevin shillings by selling the cloak he had been given at his knighting. The purchase he made with the money was a workhorse to carry his arms. Think of that cloak for a moment, at the edge of the feast. His admission to the honour of bearing arms had furnished

him with something he could sell once. The proceeds would get his equipment to an event. He still had nothing suitable to ride in it.A4L

The twenty-two shillings are easiest to reckon in horses. William still had his riding horse. He now owned a packhorse. What he lacked was a mount fit for combat. A warhorse had to be acquired, fed and made tractable. Two helpers could keep a man moving if something happened to his gear. Without a mount able to do the job at the point of need, a knight of quite extraordinary physical strength might watch his rivals get ahead while a packhorse stood ready to carry his sword. Even the admirable acts that brought William praise at Drincourt had carried him to the verge of this predicament.A4M

In Maine, between Sainte-Jamme and Valennes, the chamberlain made ready to send his people into a tournament. News of it had been in circulation for a fortnight. In the poem men from Anjou, Maine, Poitou and Brittany were to ride against Frenchmen, Normans and Englishmen. This did not mean that the English king had gone to war with each of the lands from which his subjects came. The object of the arrangements was to have two sides to an encounter, each with something to win from the other. The fame of a well-attended meeting could bring men a considerable distance. When they set out from the same lodging under the same banner they wanted to know who had a good horse and whose equipment had been neglected. For once the biographer, who has so little to say about the squires' normal work, lets us stand among them while they prepare.A4N

Mail shirts were got into condition and mail leggings rubbed. There were saddles, bridles, girths, stirrups, breast straps, helmet fittings and coifs to attend to. A man wanted his shield brought over so he could test the shoulder strap and have the arm fastening adjusted to his own measure. A thing that slipped at home could be dealt with by asking someone to hold it. A thing that slipped in the middle of the press left the rider occupied with a hand he badly needed free. While all this work was going on William had already told the chamberlain of his difficulty. His lord had said there would be horses enough. Next day the horses were brought and handed out, with every appearance that the difficulty had been settled. Everyone who needed a horse appeared to have received one, apart from the young man to whom it had been promised.A4P

This time William spoke up. A horse was found. The one remaining looked fine and nobody denied its strength, but once it was moving nobody could pull it up. The poet describes William lengthening the bridle so that the iron sat differently in its mouth. The horse that had been impossible to check could now turn within a small space. A listener raised among horses could have opinions about the mechanism and about the talents of a boy who was able to make a useful animal out

of the one his companions had left behind. The chamberlain had promised enough horses to go round. William had nevertheless come close to missing the tournament. Speaking up got him the mount. His handling of it made the gift worth having. On this occasion the family hero owed his opportunity to a lord's promise, a quiet protest and a bridle that could be taken apart.A4Q

What followed bore very little resemblance to a pair of men riding at each other on opposite sides of a wooden barrier. The participants went out in groups and carried on fighting over ground that could accommodate a substantial number of horses. In the poem the chamberlain kept his people together at first. William, from within this formation, singled out Philip de Valognes, conspicuous for his handsome turnout. He got hold of Philip's reins. In another encounter he seized a horse whose rider chose to drop off rather than be taken with it. Having brought the horse clear, he gave it to his squire and went back in. One man could fight, catch and lead away an animal. The existence of somebody waiting to take it over made it possible to fight again before the field emptied.A4R

What did it mean to capture a knight at one of these meetings? Not everything was settled when one man pulled another up. A valuable mount could change hands at once. An agreement to pay could follow the man back to his lodging and involve friends who could stand as guarantors. The poet, who likes the moment when a famous rider is brought down, also notices the business afterwards, when some men had to find pledges, redeem property or get releases from their obligations. The same men might encounter one another again in a matter of weeks. William would live to learn how far goodwill could make a rival more willing to pay and where a reputation for taking things threatened to get in the way of a better name.A4S

Georges Duby chose to enter William's life from its other end, at his deathbed. Among those whose prospects had to be settled was his youngest son, Ansel. William thought the boy might make a career by gaining honour and finding someone who valued him. His friend John of Earley urged him to leave Ansel something with which to shoe a horse. The outcome was an income, with the family's land left intact. Duby saw in the father's first proposal a man imagining his own success repeated. William had once sold his cloak just to get his arms to a tournament. He could send Ansel out into the world with an advantage he had lacked himself. It took an old friend to remind him what that advantage was worth.A4T

His story now takes him back across the Channel. Tancarville urged him to return to Normandy soon. A man who wanted a quiet, settled existence might suit England well enough. A young man with a mind to follow the tournaments needed

to be where they were held. Having found his uncle Patrick in Salisbury, William was not for long in danger of a quiet life. He had arrived among people for whom his mother's marriage still mattered. He was her son as much as he was the son of the man Patrick had once tried to defeat. The former enemy of his father would take him into his company. The price of what he learned there would be more than the sale of a cloak.A4U



CHAPTER 3

The woman who got him out

About the illumination

An unnamed woman hides a linen dressing inside a loaf for the wounded William. William was a prisoner in Poitou when she helped him, according to the family poet.

Historical source A4V

Visual exemplar A4W

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

The bread had to be hollowed out first. A woman staying in the same place as a badly wounded prisoner asked one of the men there what the captive most needed. Some lint to dress the wound, he told her. The woman went into her chamber, took the crumb out of a loaf, filled the space with linen dressing and sent the loaf to the prisoner. William's thanks occupy two lines of verse. Her name is gone. We have that scene from the poet who wrote for William's family, a man who knew very well that people liked to hear about a poor knight being helped by a generous woman. Yet he allowed this particular woman skill as well as charity. She contrived to deliver a quantity of something useful to a man whose guards were unfriendly. He went on attending to his wounds himself.A4X

The woman who sent the bread was not Eleanor of Aquitaine. Eleanor was the woman who finally got him out. By the time the woman sent William the loaf, his uncle Patrick, earl of Salisbury, lay dead in Poitou. The local men who held William had the king's men to fear. What happened to the earl, and what Eleanor could do for his captive nephew, depended on whose authority ran in Poitou.A4Y

Eleanor had inherited the duchy of Aquitaine from her father. She married Louis VII, king of France, and had two daughters by him. When that marriage was dissolved in 1152 she kept her inheritance. Her next husband, Henry of Anjou, became king of England in 1154. It was through Eleanor, the hereditary duchess, that first Louis and then Henry could claim authority in this part of what is now France. Patrick of Salisbury was sent there in the late 1160s because that authority needed men on the spot. The one person who belonged to Poitou by the best title among the party that went there was Eleanor herself.A4Z

Poitou, the country round Poitiers, lay north of much of the duchy. The Angevin kings' control was uneven across this great inheritance. A local family could hold

strongholds, fight a neighbouring family, reach an understanding with the French king or refuse to do what Henry demanded. The Lusignans were such a family. Their interests ran deeper in the region than those of an earl out of Wiltshire. When a man who owed Henry service ceased obeying him, a writer attached to Henry might call him a rebel. When people held off a man sent to govern them, they could understand the same transaction in terms of the possession of their own castles and the precedents they meant to defend. The words used by Marshal's poet about the Poitevins as a people are conspicuously hostile. They tell us which side he wanted his listeners to cheer. They tell us remarkably little about why a particular Poitevin chose to fight.[A5A]

Henry could not be in all his lands at once. When he went elsewhere the queen had responsibilities in Poitou, and the earl was among those appointed to support her there. Patrick had been the enemy of William's father before the marriage from which William was born. He was now a senior servant of Henry II, an uncle with an honourable and useful place for his sister's son. So far the marriage had done exactly what a settlement between two warring lords was supposed to do. The nephew might reasonably count on getting through a local quarrel with the help of his uncle. The difficulty came when a local quarrel killed the uncle.[A5B]

Robert of Torigni, abbot of Mont-Saint-Michel, dated the death to around the octave of Easter in 1168. He attributed it to the treachery of Poitevins, in language as lively on the question of right and wrong as it is spare about the people who struck the blows. Gervase of Canterbury reported that Poitevins who had deserted the English king killed the earl. Ralph of Diceto, a London churchman, knew that he had died in Aquitaine, pierced by a lance. Roger of Howden had a more particular story. He named Guy de Lusignan and said that Patrick was returning from the pilgrimage to St James. It is possible to gather more details from this company than it is possible to put back together. We can place the killing in an armed conflict over government in Poitou and date it to the spring. We cannot make all the witnesses agree about what Patrick was doing on that particular journey.[A5C]

The family account gives us an escort and a sudden meeting with armed men under Geoffrey de Lusignan. The difference between saying that Geoffrey led these men and saying that Geoffrey killed the earl may have mattered a great deal in Poitou. William's poet knew it too. He brought Geoffrey on in command and referred to the man who actually struck Patrick quite separately. A weapon driven in from behind reached a man unready to fight. A high officer who had risen above most fighting men in the lands ruled by Henry II could die in the time it took him to try to change horses.[A5D]

Patrick first had to think about the woman under his guard. In the verse account he recognized the odds and sent Eleanor to a castle. He called for his combat horse. He was still on an ordinary riding horse and had no time to put on armour. The men with him were trying to get their equipment in order. The blow fell as he was getting on to the horse he wanted. As often in the poem, we depend on a family memory with an almost professional interest in the precise things that go wrong when a man is caught unprepared. This was the reverse of the long night spent adjusting shield and saddle for a tournament at a date everyone had known in advance. No amount of investment in good equipment made that equipment useful if it was on the wrong animal at the point of attack.A5E

William saw his uncle struck and could not get at the assailant. He rode at the company with a mail shirt as his only armour. His own horse was killed under him. Once more the habit of judging a knight by what he did on horseback leaves out much of what was required for him to survive. William got up and put his back to a hedge. The men trying to take him had reason to avoid coming in front of him, and he had an obvious advantage for as long as they did. Then somebody got at him from the other side. A lance was driven through his thigh. There was nothing more to be gained by courage once the man with the lance could strike through the hedge. His enemies took him.A5F

In the poem Patrick sends Eleanor to safety before the change of horses and the fatal blow. By the time William fights, she is already on her way. William's impulse, as his admirers remembered it, was to get to the man who had killed his uncle. The woman who rode out of the narrative on Patrick's orders comes back into it in a position to rescue *him*. Her reward was one more competent man in her service. His reward was his freedom and the means of being competent again.A5G

In between came the almost insupportable discomfort of being made to travel with a wounded thigh. The poem makes the bleeding visible as the spear is removed. He tore strips from his own clothing to bind himself up. The company was moving through places where its security was uncertain and staying by night with people it could trust. Its priority was to get away if the king's men drew near. He experienced that as a series of shaking journeys on whatever beast he had been given that day. His value to the captors supplied a reason for him to live. It plainly fell short of giving him consistent care. It is here that the woman who found a way of supplying lint enters the story. The prize-taker who had made an art of converting another man's misfortune into a source of income was being carried about as a piece of potentially valuable property himself.A5H

At one stopping place some of the men competed at putting a stone. Someone told them there was a better thrower among them than the man who had won.

William declined to demonstrate it until a knight pressed the invitation. He outthrew his rival. The wound broke open again. This might seem an odd incident for his friends to have treasured. It cost him further pain and delayed his recovery to no apparent purpose. The poet has hold of an excellent story about a man whose body can answer a challenge which it would have been wiser to leave alone. Pride had made him useful at Drincourt. Here it undid the first good thing to have happened to him since his capture. The biographer preserves the mistake with something close to relish.A5J

In the end Eleanor arranged his release. The household verb describes obtaining his freedom. Modern accounts generally use the word *ransom*. No sum or single form of payment for this transaction has come down to us. The poet tells us much more about what Eleanor gave him afterwards. William received horses, arms, money and suitable clothing. The list repeats, with princely abundance, the things he had lacked on the way to his first tournament. A fine reputation after Drincourt had left him having to sell his own cloak. In the queen's service he had somebody in a position to give him another cloak, another horse and the chance to earn both. His uncle's death did not condemn him to a return to Wiltshire looking for another place.A5K

Nor was William the only person whose future Eleanor reshaped after the attack. At Saint-Hilaire in Poitiers she assigned property to provide for prayers for Patrick's soul. Her award invoked her own authority with those of Henry and their son Richard. A useful public servant had been killed in the duchy. The regular offices that would commemorate him were going to require income long after the people who had ridden with him could say how he died. One may find more of the work of a duchess in that act than in the purple passages her defeat or capture might have invited. A household knight's freedom cost resources once. To keep the dead earl's name in the prayers of a church required a continuing claim to draw resources from the land.A5L

One of Eleanor's other acts, probably from about a decade later, helps explain the reach of such a decision. She and Richard granted the nuns of Fontevraud an exemption for a man named Peter of Ruffec. Officers were to understand that he did not owe certain military, horse and fiscal services. His goods enjoyed protection too, with a qualification about things bought to sell again. The commands were addressed to the seneschal of Poitou, to local officers and to the queen's faithful people in La Rochelle and Aquitaine. Peter's name was worth setting out in a document because somebody nearer home might otherwise demand something of him. The same great woman who had found the means for William to get back on a horse could give another man a release from the duties connected with supplying

one. There was more than one way for the queen of England to make her authority felt in France.A5M

With the help Eleanor had given him, William joined the household of her eldest surviving son by Henry II. From here on it often takes a moment, when a medieval writer says *the king*, to know whom he means. In June 1170 Henry II had his fifteen-year-old son Henry crowned at Westminster. Roger, archbishop of York, anointed him. In exile across the Channel, Thomas Becket protested to the pope that the office belonged to his own church of Canterbury. Henry's son is called the Young King both here and in a great many of the surviving sources, which saves one confusion and risks another. He really had been anointed and crowned in his father's lifetime. He could take oaths, receive honour, employ his own men and make people expect favours from him. He could not transfer at will the counties and revenues his father still controlled. So far as the elder Henry was concerned, making sure who came next did not require him to go away.A5N

Henry II had seen his mother Matilda lose the English throne to Stephen despite the promises made to her. Those who could remember Stephen's accession did not need to hear at great length why a father might go to unusual lengths to secure a succession. On the other hand a boy whose existence settled a disputed future might not want to conduct his whole adult life in the future tense. To a lord giving a young man his first companions, the appointment of men of exceptional ability might look like a simple act of generosity. They would protect the boy, teach him how to appear and act, and help him live up to a royal position. The better they did their work, the more natural it might seem to the boy to ask why he could not act on a king's scale.A5P

The son's wife provided him with a second father to whom he could take such questions. Margaret was the daughter of Louis VII of France, Eleanor's first husband, by a later marriage. The district called the Norman Vexin, with castles commanding routes between Normandy and the French king's lands, figured in the marriage settlement. At the 1170 ceremony the young woman did not share her husband's coronation. Louis objected. They were crowned together at Winchester in 1172. People concerned with a queen's standing and people concerned with the disposal of a border fortress could be discussing the same marriage. Any child of Margaret and Henry would have a French king for one grandfather and an English king for the other. Henry's ambitions crossed family lines that Henry II had spent considerable energy drawing.A5Q

The poet has the old king give William an express commission to guard and teach his son. William accepted. So long as father and son wanted the same thing, obedience to either king meant keeping faith with both. A quarrel between them

would leave William trying to honour one king's orders in the other king's household. On an ordinary day the question of which one he had promised to obey scarcely arose. A competent man could protect the young king, teach him what he knew about riding with companions, and preserve a decent understanding with the parent who supplied the money. And as long as the father was willing to supply it, the young king himself could ride in the world as the person whom all sides had so recently honoured.[A5R]

When did William first put on a royal air? The image everyone remembers is the reverse. In the family poem, at the outbreak of the rebellion against Henry II in 1173, the son decided he wanted a knight to buckle the sword round *his* waist. There were men of title and property to choose from. He chose his household man William, who at this point did not own a strip of land. William girded him, kissed him and asked God to keep him in prowess and honour. The poet takes time to register that earls and barons watched this happen. The discrepancy in the two men's rank mattered at least as much to the descendants of the man holding the sword as it had to the person receiving it.[A5S]

A well-placed Canterbury writer, Gervase, says Henry II had himself made his son a knight in 1170, on the very day of his coronation. A second source connected with Thomas Becket weighed in favour of that earlier date for David Crouch. Medieval historians have asked whether two public gestures could have occurred, a father's act before the coronation and a son's before his own supporters three years later. Matthew Strickland thinks the possibility worth considering. Emily Joan Ward, having set out the alternatives in a study of young kings, doubts that doubling the ceremony is a likely expedient in this setting. The poem is so explicit about the honour done to William that the difficulty cannot be removed by vague language about his teaching Henry the use of a sword. For now, if we want to see the landless knight give the royal one his weapon, we must take our places among the listeners to the *History*.[A5T]

It is tempting to decide that the father's side must own the truth, since the later biographer so clearly had something to gain for his hero. The father's camp was also entitled to care who had made Henry a knight. If the ceremony was part of the father's act of having his son crowned, it expressed the transmission of authority from one generation to another. If the son, rebelling, had the best fighting man he knew gird him in public, it presented his readiness for action in terms he and his own men had chosen. The difference is just what made the story worth remembering, whichever way one chose to tell it. From the available witnesses we can put William in Henry's household, in dangerous opposition to the father who

had appointed him. Everything now depended on what sort of king that boy was allowed to become.A5U



CHAPTER 4

A king at the tournament

About the illumination

A squire brings William the prize pike while a smith tries to free him from his battered helmet, as the family poet tells it.

Historical source A5V

Visual exemplar A5W

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

Henry II still had to provide for his youngest son, John. The trouble was that his crowned eldest son, the Young King, already counted on inheriting lands from which a gift might come. An arrangement for John to marry the heiress of Maurienne held out the prospect of land far to the southeast. For his English father it also meant finding something closer at hand to settle on him. Castles in the Loire country entered the negotiations. The eldest boy had been crowned to ensure his future. Now the father who said he would secure that future appeared to be distributing bits of it to his brother. It had taken no more than an ordinary effort to provide for one child to make the settlement of the whole family look uncertain.A5X

William's poet has the two kings come apart over something even nearer home. In his story the younger Henry's expenditures made an audience for men who wanted to poison his father's mind against the people around him. When the money ran out, the son sent for more. Why was it necessary to spend all this? the father's advisers asked. What had happened to the last instalment? The allowance of an expensive young man had consequences beyond the accounts of the person paying it. Each promise he made assumed that he had something to give. The man who sent a horse in anticipation of a favour, or took his chance of a reward by spending the winter with the household, helped make the king look and act like a king. His patience was likely to be limited. William owed his position to one side in this argument and his living to the other.A5Y

In 1173 the Young King left his father for the court of his father-in-law, Louis VII. His brothers Richard and Geoffrey joined the revolt. So did the count of Flanders. Men who held lands in the English kingdom weighed their own concerns in the balance. Beyond the northern frontier the king of Scots had an opportunity to press claims of his own. To speak of a family quarrel is quite accurate, but such a

description gets progressively less adequate as one travels outwards from the men whose relations had broken down. The custodian of an English castle deciding whether to admit a force bearing one of the two Henrys' commands could lose his estate, or the lives of the people under his roof, on an error of judgment. For men with lands given by the father, joining the son might be expensive even if the son eventually got what he wanted.A5Z

The French king had reasons of state for making his daughter's husband welcome. As ruler of Normandy, Anjou and other continental lands, Henry II owed service to Louis, king of France. His title as king of England hardly lessened his ability to make difficulties for his overlord in France. Louis had both the connections and the incentive to support an alternative ruler of part of this great inheritance. Becoming the Young King's ally involved him in a curious double undertaking. He would help a son lay hands on what his father controlled. At the same time he was protecting a daughter's expectation that the crown placed on her head would carry something of substance with it. A prince could go a surprisingly long way towards a position in international politics by going to stay with his wife's father.A6A

The rebel prince could offer other men a remarkable quantity of other men's property. Roger of Howden describes terms offered to allies who could help deliver him an inheritance. In the north, promises to the king of Scots concerned English territory. The beneficiary could bring men equipped to take it. What the Young King could not do was hand it over in the ordinary course of government, except to the extent that tenants, fortresses and officers decided to accept his command. William could ride at his side with a sword and all the confidence conferred by household membership. He had no instrument with which to distinguish in advance the promises of an emerging king from the offers of a losing claimant. For the time being they came from the same man.A6B

Eleanor supported her sons. Her husband obtained control of her person and restricted her freedom for much of the remainder of his reign. The interruption to her life is particularly striking after the appearance she makes as the active duchess in Poitou. A person whose commands officers there were expected to obey could be prevented from moving freely, yet her claims to land and her capacity to matter to her children did not disappear. The costs of losing in the family were not equally distributed. Her sons had armies with which to negotiate. They also had a relationship to a father who had devoted a great deal to making their succession good. William served the son who was most handsomely reconciled with that father. He did not thereby secure the release of the woman who had once secured his.A6C

The war crossed the Channel and reached the north of England. In 1174 William, king of Scots, was captured at Alnwick. The capture altered what one side in the family quarrel could expect of the other. A living king in the other party's hands had made all the difference at Lincoln before William Marshal was born. This time there were enough different armies and interests in play that even the meeting which ended one part of the fighting could leave another family member outside its protection. Howden records an agreement to a truce in which Richard was explicitly excluded from its benefit and the French king and Young King were to give him no assistance. A statement sometimes made of a prince, that he had made peace, could mean that his younger brother was about to face a more concentrated war in Poitou. Richard too came to terms.A6D

What did it cost to get the eldest son back? We have more than the family poem to go on. Howden copied settlement terms in which the sons returned to their father's service. The Young King was to receive the revenues of fifteen thousand pounds Angevin each year and two suitable Norman castles. One of the most important words in the agreement concerns who would choose the castles. The father reserved that right to himself. Richard would receive residences in Poitou and a share of its revenues. Geoffrey's arrangements looked forward to his marriage into Brittany. Men who had fought on opposite sides needed pardons. Castles newly built or strengthened had to be dealt with. Some captives had already made separate financial terms. A king might forgive an offence with a gesture, but turning the gesture into a peace that could be used in the localities required a settlement of what men owned and whom they could still hold.A6E

The company of the Young King had survived. The prince had a larger allowance, titles in abundance and the disadvantage of a father who was still both vigorous and king. Much could therefore turn on what the son did when he was at liberty to make his own arrangements. He found a field in which he could recruit men in the face of strong competition, travel, cultivate his acquaintances and be seen to bestow gifts on people of merit. The tournament made the royal household into an employer of consequence abroad without requiring an English war. It offered something else to William. A man had been made conspicuous by the quality of his service to the prince. The circuit gave him an opportunity to be known to people quite beyond the reach of any single ruler.A6F

The Young King's people did not begin as champions. In the household poem they attract sound, willing men, yet for a time get the worse of encounter after encounter. Philip, count of Flanders, knew when to hold his men back. Men who had been in the press of fighting for some time were tired and their groups had become disordered. He held his own men back, watched for the advantage and

went in across their path. His men could unhorse knights of the Young King's company, take captives and exact pledges. The Young King's people eventually learned to withhold themselves and turn the trick against the count. The poet gave Philip, who repeatedly embarrassed his heroes, full credit for the intelligence with which he had done it. The young royal team needed training in patience as well as courage.A6G

The participants knew a great deal about one another. It was difficult to be generous, grasping, late, gallant or dishonest on successive weekends without having a reputation attached to one's behaviour. Relations who had heard a version of the story would be in the next town. A formidable rider could make a fortune or need the favour of a smith. At Pleurs in Champagne, Henry judged the distance too great to attend but gave William leave to go. Towards the end of the gathering, a woman sent a handsome pike as a gift to the duke of Burgundy. The duke passed it along to the count of Flanders. Other distinguished men took turns in receiving and offering the fish. Philip found a solution beautifully suited to an assembly where a lord wanted credit for recognizing talent even when he had no intention of letting someone else outrank him. Why not give it to the best knight at the meeting? The company agreed that this was William.A6H

Two knights went looking, a squire carrying the pike in front. William was not at his lodging. Somebody had seen him at the forge. There the newcomers found the man they wished to honour with his head laid on the anvil. The sides of his helmet had been so beaten in that he could no longer get it off. The smith was working to free him with hammer and pincers. One can take the scene as a family anecdote whose very pleasures invite embroidery. Everything is happening in the wrong order for a formal presentation. The company sends two knights after its chosen man. He cannot go to them. For the moment everybody's attention is on the smith trying to get a piece of iron away from his throat. By the time they told William he had won a fish, he had already been given something that mattered more to him.A6J

A different set of numbers came out of his association with Roger de Gaugi, another knight of Henry's household. Roger saw how well William did and proposed that they work together. The poet says the partnership lasted two years. Within that period, from Pentecost until Lent, they captured 103 knights between them. The figure was not the sum of William's individual victories over two years, a number of tournaments won, or a list of men killed in combat. It excluded horses and gear. Wigain, identified as a clerk of the kitchen, and other household clerks were said to have done the counting. We have the poet's claim about their figures. We cannot take the independent testimony of an account book off a shelf and add it

to the poem. The book that survives is the one in which someone remembered a clerk having counted.A6K

The count seems less fabulous once one sees what required recording. A man encountered in the press had promised a sum of money and was allowed to get home. Another man needed someone to guarantee his payment. A third had lost a horse but claimed it back on the ground that what had happened was beyond the terms on which the other man was entitled to it. A pair in partnership could not divide gains sensibly unless they agreed on which gains belonged to both. A kitchen clerk may seem an odd person to find amid the mounted warriors until one remembers who else could keep accounts in a household on the move. Keeping a force together, feeding it and handling the obligations incurred in its presence were aspects of the same employment. Wigain had a view of the royal enterprise that we would give a good deal to recover in writing as well as a single remembered number.A6L

At another meeting William took the same man's horse twice. The first time he gave it back. When the man reappeared at full tilt and was thrown down a second time, he found William less inclined to let the animal go. At the end of the encounter there were prisoners and friends standing surety and men settling up in all directions. The defeated rider, Mathieu de Walincourt, came looking for William. The comic possibility depends on the distinction between the mounted warrior who had charged the royal people and the individual who might later walk up to one of them with a reasonable request. Riding badly was expensive. Riding admirably did not eliminate all the financial consequences of coming up against the same man twice.A6M

Good manners could be enforced by a man's relations. William, put to the trouble of retrieving another horse at the end of a day's encounters, went to see William des Barres, the uncle of the man who had taken it. The uncle received him with courtesy and required his nephew to produce the horse. First they were offered an old work animal of the right colour and the wrong quality. The man who had taken a good horse was prepared to be utterly precise about the colour he had returned. There were enough onlookers to make the trick a poor one, and enough anxiety about the uncle's own standing for his household to be an effective place to bring a claim. In the story the marshal who had grown expert at handling a bad horse could also tell when he was being offered one in place of his own.A6N

A dispute about another captured horse led to a remarkable piece of sharp dealing. The horse had been brought out and the parties generally agreed that William should surrender part of the value, or that the two men should play at dice to decide who owned the whole animal. The other man preferred to put a valuation

on it. He named fourteen pounds, hoping by the low figure to come out ahead. William had cash. He offered seven pounds for the other man's half and walked away with a horse the poet thought worth something near forty. Acquiring an advantage in these company arrangements required a price one could defend whichever party got the choice to buy. A few lines of calculation have left us a more intimate portrait of the tournament expert than any superlative about the power in his shoulders. He noticed that his antagonist had come to terms on the assumption that William could not find the money, and he could.A6P

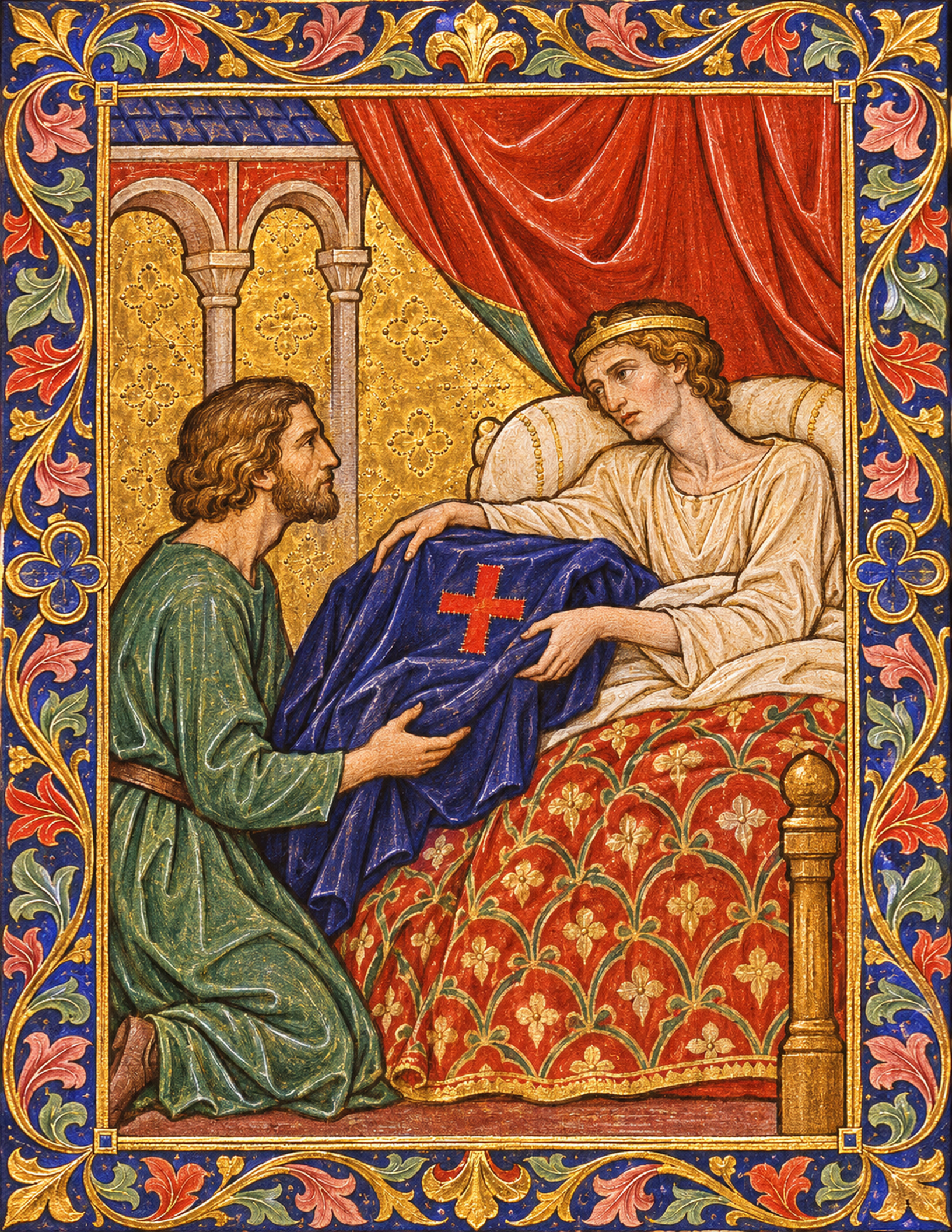
It was to the Young King's advantage that such a man belonged to him. A well-known knight from his establishment could turn up at a meeting in the prince's absence and force powerful company to take note of the household he came from. At Joigny men were waiting in their equipment for the opposing side to approach. The countess and other women joined them. People started a dance; somebody proposed that a courteous person supply a song. William sang and others joined in. Then a herald took it into his head to sing a refrain asking Marshal for a good horse. At this point an opponent appeared who was in no danger of mistaking the affair for a social gathering. William left the dance, got his horse from a squire, knocked an oncoming rider out of the saddle and obtained the animal the herald had requested. What the onlookers thought of the singer was transformed by what he could give away.A6Q

The story confers on William something that a prince usually enjoyed in these accounts. Other people made songs about his ability to give and came to him for presents. Gifts that it was a considerable business to acquire could be handed on in an instant and leave an enduring debt of goodwill. This was just the sort of thing that made Henry so attractive to the author of the *History*. The prince, he writes, took the lead in seeking out men of ability and rewarding them with horses, arms, money or a holding on which they could live. An author writing in the 1220s could use a dead prince's apparent generosity to say an uncomfortable thing about the men who still had land and had the option of spending it on retainers. Praise for a dead prince could sound very much like a reproach to living lords who had the means to give young knights a start.A6R

There is another side to being thought important enough to receive public gifts. As the household entered the 1180s William was spending more of his time in pursuit of gains that attached directly to his own name. The same freedom that let him make a good horse available on the spot might put him somewhere else when his lord needed protection. A man whose banner was routinely visible beside the prince acquired people and interests of his own. His brother Ansel was on the circuit. At Lagny in 1179 the poet has an assembly of astonishing splendour, in

company brought together by the crowning of Philip, son of Louis VII. A separate notice of Ansel with men of that circle suggests how widely the family had found its way into this world; it supplies no independent score of horses or prisoners William took at Lagny. Henry benefited when his best knight won. Yet a horse that William chased on his own account could take him out of reach of the prince he was charged to protect.[A6S]

For years William and the younger Henry had appeared to provide the answer to one another's difficulties. The king could give a knight without much land access to royal company and a part in making a name on both sides of the Channel. The knight could give a prince without much power over daily government the closest thing to an effective army he was allowed to maintain on an ordinary day. Their success made both men valuable to people outside that relationship. Other lords might offer William work. The prince's other men might wear thin under repeated invitations to admire his favourite. A public honour could be conferred at a meeting like the one at Pleurs, in company too large for rivals to challenge the award without looking ridiculous. It was in smaller company, where the audience could be chosen and the charge passed from hand to hand, that the Young King heard something about William he was no longer prepared to let go.[A6T]



CHAPTER 5

A cross on a cloak

About the illumination

At Martel in 1183 the dying Young King entrusts his crusading cross to William. The chronicler Geoffroi de Breuil says it was on the prince's cloak.

Historical source A6U

Visual exemplar A6V

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

At Caen in the winter of 1182–83, William offered to lose a finger. He had already volunteered to fight three men, one on each of three days. If he failed to clear his name he would accept hanging, or something worse. The Young King had refused the fight. William's next proposal was to have a finger cut from his right hand and let the best of his accusers try him at that disadvantage. Nobody took the offer up. For years Henry had valued what William could do with a sword. Now, when William wanted to stake his name on it, Henry would not let him fight.A6W

The story comes from the side that had good reason to make the accusers look bad. A group of Norman household knights had worked up a case against him. At its heart was an accusation of improper relations with Margaret, their lord's wife. The *History* calls the charge a lie and reserves some of its most outspoken abuse for the men who carried it to the king. There were business grievances too. When the Young King rode out to a tournament, did William concentrate on guarding his lord, or did he use his lord's presence to make conquests of his own? It is possible to have behaved impeccably towards a married woman while pursuing an excellent horse at quite the wrong moment. The family's rejection of the first allegation does not require its readers to dismiss the second.A6X

How did the accusation reach Henry? The poet follows it from one household man to another. The men needed someone with access to the king who would carry their charges into his presence. They did not succeed with the first person approached. Eventually Ralph Farci told Henry he could produce five knights to confirm his account. Five witnesses sound like a very different proposition from a single unsubstantiated accusation, until one knows the steps by which they were brought forward. The poet was prepared to name some men and spared the names of others whose descendants were still alive. What passed behind the closed doors

he describes is hard to verify even in one's own generation. After four decades, the writer found himself in possession of remarkably intimate information about how William's enemies had plotted. Some of it may have reached the family from a participant. None of it makes him an observer of five men's consciences.A6Y

Henry stopped talking to William. Distance was a form of discipline the person at the centre of a household could impose without issuing orders. Everyone could see that the man who used to have access no longer had it. Fewer people knew what had brought the change about. There is a particularly awkward moment in the *History* in which an order still binds a retainer whose lord has ceased to speak to him. At a tournament at Gournay, the estranged William obeyed the summons, made himself useful to his prince, and departed with the breach still plain to both. A biography written to celebrate a man's gift for loyal service can be a surprisingly good account of an employer who no longer wishes to acknowledge that gift in public.A6Z

In the grand scene at Caen, standing before both kings offered William a chance to put a declaration on record. His offer of combat was a demand to know whether the people who had made him an outcast would stand by their words where it might cost them their lives. His proposals grew more extravagant when the prince kept refusing. At last he asked the elder Henry for a safe conduct out of his lands. There was a greater world in which William's earnings and reputation did not depend on the prince, and it mattered that he could go there. The man with no other door open could be left at his lord's gate indefinitely. William had friends in France and Flanders. Even his ability to leave was a consequence of the long association that appeared to have ended.A7A

There was a person at the centre of this episode who had no right of reply in the poem. Margaret was the queen whose marriage was supposed to have been injured. In 1183 the question of her future mattered to two courts; in her widowhood she acted for the memory of her husband in a document issued in her own name. Much later in this story we will encounter people trying to decide how a dead person's preferences can be made to bind the living. Margaret can be heard confronting that question in the surviving records of Rouen cathedral. It is possible to recover what she wanted done in Rouen. It is not possible to recover a private word of hers about the allegations at her husband's court. To let William's accusers or his defenders settle her character would give the only people audible in the dispute a quite undeserved authority.A7B

In the spring of 1183 a more serious quarrel offered all parties a reason to reconsider. Richard, Henry II and Eleanor's second surviving son, was trying to rule Aquitaine. Local lords resented his exactions and coercion. Some offered the eldest

brother an opening against the younger. Howden begins the year's account at the royal gathering in Normandy and builds his explanation from the oaths and undertakings with which the family tried to manage its grievances. Henry II ordered his sons Richard and Geoffrey to do homage to their crowned elder brother. Geoffrey complied. Richard at first refused, and when he changed his mind, the Young King refused in turn to accept the gesture. A man commanded to put himself into the hands of his brother could make a very considerable point simply by deciding at what moment to obey. Henry II had a real difficulty. Acknowledging the superiority of the elder son might end in giving him the men and means to intervene against the younger.A7C

A particular castle made an answer necessary. Clairvaux had been strengthened by Richard. The Young King objected that it lay in his own future inheritance. Father and sons were soon exchanging promises to maintain their peace while men in the localities were deciding whether it was safe to attend the conferences intended to settle their future. The aggrieved lords had interests besides the dignity of two princes. They might prefer a distant overlord who would confirm them in their holdings to an energetic neighbour determined to govern. Some of them told alarming stories about what Richard had done in their country. Whatever weight should be given to the particular accusations his enemies circulated, the coalition had enough weight for Richard to appeal to his father. The Young King had little power in his own right. Richard's quarrel with his lords gave the elder brother new allies with grievances of their own.A7D

In and around Limoges the contest divided the town and put men of the same family at the head of opposing armed parties. To pay them became an urgent problem. The Young King and his brother Geoffrey needed professionals who would fight for wages. The most readily convertible stores of precious metal in the neighbourhood included those held in churches in honour of the saints. Howden gives Geoffrey a dishonourable part in a truce and says he took gold and silver dedicated to Saint Martial and used the proceeds to pay the Brabanters, soldiers serving for money. The Young King too, in Howden's account, stripped a church. What was in a saint's keeping could become cash for the men on whose services a king depended. The people who had given those gifts had done so for purposes of their own, which rarely enter the dynastic story. Money could make the prince's reputation for generosity look rather different from one side of a treasury door to the other.A7E

Here, according to the *History*, the Young King's experienced brother Geoffrey of Brittany advised him to recall William. One of the voices raised on William's behalf belonged to Geoffrey de Lusignan, the man the same poem had placed at the head

of the party that killed Patrick of Salisbury. Geoffrey was prepared to maintain William's innocence in combat. He added that William thought he had killed his uncle and that the belief was groundless. These are vivid words to be remembered by a family with an interest in acquitting its own man of a charge of betrayal. Geoffrey had little reason to speak for William. That gave his offer particular weight. The poem can find its way back to the ambush in Poitou when a regular account of what the rebels did to pay their troops would have been much less welcome.A7F

A message went after William. He was careful about accepting. The younger Henry wanted him at his side to wage a war in which the elder Henry was already engaged. The old king had once given him to his son and had lately given him a safe conduct to leave. According to his biographer William collected letters from great men in France before he re-entered the prince's service. He obtained Henry II's authority to go back to his lord. The poet says he had even heard that the father gave permission to fight against him. There is a distinction between letters attributed to the king and a remarkable further concession the narrator himself introduces as hearsay. Both belong in an account of what the family wanted settled. A man who had once offended both parties would be much better off if neither could say he had secretly crossed its line a second time.A7G

On the way back to his lord, the poet takes William away from courts and into an encounter in which he did not come off quite so well. He met a man and a woman travelling with good horses and baggage. The man turned out to be a monk. The young woman said she came from Flanders and identified a brother William knew. William offered to make her peace with her family. She said she would never return to a place where she was known. The man had forty-eight pounds with him. William took the money and let the couple go on their way. Later he produced it before his companions. Hugh de Hamelincourt thought he had been altogether too generous to leave them their mounts and baggage, and would have gone after them if William had not stopped him.A7H

There is no need to decide from this vantage point whether the absconding couple were truly in love, or to suppose we know what the woman faced if returned. She disappears beyond the edge of the tale. William had been able to take a large sum of money from people who could hardly appeal to his lord for justice or to their own community for sympathy. His friends saw an opportunity missed. Paul Meyer, the poem's editor, thought the taking looked very like armed robbery. The poet told it without seeming to fear that anyone would think worse of his hero for accepting the money. The episode is more difficult to keep in a comfortable life of the best knight than the charges about Margaret, which his champions were quite prepared to answer. At the tournament a disappointed man could bring an

awkward claim to the lodging of somebody's uncle. There was no such person available to a runaway woman on a road far from home.A7J

The Young King fell ill at Martel, south of Limoges, in the country of Quercy. He was some way from the city where his father and brother had been fighting. Howden describes a fever and a flux of the bowels and says the father, fearing a trap, declined to come when he was summoned. The parents and children who had exchanged solemn assurances in the winter had managed to create a situation in which a son could be dying without his father daring to go to him. Bertram, bishop of Agen, reported that the father had sent him to work for peace. He found the prince gravely ill and administered the last rites. A correspondent who had actually stood at the bed had his own thing to settle. It was the disposition of the body that led him to give an account of his encounter to the pope.A7K

What did the prince do with the enterprise he had promised to undertake in the Holy Land? The Anglo-Norman poet has him call on William, remind him of his loyalty and ask him to carry his cross to the Holy Sepulchre. Howden gives him a moment of public confession and says he gave William "his cross to bear to Jerusalem". Geoffroi de Breuil, the prior of Vigeois in the region where these things were happening, says William pledged himself to carry it on the prince's cloak to the Lord's Sepulchre in his stead. The accounts do not make the same selections at the bedside. For the journey they agree on the essential transaction, that a man who could no longer go entrusted the obligation to someone else. His year's campaigning had given churchmen some difficult matters to weigh against this final piety. Carrying his cross into the east was work William could undertake even when his lord's other promises lay beyond his help.A7L

Young Henry wanted to be buried at the cathedral of Rouen. He died on 11 June 1183. The bishop of Agen told Pope Lucius III that everybody could see the practical reasons for the nearer monastery of Grandmont. The sick man persisted in his choice. In a separate letter the count of Toulouse likewise said he had been present, heard Henry choose Rouen, and heard him pray to lie near his uncle William there. The castellan of Saint-Omer gave testimony too. These are records called into existence for a specific purpose by a church which very much wanted the prince's body. They tell us something the prince was capable of insisting on even while undergoing extreme unction. If one needs a proper place to look for what a dying man actually wanted, there is a considerable advantage in the words of a person who had proposed something more convenient and seen the proposal rejected.A7M

The difficulties the bishop foresaw were real. Howden says the brain and entrails were buried at Martel, the body salted and wrapped for the long journey north. The household poet says a commander of mercenaries stopped William by seizing his

bridle. The dead man owed him money. A living man with so strong a claim to the confidence of the deceased would do until he was paid. They agreed a price of a hundred marks for William's release. William pledged himself to return at an appointed time if the matter had not been settled. When the old king asked him to escort his lord's remains to Rouen, therefore, William had an outstanding engagement to report. A man can put himself in a dead friend's place for several quite different purposes. The creditor had chosen the one which promised to yield money.A7N

At Le Mans the people of the cathedral and town held on to the body and buried it. Rouen wanted what it regarded as its due and the father intervened. It was necessary to dig up the son again. Howden offers the instructive detail that while discussions over the burial went on, Henry II continued to press his military advantage in and around Limoges. The rebel's campaign had been broken up by the death of its principal but had left castles and garrisons to dispose of. The churches that had lost their silver had good reason to be interested in what the victors did. The men who were to obtain the revenues of disputed estates wanted a decision quite as much as the canons who were to care for a dead man's soul.A7P

For the widow whom the Marshal story leaves in such an uncomfortable position, the completed burial was the beginning of work. Margaret issued a charter providing for chaplains at Rouen. The money would come to her from the king of Hungary. On receipt she proposed to place three hundred marks in the hands of the abbot of Clairvaux, who could turn it into a rent. Some of the income was for the chaplains who would celebrate for her husband; at the anniversary part was for clerks of the choir. She had given thought to who should appoint the chaplains, and she vested the right in the dean and his successors. What that document establishes is far more precise than an expression of grief. This woman distinguished the arrival of a payment, the establishment of an income, the people who would receive it and the officer who would have the right to choose them after she was dead.A7Q

Geoffrey, Duke of Brittany, made a provision for his dead brother which drew its rents from his mills at Guingamp. His wife Constance confirmed it in a separate charter. Margaret, Geoffrey and Constance each helped provide for prayers at Rouen. Long after the three were dead, others would still have to collect the money and pay for those prayers. William had been given a commission of his own even before they drew up their documents. The documentary evidence for that family's commitments at Rouen is unusually full. The moment we follow William east we have to put away most of this abundance.A7R

The poem says that Henry II gave him a hundred Angevin pounds for his journey and kept two good horses which William reckoned more valuable. In

England he went to take leave of his family. His sister, married into the household of Robert du Pont de l'Arche, wanted to know who would help with her five daughters' marriages in his absence. There is very little in the surviving literature of this fighting man to match so immediate a reason for his eventually coming home. William had not yet received the large landed estate on which a whole family would one day depend. His name and friends were apparently of use to people in need of introductions and endowments. A pledge to go far away could sound very different to a group of nieces whose future nobody had troubled to put into the Young King's testament.A7S

William went east. A great deal that we know about the kingdom of Jerusalem in the middle 1180s could be used to supply him with places to go and battles to fight. We have no witness with which to make such a choice. The *History* says he spent two years away, did deeds in Syria that others did not equal in seven, and took his leave of the king, the Templars and the Hospitallers. After so many accounts of particular movements of a horse two decades before, this is an extraordinary change of scale. The poet says plainly he was not there, never saw these feats and could not find anyone to tell him the half of them. Even his naming of Guy as king at the farewell is difficult to square with reconstructions which put William back in the west before Guy became king in 1186. A chronicler can use the title by which a man was later known. That does not enable his readers to reconstruct a day of departure.A7T

It is hard to improve on the old poet's candour at this point. The cross had a destination that the sources name. The return placed William in a household in which his abilities were going to be used on a different scale. Between those two events he had an experience that still mattered in the last weeks of his life, when the connection he had made with the Temple came into view once more. Historians who can describe exactly what was happening at a place in those years are still unable to put William there on any one day. The *History* finds him on his return meeting Henry II at Lyons-la-Forêt in Normandy. The man who had tried, on the side of the Young King, to make that father share some of his authority now needed a place at the old king's own table. This time the king had land as well as horses in his gift.A7U



CHAPTER 6

What the king had promised

About the illumination

In the family poem, William helps a woman save her possessions from the fire at Le Mans in 1189. The quilt he takes up is already smouldering.

Historical source A7V

Visual exemplar A7W

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

In the north of England a man called Gervase had acquired land from a lord called William of Lancaster. After William of Lancaster died, Gervase wanted his next lord to honour the grant. A piece of parchment from Sizergh records the new lord's answer. Gervase was to keep his holdings on the terms already set out in William of Lancaster's charter. He would hold them of William Marshal and his heirs. A knight who had been able to tell a creditor that he had no land from which to pay him had become the man from whom another family wanted its tenure secured. The document can be dated between 1186 and June 1188, before the marriage with which most accounts of William associate his arrival in the ranks of landed society.A7X

There is a strangeness to the words about the Marshal's heirs. The northern lands had an heiress, Heloise of Lancaster. While she was still a girl Henry II had made William her guardian and entrusted her lands to him. Custody put a guardian in a position to deal with the people on the estate, draw income and oversee its affairs. It did not extinguish the rights of the girl whose family had given the place its line of lords. A royal grant could include the valuable opportunity to arrange the heir's marriage. In the household poem William keeps the girl in honour but does not marry her. The document for Gervase suggests he could conduct business on the expectation that he might. It does not tell us that Heloise made any such calculation, or that the arrangement would survive the death of the king who had made it.A7Y

A good tenant might see the issue from a different angle again. Gervase already had terms from a member of the Lancaster family and an interest in preserving them. The earlier charter mattered enough for the later notice to refer back to it. Ownership and authority consequently came with a history which the arrival of a new lord could not simply wipe away. William's importance at Sizergh depended on an intervention by Henry II. Gervase's ability to deal with him depended in part

on having something to show for the terms he had been promised before the intervention. The two men might freely agree on the value of setting their understanding down while keeping quite different futures in mind. The document was once sealed. In the modern editor's description one can see the slits for the tag. The tag itself has been torn out.A7Z

Royal friendship had other tangible rewards. Crouch places the grant of the royal estate of Cartmel, adjoining the approaches to Morecambe Bay, at Christmas 1186. A man who had made his name in crowds in Champagne had acquired interests a considerable distance from where he would be expected to spend most of his time in the king's service. Estates came with people able to conduct business in a lord's absence, or able to say that a transaction required his assent. We know less than one might wish about the people who did that work while he was riding in France. We have enough in the confirmation to see that his life in these years was already about the authority of a lord with dependants, a guardian with a valuable charge and a servant still ready to press an employer for better terms. All three could be the same man without having exactly the same interests.A8A

Henry's pleasures in dealing with him can be approached from a document quite different in tone. Nicholas Vincent brought to light the circumstances of a letter summoning William to the king on campaign in 1188. The king observed that his knight had been pretty persistent in claiming he had received too little for his work. In Berry, Henry proposed to reward him with marriage to Denise, heiress to the important lordship of Châteauroux. The court was in the middle of a contest for territory in which the question of who got the heiress mattered to both kings. William had acquired sufficient weight to be offered a striking match, and sufficient caution to press the value of his services upon the king from whom he needed it. He was serving Henry in a cause which might make him a substantial man in the middle of France. One can imagine quite a different geography for the rest of this book from the contents of that letter alone.A8B

So who was Henry fighting? Louis VII, to whose court his sons had turned in their first rebellion, was dead. His son Philip II was now king of France. Richard, the most experienced of Henry's surviving sons, had a considerable army and following in the continental lands he had governed. Geoffrey, who had fought with Henry the Young King in the Limousin, had died in 1186, leaving his wife Constance and claims in Brittany which would outlive him. John was growing up and remained a favourite of his father. And besides the concerns of this family there was terrible news from the east. In 1187 Saladin defeated the kingdom of Jerusalem's army at Hattin, captured its king and the relic known as the True Cross, and took Jerusalem itself. The city which people in the west had understood William to have visited was

now in a conqueror's hands. A new crusade called for the participation of men who were finding it extraordinarily difficult to make peace close to home.A8C

When Henry and Philip took the cross in 1188, a commitment of the highest religious importance seemed to give them the strongest possible reason for settling their quarrels. To set out on a long journey with expensive forces was a difficult thing for either king to do if the king he left behind could invade his lands in his absence. Those who were willing to go needed to raise money and make arrangements for their dependants. Others who had no intention of going would still face demands for an extraordinary contribution. Henry and Philip could agree to assume the cross without agreeing who was to dispose of a castle or hand over a bride. Efforts to keep the peace on the frontier continued to come up against what each king thought the other was getting away with. By the middle of the year they were fighting in France. Henry's offer of Denise was made in the course of an attempt to recover the disputed lordship.A8D

The poem shows William as an adviser on what the English king could do to recover his advantage. One incident began near Gisors, on a frontier where the two kings and their predecessors had met and quarrelled for years. A great elm associated with their meetings was destroyed in an outbreak of hostilities. The loss of a tree could be personally offensive without being militarily important. What mattered to the men of Pacy and the country towards Mantes was that when the French force withdrew from the border it broke up. William proposed that his own king should seem to do the same. Give the men secret instructions about a place and a date to gather again, he advised, then take a substantial mounted force across the border before the other side can get its people back into position. The defenders near Mantes would be hard pressed to fight it off, and the inhabitants along the line of march had no respectable chance at all.A8E

It worked in the family poet's account. When the men Henry wanted had reassembled at Pacy they set out with knights, sergeants and a great disposition to do damage. They burned their way towards Mantes. Men of the French king's household came out to oppose them but lacked the numbers to stop them. When the English king's force came to rest at Ivry it had a considerable quantity of plunder. Henry's praise for the man who had suggested the raid was cast in terms usually reserved for a gracious or courteous knight. The virtue consisted in judging how to hurt the enemy at the smallest corresponding cost to one's own side. It was not necessary to come up against the whole French force to show courage. It was wiser to make sure the whole French force was somewhere else.A8F

To reckon the cost of William's raid, one could also ask a family whose crops had gone up in smoke. Much earlier, while telling the child's adventures at Newbury,

the same poet had explained that when poor people could no longer get food from the land they would be unable to pay rent and would go elsewhere to find bread. In due course their lords would suffer. John Gillingham pointed out the relation between that observation and the actual practice of war commended in the Marshal's biography. William's proposal could pay a raiding party and impoverish an opponent, and the mechanism by which it did the latter was to hurt people too poorly protected to prevent it. The men at Ivry could count their gains that night. A household that had lost the means to take in a harvest was going to go on reckoning its losses for an appreciably longer time. Nothing in this picture requires us to make William untypical. His peers thought the advice excellent.A8G

The distinction between sound planning and caution in the face of personal danger could become very fine once William began to ride. At Montmirail he got himself on to a bridge from which it would have been difficult to retreat. His account of why he had gone so far was splendidly characteristic. There was a mounted man among his opponents. If he had managed to seize that one by the reins, the raising of a bridge behind the fellow might have prevented his retreat and delivered him into William's hands. His friends did not find the explanation altogether reassuring. They had servants and horses as well as their own bodies to consider when a foray into the other side's territory went wrong. At the end of the day someone had to inspect the animal on which William had taken this alarming chance.A8H

The man tending William's horse was John of Earley, one of the men who would later help tell his story. He took off its covering at the night's lodging at Châteaudun and saw what the lance points had done. They counted seven wounds in shoulder, neck and breast. The mount appeared likely to recover. There are feats of arms in the early part of the *History* which may have worked their way through several people's recollections before reaching the man who put them in rhyme. For the business of taking off the cloth, looking under it and summoning his master we have a named person with precisely the responsibility that would put him there. John of Earley was an intimate of William's and a major informant for the poem. It is seldom possible to say that a particular detail came out of his mouth. Here we at least know what brought him close enough to see.A8J

Henry's enemy across the frontier soon acquired an ally with far better knowledge of his father's resources than any scout could have supplied. Richard feared for his succession. In his dealings with Philip he found a way to announce that he would act on his own account. He gave the French king his allegiance for continental lands, in opposition to his father. It is one thing to call a king's son disloyal when he puts his hand in the hand of an enemy. It is quite another to

persuade the people who expect to live under him for the next half-century to deliver arms and money to someone else. Men in Normandy, Anjou and Brittany began to calculate a future after the old king. The author William of Newburgh, writing at a religious house in Yorkshire, saw betrayal and ingratitude and suspected Philip's influence. His moral language is very useful for understanding what people who loved the father thought of the men who deserted. The desertions were real enough.A8K

William Marshal stayed with Henry. For much of his earlier adult life loyalty to the Young King had entailed standing against this very man. One of the objections to his position with the son had been precisely that the captain of a tournament company might spend more of his time looking for an advantage of his own than minding the interests of his master. These things did not prevent the father from employing William or from placing a great deal of confidence in him. Now the ruler holding his northern English grants and the promise of a French heiress was fighting for the life of his kingship. Helping him had become something more particular than service to his family. Richard possessed a very good claim to be the same family's future. Turning one's back on that future could be economically disastrous while thoroughly in keeping with a commitment of the previous week.A8L

In June 1189 Henry was at Le Mans when the opposing forces approached. Philip and Richard arrived in circumstances which made the defence difficult from the first. There was fighting around an entrance to the city. William took a man by the bridle and brought him in; the horse William had been riding was lame and he presently mounted the prisoner's. Henry in the recollected dialogue reminded him that the gate at which he was showing his prowess happened to be the best his army had, and the consequences might be unfortunate if it were compromised. A king in the process of trying to save a city had grounds for impatience with a man who had never quite lost his liking for securing a single well-mounted prisoner. William was left to arrange the custody of his own captive.A8M

Then the fire intended to make the undefended suburbs useless to the approaching army got into the city. The *Gesta* associated with the name of Benedict of Peterborough says the flame leapt the walls. Newburgh, taking a broader view of Henry's predicament, tells his readers that the king fired the city and got out. In the *History* the command concerned a suburb, the consequences defied the commanders, and a woman appeared in the street desperately trying to save her possessions. Her house was burning. William ordered his squires down to help and dismounted himself. He took up a feather quilt. The underside had caught fire, and the smoke got into his helmet so badly that he had to take it off. For the moment the

smallest place in the entire campaign was the space about one man's mouth and nose as he tried to breathe.A8N

There is no difficulty in taking the poet at his word that he wished to show a humane man helping someone in trouble. What makes the episode worth the telling is the identity of the people who set the fire. These were Henry's people, trying to keep an enemy from getting an advantage. The woman in the house belonged to the city he was supposed to defend. We do not know what ultimately became of her or whether the famous knight succeeded in lifting much of her household equipment clear. His willingness to go to some inconvenience and risk for her can stand alongside the harm which efficient raiders, acting on advice he had given, had inflicted the previous year on people in much the same circumstances. In the account drawn up by the family there was room for both actions to count as good service. The woman and the landholders outside Mantes might have distinguished rather sharply between them.A8P

Henry had to leave Le Mans, his birthplace, to the enemy. Richard rode in pursuit. In the poem he was wearing a padded garment and an iron cap rather than a full suit of armour and called out when he saw Marshal coming at him. William was able to reach the horse. He drove the lance into its body and the animal fell dead. The pursuers checked their advance and Henry's men got away. To attach to this incident the neat label of a duel between the two greatest knights of their generation would be to import the organization of a contest into the dangers of a retreat. Others had already been engaged on both sides. The account places William des Roches and Philip de Colombiers in the fighting. Killing an animal helped the people on one side get out of a rapidly deteriorating situation. One of those on the other side would soon be making a great many decisions about William Marshal's future.A8Q

The two men had good reason to remember the point of the lance differently. According to the later discussion constructed by the poet, Richard thought he had just deflected a blow that would otherwise have killed him. Marshal insisted that if he had wanted to put the lance into Richard's body it would have gone exactly where he wanted, just as the thrust at the horse had done. His family gave him nothing to retract so far as the killing of the animal was concerned. The later need to answer a question like this might have helped preserve the account of the earlier encounter. We have neither a companion's statement to set beside William's boast about his control of the weapon nor a letter from Richard explaining how he judged the answer. We have the consequence of their meeting, which is quite eloquent.A8R

The old king's strength failed. At the end he wanted to know who among his men had gone over to his adversaries and the list included his son John. The

monarchy could not afford to become a drama about the pain of a single father, and the terms upon which a sick king could end a lost campaign mattered beyond his household. Nevertheless several writers found in this last defection an explanation for the collapse of a ruler who had generally managed to recover his footing after every challenge. In the family poem Henry suffered considerable bodily pain and decided to go to the necessary conference. At Chinon he grew worse. Chroniclers who could see a father's grief joined to the punishments of God in this outcome were more certain about its causes than a modern physician ought to be. He died on 6 July 1189.A8S

The dead king's chamber offered poor protection for the property in it. In the *History* servants helped themselves, and the men immediately concerned with his body were left to find suitable things for him to wear. The great nunnery at Fontevraud was to receive him. A ring that could be used in the burial was produced by a servant, Hugh of Sandford, who said Henry had given it to him for safekeeping. In a narrative preoccupied with disloyalty it is worth noticing that there were people in the household who still had things in their keeping of which the dead king could demand no account. One had a ring. William and his fellows had a funeral, the need to tell Richard what had happened and the very serious question of which parts of the old king's unfinished business his successor would treat as binding.A8T

The chancellor reminded Richard that Henry had given Isabel, the heiress of Striguil, to William Marshal. In the poet's dialogue Richard made a correction. Henry had promised the match. Richard himself now granted it. With Henry dead, a promise was all William had. Richard's assent allowed him to marry the woman through whom he might acquire lands in several countries. Richard did not honour every proposed match on the same terms. He had given Châteauroux and Denise to André de Chauvigny and another man would have to be compensated. Heloise of Lancaster was to marry Gilbert fitz Reinfrey. The Anglo-Norman scene is extraordinarily revealing about a young king whose supposed chief pleasure lay in warfare. He knew exactly which commitments he regarded as his to change. Women whose heirs would bear the consequences of those decisions are named one after another without a voice in his conference.A8U

Richard wanted William and Gilbert Pipard to go to England ahead of him and attend to his affairs. By the time he crossed the Channel to take the crown, one of the men with responsibilities for the transition would be the household knight who had killed his horse in an effort to get his father safely away. That choice, which might look surprising in retrospect, did not oblige Richard to waste the remainder of his time on a quarrel whose purpose had died with Henry. William knew the men and

countries with which he would have to deal and had given a striking demonstration that he understood what it meant to stick to a commission. Richard had entrusted William with duties in England. The people on the Clare estates owed their services through Isabel's title. Marrying her gave William a claim on those services, and he had yet to find out who would acknowledge it. Within weeks the king would have work for him at Westminster. Across the Irish Sea, quite different masters held the castles to which his marriage gave him a claim.[A8V]



CHAPTER 7

The men who carried the gold

About the illumination

John Marshal carried the gold spurs at Richard I's coronation. His brother William carried the cross-topped sceptre, and their kinsman the earl of Salisbury bore the rod with a dove.

Historical source A8W

Visual exemplar A8X

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

At Westminster on Sunday, 3 September 1189, two brothers carried gold for the man who was about to be crowned king. John Marshal walked beside Godfrey de Lucy, the man with the king's cap. John's own charge consisted of two heavy spurs. Behind him came his younger brother William carrying a sceptre. It had a gold cross at the end. Beside him their kinsman William fitz Patrick, earl of Salisbury, bore another royal rod with a dove on top. The cloth laid down all the way from the king's chamber to the altar was wool.A8Y

The historian who kept those objects straight was Roger of Howden, a royal clerk with a taste for the order in which things ought to be done. Farther along in his account came three golden swords from the treasury. John, Richard's brother, carried the middle one. Another earl carried the crown, which Howden distinguished from all the other gold by its great weight and its precious stones. Richard, still duke of Normandy as he approached the altar, was about to swear an oath. Before the archbishop and people, he undertook to maintain peace, honour the church, do justice and put an end to bad practices. Only after making his promises was he stripped to the clothes prepared for the anointing. The archbishop then charged him again over his fitness to discharge the office. The men parading with objects that had accumulated over royal lifetimes belonged to an occasion which insisted that this particular king had duties of his own.A8Z

One of those men had lately killed the horse from under Richard on a road in France. The claim is the family's; it is a remarkable piece of evidence about what a family with royal loyalties thought worth having recorded. Just a few weeks later the recipient of so striking an affront had allowed William to marry Isabel de Clare and was putting a golden sceptre in his hands. If this seems an abrupt improvement

in their relations, the subjects of the day's promises offer one explanation. Richard had inherited a kingdom and a war to end. The next war he wanted to fight was a voyage away. It was worth a new king's while to find a place in his honour guard for a man who had kept faith with the old king to the very end. He had good reasons to want such men on duty when he left.A9A

Who watched the two brothers go by? Howden's list is excellent for people admitted to the procession and hopeless for most of the people who made the day's crowds. It changes character after the ceremony, when Richard sat down to eat. Some leading Jewish men had come to present gifts. They were making a perfectly intelligible claim on a king's attention. Their communities lived under royal protection. They had interests at the start of a reign as pressing as those of any lord newly admitted to royal favour. On the day before the coronation, according to Howden, they had been forbidden to attend the court. The people who attacked them did not simply refuse them entry. Men who had brought gifts were stripped, beaten and chased away.A9B

One of the visitors had come from York. His name was Benedict. Howden identifies the Christian priest who baptised the wounded man. This was William, the prior of St Mary's, York, and he gave Benedict his own name, William. Calling his act a conversion leaves out the circumstance on which the whole episode turns. Benedict had just been so badly hurt that men thought he might die. There was no security in refusing what a priest before him proposed. The next day, in Howden's telling, Richard asked who he was. Howden gives Benedict's answer in words that put his city and his claim on the king together. "I am Benedict of York, one of your Jews." The chronicler and the Christian prelates in this story had opinions on the status of a baptism received under threat; the ruler had to decide what to do with a man who had just repudiated it. Benedict had already supplied his own answer to the question of who he was. A Christian clerk has left us that answer amid language hostile enough to make the reader feel how much it cost to give it.A9C

The violence had meanwhile reached the streets of London. Jewish houses burned. Howden knew that at least some people got out with the help of Christian friends. His fellow chronicler William of Newburgh describes a false report that Richard had ordered the destruction of the Jews. A prohibition on attendance at court had travelled a remarkably short distance before it had become a warrant to burn down a neighbour's house. It is sometimes easier to narrate the behaviour of 'the people' on a day like this than to keep sight of the actual choices the sources preserve. Some attacked, some believed the convenient rumour, some helped people escape. Richard ordered some of the rioters hanged. Howden says the king acted because Christian houses had been burned and Christian property plundered.

Richard also commanded that the Jews in his other towns should be left in peace. Benedict died at Northampton. Nothing in the order of procession or in these narratives puts William Marshal on a particular London street that day. It matters that he took part in the coronation. It matters just as much to leave Benedict his place before the king without supplying him a famous defender or accuser.A9D

Richard crossed the Channel. In East Anglia violence spread in the months following. In March 1190 members of the Jewish community at York sought refuge in the king's castle. Benedict's house was among the places attacked there; members of his household died. Josce, another prominent Jewish inhabitant, was able to get his family to the stronghold. Newburgh's account describes a breakdown in the relationship between the refugees and the keeper of the castle. They feared to admit him again after he went out. A royal fortress could give people some protection while they held its gate; turning away the man who ordinarily commanded it gave local enemies a pretext to demand their surrender. The keeper took his complaint to the sheriff. Newburgh says the sheriff ordered a siege and then tried in vain to call it off. Armed townsmen and men from the surrounding country gathered against the people inside.A9E

The most detailed narrative of the days that followed was written by a Christian cleric in Yorkshire. It describes violence within the refuge when hope of surviving there failed. Some of those inside killed members of their families and themselves. Some survived the night and appealed from the wall to their besiegers in the morning. A promise of safety brought people out; men in the crowd murdered them. Newburgh gives speeches to people shut inside the tower. Even a man writing in the same county had no means of knowing all the words exchanged there. The Hebrew account associated with Ephraim of Bonn supplies the name of Rabbi Yom Tov. It dates the catastrophe by the great Sabbath before Passover, a life of worship to which the English chronicler's calendar of Passiontide gives us no access. Its place names and numbers do not fit the Christian accounts in every respect. Accounts written far from York told the bereaved what had been lost there.A9F, A9G

Ephraim goes beyond the people's deaths to describe the fate of their books. There had been many beautiful volumes. Plunderers carried some to Cologne and other places where people bought them. In Newburgh there is another kind of writing, bonds belonging to Jewish creditors, deposited for safety in the cathedral. Men involved in the attack forced the keepers to hand them over and burned them. The beautiful books could fetch money. The men who destroyed the bonds wanted the record of what was owed to disappear. Taken together, the two accounts let us see what became of things that people in York had written, used and thought worth keeping safe.A9H, A9J

King Richard, already overseas, ordered an inquiry. William Longchamp, bishop of Ely, chancellor and one of the men charged with keeping order in England, came north. According to Newburgh the leading offenders had gone. Some of them had had the cross sewn on their clothing to mark their intention to fight in the Holy Land and set off before an inquiry caught up with them. Longchamp exacted financial guarantees and removed the sheriff. Newburgh leaves him unnamed. David Crouch identifies him as John Marshal, William's elder brother, who had carried the spurs at the coronation. Osbert, Longchamp's own brother, took his place. No one had been condemned for the killings by the time the chronicler wrote. Newburgh attributes Richard's anger in part to the loss of revenue. Benedict had appealed to Richard as one of the Jews under his protection. At York people took refuge in the king's own castle. The sheriff ordered it besieged, then found he could not stop the siege. The inquiry removed an officer. It came too late for the families there.[A9K]

Longchamp had the largest share in governing England while Richard was away. A chancellor had command of the means by which a king's written orders were authenticated. Longchamp was also a bishop. For a time he could claim papal authority as a legate. His secular jurisdiction became the more powerful when Hugh du Puiset, bishop of Durham, ceased to be an effective colleague. That was an extraordinary accumulation in one pair of hands. A ruler about to spend an indefinite time out of the kingdom could appreciate the advantages of concentrating work in the hands of an energetic man. A subject who had asked a bishop for relief against the demands of royal government might find he had just appealed to the man responsible for making them. And anyone with ambitions to succeed him could find an audience well disposed to hear an account of his failings.[A9L]

Newburgh's portrait of Longchamp is so hostile that it is worth reading against the physical state of things just described. He resents the elevation of a man he regarded as a foreigner and of humble descent. His chancellor travels with a train of attendants so imposing that the people whose hospitality he requires have grounds for dreading his progress. He dresses, spends and appoints relatives on a scale calculated to make every offence a public one. In York the same chancellor turns up in answer to an entirely proper demand for royal intervention, to discover a difficulty any administrator would have faced once those chiefly responsible had left. A relatively new man wielding a king's delegated authority was an easy person for another ambitious man to present as a menace. One of his leading opponents was John, the king's brother.[A9M]

Richard had been lavish to John on his accession. A younger brother with substantial revenues could be expected to sustain an establishment commensurate

with the family's rank. His prospective wealth from Ireland added to his weight. John could also entertain the thought that, if Richard died far from home, someone would have to occupy the throne. Richard had no legitimate child. His nephew Arthur, son of his dead brother Geoffrey, had a dynastic claim. There were castles in England whose keepers had to make everyday decisions about which orders to obey. In that situation one could render the country a service by pointing out that the king's chancellor had exceeded his powers. One could also use the opportunity to get one's own adherents into the castles. John did both.A9N

There were royal officers in England able to act together, men besides Longchamp to whom Richard had entrusted responsibility. William Marshal was among them. His ear was worth having for reasons besides his old reputation in battle. Marriage had given him a household and followers on the Welsh March. His service had brought him into close relation with Richard's mother Eleanor. He could arrive with men of his own and take part in deciding what work a larger force ought to undertake. This was what men who were used to asking royal friends to come to their help had wanted somebody else to do for them. William was no longer only receiving these requests at the direction of a master. He was beginning to make up his own mind about what an answer to one should cost.A9P

The family poet deals briskly with what was done in distant places, including Richard's enormous expedition. Along the way he has a messenger complain to the absent king that William is among the men seeking to betray him. Richard in the poem will hear none of it. The messenger has cause to remember the difference between carrying someone's letter and personally endorsing its accusations. The point of the scene for the household is plain. William's king knows his loyalty so well that even an authorised messenger cannot shake him. A more prosaic record of the period, the exchange of instructions between people whose attitudes to Longchamp were changing, produces a different sort of suspense. A messenger travelling between England and the Mediterranean could easily arrive after the quarrel his letter referred to had been superseded by another. Reject a letter as wrongly obtained, as Newburgh has Longchamp do, and Richard himself was a great way off if someone wished to ask him what he had meant.A9Q

Eleanor did not confine herself to the English shore. During Richard's time in Sicily she brought Berengaria, a daughter of the king of Navarre, to him. He married Berengaria in Cyprus on the way east. In a chronicle a royal marriage can seem to happen because a man has at last reached the place where it is to take place. Here getting the woman to him required a journey by two women, one an older ruler whose own experience of making long journeys had begun decades before. Between her presence beside Richard and her work to release him from captivity lay another

of the problems of government during a long absence. The king had only one mother capable of acting with this authority. John, Richard's younger brother, and the powerful chancellor were both in England. The king of France, his partner in the crusade, would go home before him. Who could see him in person, and who had to wait until a ship with a reliable letter came in, mattered greatly.A9R

Richard sent Walter of Coutances, archbishop of Rouen, to England from Sicily. Walter could bring the force of Richard's authority against Longchamp if need arose. The chancellor's fall in 1191 came after an affront to a member of the royal family in sanctuary. Geoffrey, the king's half-brother and archbishop of York, had returned to England. Men acting for Longchamp seized him at Dover. That a bishop's agents should drag an archbishop from sanctuary supplied opponents with an indictment that reached London faster than any appeal could reach Richard. Longchamp retreated to the Tower. London's people, hearing from the royal brother who was on the spot, could make political demands of their own. It is a salutary change of perspective after the account of the massacre. The city that failed to keep some of its households safe could deal shrewdly with great powers when its collective privileges were at stake.A9S

John briefly gained the advantage and Longchamp lost the government. The archbishop of Rouen took the principal office. It would have been quite possible at this point to think John had helped restore the rule Richard wanted. The test came when his brother did not come home. After leaving the eastern Mediterranean, Richard had to travel through territories in which his enemies could reach him. In December 1192 he fell into the hands of Leopold of Austria and was delivered to Emperor Henry VI. The emperor's possession of a king changed the terms on which people in England could hope to settle their quarrels. Castles, silver, hostages and the cooperation of princes in territories an English army could never hope to compel would be required. A rumour of Richard's death could benefit a man in England before enough time had elapsed even to find out how much silver might bring him back.A9T

John approached Philip. Royalists in England made preparations at Windsor, where John's people held the castle, and elsewhere to deny him the use of the kingdom. William's story now turns on a commonsense point about military obligations. In the family poem the archbishop, Eleanor and the other magnates welcome him when he comes to Windsor with his following from the March. The force has already sworn to stay until the castle is dealt with; William is invited to add his oath. He declines to bind himself to the same terms. If everyone were tied to one spot, John could ride through the country doing damage while the king's force stayed dutifully before the walls. William undertakes to stay as circumstances

require while keeping open the possibility of going after John. At Windsor, in the poet's telling, William served his absent king by refusing an oath. Had he sworn it, John would have known exactly where he could be sure of finding the king's army. It also tells us the sort of audience he had: aristocrats who expected a commander with a force of his own both to take counsel and to reserve some freedom to decide for himself.A9U

Paying for Richard to be allowed to come back was work of another order. Chroniclers enumerate the surrender of church treasure and a heavy levy on movable property. The proportions in their accounts vary. So do the figures for the ransom, partly because terms changed and sums promised, sums paid in instalments and sums still secured by hostages were different things. Early terms between Leopold and the emperor involved a hundred thousand marks to be shared. A later total of a hundred and fifty thousand marks became famous. A mark was a unit for reckoning silver; it was not a coin one could count into a purse. To say a king was worth so many marks was to call on many thousands of people to turn plate, cash, goods or the value of service into something his captors were willing to accept. No one could achieve that by swearing undying affection for him in a hall.A9V

The family poem thought it particularly worthy of remembrance that men sent their children to stand as hostages for the king. It also reports letters of thanks. The more expensive royal act of gratitude associated with William was appointment of his brother Henry to Exeter as bishop. A reward for one brother could take the form of office for another. An ecclesiastical appointment had its own machinery and interests, and the biographer's account of personal recognition should be read as such. But we need his seemingly backward way of counting the beneficiaries of royal favour. An offer to raise a brother in the church might advertise a man's standing more effectively in more places than a present made directly to him. Conversely a father who supplied his child to help discharge the king's debt had done something with consequences that lived on after his own obligation drew to an end.A9W

A letter transmitted under Eleanor's name took the matter to Pope Celestine III. The woman who calls herself queen of the English points out to the pontiff what her family has already done for the papacy and what protection a crusader should have been able to expect. A mother can rebuke a father who has failed his son. The letter both adopts the posture of distress and uses it to powerful political effect. Its preservation in the collection of Peter of Blois has prompted discussion about how far its words came from Eleanor herself. We need no report of her private feelings to see what the letter was designed to achieve. We can follow her physical progress to

Germany and the negotiations that resulted in Richard's release. Ceremony, supplication and ready silver were all required. A study of the English and German reports warns how differently those negotiations appeared depending on where one's information came from. English churchmen who were present remember protracted arguments almost invisible in the German annals.A9X

In February 1194 Richard was set free. He reached England in March. The garrisons at Nottingham and Tickhill still had to decide what the sight of the king meant for them. At Striguil William received two pieces of news in quick succession. Richard was back. John Marshal, his own brother, was dead. Since losing his office in Yorkshire, John Marshal had served Count John as his seneschal. Marlborough had held for the count against Richard. The family narrative now follows his body. Men went to Marlborough for it; at Cirencester William met the funeral party. His brother's widow had come. They held the service, and the boy from Newbury, now a great lord with people at his command, could not go all the way to Bradenstoke, where his ancestors lay. A summons had come from the king. The earl in the poem expresses grief for his brother and gladness for Richard in the same breath. We cannot recover the proportions of either emotion. Whatever others made of his brother's service to the count, William's ride would make his own allegiance visible. He went to meet Richard.A9Y



CHAPTER 8

The carts at Arras

About the illumination

The Marshal poet gives the Flemish townsmen's carts a place in William's plan. Set across the way out, they could hold back the garrison while the mounted troops faced the relief army.

Historical source A9Z

Visual exemplar B2A

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

Two men came out of Nottingham Castle to see whether the king of England had really come home. In the account kept by William Marshal's family they have names, Foucher de Grendon and Henry Rossel. The royal clerk Roger of Howden also knew about the deputation, though he did not name the men. The garrison had been told Richard would never return. Surrendering on the strength of a rumour would be a costly mistake. If the people outside the castle were to be believed, however, the garrison now stood in rebellion against the very king whose return was supposed to be impossible. The two men looked at Richard. The castle surrendered.B2B

Soon afterwards the same king heard a request that could have caused scarcely less difficulty. Walter de Lacy was asked to do homage to Richard for his lands in Ireland. In the family's story he did it. The chancellor asked William to do the same. William declined. He had already acknowledged Richard's brother John as the lord from whom he held the Irish land. There was no honourable way of pretending that he had made no such promise. For his possessions held of Richard, William acknowledged his duties plainly. In the circumstances it took considerable presence of mind to separate so carefully what a king and his brother might each require. Only a short time before, William had brought armed men against John at Windsor. The poet makes Richard approve William's refusal. This is a household's report of an encounter, remembered after further and much graver quarrels over homage. It preserves a distinction the reader would do well to keep in mind. Fighting against a man was compatible with acknowledging that one held land of him. If the man himself made war upon one's king, trouble might follow, but the tenure would not disappear.B2C

Richard was impatient to cross to Normandy. Philip had been taking strongholds while he was in prison. The duke who undertook to defend a Norman lord and failed to reach him could not expect the lord to hold out indefinitely on the strength of a promise. The man who had recently brought men to Windsor would therefore spend much of the rest of Richard's reign on the other side of the sea. The country was one in which he had learned his trade; the matters now entrusted to him went well beyond his ability to strike a man off a horse. Richard needed him to keep people from beginning a fight at the wrong time, to speak for him among allies with their own views about how a war should be fought, and sometimes to say that there was more to be gained by holding his own men back. The fighting concerned his own household too. In Normandy it was Isabel's lands that William stood to lose.B2D

For the first weeks on the continent the poet gives his listeners the pleasure of speed. The king lands at Barfleur and moves across the duchy. He wants to reach Verneuil, where Philip is besieging the town. The storyteller names Bayeux, Caen and Lisieux along the way. The small particulars of where people ate or stopped for the night are part of his case for having known the workings of a royal household. A man writing a generation later might misplace the date of a march and still be remarkably exact about the sequence of places on the road. Some of his information looks very much like the experience of someone who had made the journey. The knowledge that a French siege might be lifted simply by bringing news that the king was coming was reason enough to ride quickly. Relief could come in the form of a rumour before a single royal knight reached the walls.B2E

Philip had people of his own to think about. Verneuil and the other contested castles were nodes on routes; their value depended on the forces that could be brought to them and the food that could be moved between them. A king might be quick enough to threaten a siege without being rich enough to leave a large body of horse in the field for the rest of the summer. Both kings were capable of turning a truce into a considerable achievement. Indeed William of Newburgh thought one of Richard's early truces with Philip worth defending against people who found it unbecoming in a victorious king. It had left Richard in possession of less Normandy than he once had, which was undoubtedly an objection. Richard had recently had to buy back his own person. Restoring his capacity to make war might be a rather more urgent matter than persuading everyone that he did not need the pause.B2F

The host included a man who had been on entirely the wrong side just months before. John, the king's brother, made his peace with Richard with their mother's help. In Newburgh's account Eleanor made it possible for him to approach as a suppliant. For all the chronicler's outrage at John's earlier conduct, there is a generosity in his acknowledgement of the younger man's subsequent military

service. Other people besides their mother could profit when Richard had one fewer enemy and a brother with local interests to draw upon. The family's story gives John operations at Évreux while Richard recovered other strongholds. It would eventually make William defend John's right to England. Having shown him changing sides under the protection of a mother and a forgiving brother, a storyteller would have his work cut out to make the later choice of John look automatic.B2G

At Fréteval in July 1194 Philip had his baggage taken. The household account piles up the things the retreating French abandoned. There were good horses, valuable cloth, tents and coin, the ordinary goods of an army that went on campaign equipped for a king. Newburgh mentions the king's household goods. Howden names a more revealing loss among Philip's possessions. He says Richard captured the charters of Richard's men who had gone over to Philip and John. Someone left behind a story no less enduring than the battle: the loss of Philip's papers was supposed to have taught the French monarchy to keep a permanent archive safe at home. A king travelling with proofs of title could indeed lose something much harder to replace than a length of scarlet. But it is one thing to catch a defeated king's baggage, another to found an archive by doing so. Yann Potin, a historian of the French royal records, directs attention to the acquisition of Normandy ten years later and the markedly larger business of government that followed. The story of the carts offered a gratifyingly precise birthday for an institution whose actual growth was much less convenient.B2H

William's family was interested in something different about Fréteval. A lot of its audience probably knew what it was like to be in pursuit of an enemy whose baggage promised more than a man ordinarily earned in a year. The earl's poet tells them what their splendid ancestor did when faced with all this unattended wealth. Richard put him in charge of keeping order. While other men chased the French and collected the spoils he waited, and when Richard thought it safe to call off the business William waited a little longer. The men who had run farthest ahead were still coming in. An enemy harmless to the body of a victorious force could turn back on a handful of men riding home in twos and threes. William put them ahead of him and brought up the rear. That evening the king in the poem gives the highest praise to the man who had come back with little to boast about.B2J

This is a more demanding picture of the relation between a knight and his lord than the familiar one of men going forward at the king's command. Someone engaged in the chase cannot at the same moment see to the welfare of the men following him. The king himself is made to ask William to stop doing the very thing which he will presently admire most. The poet allows his hero a better grasp of the

tactical position than his lord and lets his lord recognise it in time for the evening's conversation. A man could disagree with Richard to his face; an account of his having done so could be profitable to his reputation long after both were dead. William's early fame had been made in a world where the capture of horses and valuable opponents was part of one's business. His family wanted its readers to see that he had outgrown the need to be first back with a good horse when there was more important work in hand. None of this requires us to suppose that he or the men he brought with him took no profit in the war.B2K

For people who lived on the frontier, a truce brought an immediate question. Whose orders were they now to obey? In an agreement whose conditions were settled late in 1195 and published in January 1196, Richard relinquished Gisors and much of the Norman Vexin. On a map this looks like the transfer of a frontier district. The treaty includes the arrangements for a man called Stephen de Longchamp, who was to keep his own land and hold it from Philip. Matters as particular as this one man's tenure were necessary if the peace was to tell anybody who could require his service next week. Elsewhere the text had to provide for an archbishop with the authority to lay a country under interdict. An interdict meant the withdrawal or restriction of public religious services. One could remain deeply committed to the king of France and have strong feelings about being unable to hear the church's accustomed services because he had angered the wrong man. The peace-makers anticipated how such an order by Walter of Coutances, archbishop of Rouen, might be contested. They even counted out the clerics who would examine it, two chosen by one king and two by the other.B2L

At the heart of the difficulty was the land of the church of Rouen at Andely, on the Seine. The treaty has the kings disclaim feudal rights or direct lordship there; it regulates the sanctions one might impose if the archbishop acted against them. The archbishop had lately done essential work keeping the peace in England during Richard's absence. He was entitled to find an arrangement concerning his own great church's property in Normandy of rather greater personal interest than some of the castle transfers elsewhere in the document. A man who had done good service for Richard might still be bound by his office to resist him. The geography ensured that Walter would soon have to decide how far he was prepared to go.B2M

Below Andely the river turns sharply. The spur above it offered a duke of Normandy a commanding position upstream from Rouen, especially valuable when Gisors and other strong points had passed into the French king's hands. Richard set a great complex of fortifications in motion there between 1196 and 1198. The principal work on the rock would become known as Château Gaillard. In a modern view from the east, successive walls of the ruined stronghold stretch along the ridge.

It is tempting to think the setting explains everything. A great soldier saw that this was where he needed a castle and built it. The ground did not belong to him. It belonged to the archbishop. Its defence, moreover, involved rather more than putting impressive masonry on a high place. The system included the river approaches and works below. The king had to find the men and the means to build and supply them while a war was going on. No surviving view of the ruin shows what he gave in exchange for the right to do it.B2N



Château-Gaillard above the Seine. Photographed from the east in 2018. The surviving walls rise in succession along the ridge at Les Andelys. Richard I built here to guard the Seine valley. The fortress fell to Philip II in March 1204.
Photograph by Roman Geber, 2018. CC BY-SA 4.0. B2P

Walter responded with ecclesiastical sanctions. If his position looks like an expensive fit of pique, one might ask how his successors at Rouen were to finance their activities if the church's possessions could simply be requisitioned whenever a duke found a military use for them. In October 1197 an agreement secured the archbishop's manor of Andely for Richard. The terms of exchange included Dieppe, Louviers and Aliermont. Some ecclesiastical property and interests were reserved. A seaport and income from other places would go on doing the work of a manor the king was turning into a stronghold. There were beneficiaries who would never see the rock and yet might find in the following years that a different official came to collect what they owed. In 1200 a further instrument of King John confirmed the exchange and dealt with differences that had arisen over it. A castle which one king had planned to secure his frontier already had a documentary afterlife in the reign of his successor.B2Q

William must not be thrust between king and archbishop as the man who solved the quarrel. Other men's transactions belong in his life on their own terms. Walter, the man through whom Richard's authority had been exercised in England, had become the man defending a church's freedom against the same ruler in Normandy. Within a few years William would have cause to ask how far a man could go to keep his family's Norman lands when two kings demanded different forms of service.

Richard had entrusted England to a man who could command obedience there. At Andely that same independence allowed Walter to insist on terms for his church. Had he had no independent position he could have done far less to resist him at Andely, or to keep his throne for him at home.B2R

The northern allegiance that mattered most in the latter part of the war was that of Baldwin, count of Flanders and Hainaut. He had a direct interest in territory claimed by Philip near Arras. For Richard, making common cause with him had an obvious military advantage: a king with enemies on more than one border had to decide where to send his men. It did not follow that Baldwin regarded the recovery of Norman estates or the satisfaction of an English king as a principal object of policy. He had towns and people to answer to closer to home. The other important ally in the northern fighting, Renaud of Boulogne, likewise had his own reasons for quarrelling with the French king. It suited the Marshal poet to show his protagonist arriving among men with whom he had little opportunity to trade upon inherited title. If they took his advice, it was not because his family had the principal claim on their allegiance.B2S

A treaty made at Rouen on 8 September 1197 places William among the witnesses to a political arrangement with Baldwin. That is a valuable piece of evidence when one turns to the poem, for the poet tells of a mission by which William helped bring the northern lords into Richard's alliance. The same poet then describes another mission. Paul Meyer, comparing the narrative with the treaties, noticed that three English envoys specifically named in another instrument were not William. He wondered whether two versions of one diplomatic journey had found their way into the narrative. A man listed as a witness to an agreement may very well have been among those who drew the parties together. His attestation is not proof of a particular conversation he had on the way. In this instance the absence of a satisfying answer is helpful. We can put the household's first version of events alongside actual correspondence coming out of Philip's chancery and discover what the work of arranging an alliance looked like to the man against whom it was directed.B2T

Philip wrote to the provost, dean and chapter of Notre-Dame of Reims. He conceded that the demand for help he was about to make was unusual. The situation, he argued, was unusual too. The count of Flanders had refused judgement by his peers and defied his king. Philip needed aid even from people who had no custom of supplying him with this service. One would never guess from this document that a loyal and experienced visiting knight had charmed the leading men of Flanders into a sensible military partnership. Nor would one guess from the family's account what awkward requests the change of allies obliged the king to

make of other people. He had a word for Baldwin's conduct, and a justification for a demand that clerics in Reims might ask him to explain. Richard's war put that chapter to a decision. A letter written to secure resources reads differently from a poem written to preserve renown, even when both are concerned with the disposition of the same men.B2U

The family poet sent William to the count of Flanders with Pierre de Préaux, Alan Basset and John Marshal. This John, his nephew, must be distinguished from his lately buried brother. The count's forces included the levies of his towns. They brought carts. The question at a council before the encounter usually identified with the campaign at Arras in 1197 was what to do with them when the French relief army came up. The townsmen had their own uses for a wagon and little reason to welcome a lord's brilliant plan that would leave them to be attacked while the knights rode away. The local proposal was to make the carts into a protective barrier. William wished to take the mounted force out to meet the French in the open, but the first objection a sensible man might make to that course was the enemy already behind them. The garrison they had been besieging could sally against the people left outside. Put the carts in their way, William argued, and they could fight the relief army without exposing their rear. The count could bring out his troops. The relief army could see them. Nothing obliged either to go on and get itself destroyed.B2V

John Gillingham took issue with Georges Duby over those carts. In Gillingham's account, Duby saw a brave man eager to stake his honour on open combat, impatient with a plan to fight from behind wagons. Gillingham followed the carts through the rest of the scene. William does not dispense with them. He parks them where they can stop the garrison getting out. In Gillingham's reading, what looks like a piece of aristocratic disdain for mere foot soldiers contains a quite competent piece of defence. A man willing to take the field did not have to be indifferent to what happened behind him. The different readings are consequential. In one version the people who came equipped with wagons have a brief appearance as foils for a great knight's courage. In the other their equipment has a use without which the supposedly audacious plan would be a good deal harder to carry out. One can take seriously the spirited speech put in William's mouth and still look at the wagons on the ground.B2W

In the poem Philip's scouts report that the Flemings have taken up their positions. Philip consults his council and withdraws. If the opposing king was genuinely unwilling to offer battle on these terms, it would have pleased the earl's descendants to be told that William's advice had made him think better of it. The poet thought Philip had made a wise choice, too. He could see no advantage in

fighting that day, and the Flemings were glad to see him go. Their council chose John Marshal, William's nephew, to carry the news to Richard. It was John who went down to the sea, made the crossing and told the king how the French had gone home.[B2X]

There were occasions when the lines between the military and ecclesiastical worlds gave way entirely. Philip of Dreux, bishop of Beauvais and a kinsman of the French king, was taken in the fighting of 1197. A prelate could travel with armed men and an armed man could also be a prelate. The family account makes a good deal of Richard's refusal to hand this particular captive back. In its narrative of negotiations with the papal legate Peter of Capua, the cardinal seeks a truce and also asks for a man of the church held by Richard. The king has cause to consider who has invaded whose territory and who has taken arms against whom. Walter of Rouen had been able to bring the sanction of an interdict to bear on a quarrel over landed property. A bishop caught in the act of waging war supplied Richard with an opportunity to contest the political uses of an ecclesiastical title from the other side. The poet knew no one else had been in the room during part of the interview he narrates with such confidence. Its argument survives more securely than its dialogue.[B2Y]

Richard died at Châlus in the Limousin on 6 April 1199 after a wound received during a siege. A fortress of no great importance in comparison with the new stronghold on the Seine had put an end to the most powerful of the parties who needed the Seine frontier kept. The Anonymous of Béthune, writing from a circle with Flemish connections, was quite sure other accounts had the wound in the wrong part of the body. He put it in the chest. He also held that before he died Richard required his barons to accept John and described the places at which the corpse and the heart were laid to rest. His very insistence that he knew better than people who located the wound in Richard's arm gives us a choice of witnesses where popular memory supplies a single, apparently unproblematic arrow. It gives us more than one decision to investigate. Where was Richard hit? Whom did dying men and the people around them want to succeed him? What were the men at Rouen actually free to decide when word came that he was dead?[B2Z]

For once William's physical absence is written into his own life. In the household account the news came to him from the south. It found him near Rouen. He sought out Hubert Walter, archbishop of Canterbury, and they considered who should succeed. Hubert is made to propose Arthur, the young duke of Brittany and son of John's elder brother Geoffrey. William prefers John, the dead king's surviving brother. In the poem the archbishop consents, with the memorable prediction that one day William will regret it. The audience for this story knew what happened

between the two men in the next reign. Giving an archbishop foresight and allowing the earl, of all people, to persist in the choice made the disastrous parts of that reign into an episode in the moral history of the Marshal family. Such a prediction sharpens a story; it scarcely assists in dating an agreement. One has only to turn back to the Anonymous, who represents Richard himself as having already made the decision, to see how much the household had to gain from putting William in the small room where a king was chosen.[B3A]

An answer to the succession question in England could still leave the people of Rouen, Angers and Poitiers with a choice to make. Arthur was young; his mother was Constance, duchess of Brittany in her own right. He had a claim through a dead father and supporters who preferred that claim, or the terms they might obtain through him, to what John could offer. John was an adult with long experience of political life. Some of the people who knew him best could vouch for his ability and testify to how rapidly he might change his allegiance. Eleanor was his mother as well as Arthur's grandmother. Philip was lord of the great fiefs whose distribution was at stake, and had by no means given up the interest he had taken in the affairs of his opponent's family. An Englishman could be a strong supporter of John without deciding what Arthur ought to receive in Brittany. A man with an estate in Anjou had reasons for demanding a more particular answer.[B3B]

The choice at Rouen belonged to a world in which a man could recognise a king in person, like the two envoys from Nottingham, and still have a good deal of unfinished business about the extent of his authority. Richard had been willing, in the family story, to hear William remind him that John was his lord in Ireland. Now John was to have a kingdom as well as that lordship. William could hardly expect to know in advance what kind of security for his own lands, or Isabel's, he had obtained by helping him to it. In May a king was crowned at Westminster. The barons of other lands had still to decide whose documents they would receive, whom they would admit to their fortresses, and what security they would demand before giving their word.[B3C]



CHAPTER 9

The men who kept the bridge

About the illumination

Rouen's agreement with Philip in June 1204 let merchants trade by land and water during the truce. It set separate terms for control of the bridge.

Historical source B3D

Visual exemplar B3E

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

At Le Goulet on the Seine in May 1200, King John gave Philip of France nine guarantors for the peace. William Marshal was one of the nine. They swore that if John broke the peace they would go over to Philip with their fiefs on the French side of the Channel. On the other side were nine men who had sworn to go to John with their fiefs if Philip failed to perform his part. Those named included leading men with property and forces of their own. One of the French guarantors was Philip's kinsman Robert, count of Dreux. The son of another guarantor appears on the list beside his father. Royal servants and family men, the sureties had some idea of what a king could lose when a household with resources resolved to oppose him.B3F

William, the boy remembered as a hostage in his father's war and the man who lived to see his own sons taken as hostages, was here supplying his own word. A hostage goes into custody while someone else's obligation remains in doubt. A surety promises something he can be required to perform if an agreement is broken. In this case the thing promised was a change of lord for particular lands and services. It did not require William's wife and children to repudiate every other bond of kinship and tenure or compel William to take up arms against John in England. The Channel marked the limit of the pledge. John stood to lose what William's Norman holdings could supply, even while William still owed service to him elsewhere. Whether its lord could in fact bring the men who lived on it over with him was the kind of question prudent kings hoped a good agreement would spare them having to ask.B3G

The treaty had work to do before it got to the sureties. Richard had died little more than a year before. England had a king, a man whom William had helped to the succession. John had been recognised as duke in Normandy. Other people in the lands of the dynasty had motives for making a provision for Arthur, duke of

Brittany, son of John's dead elder brother. A child and the people who claimed to act for him were a very different proposition from a newly crowned monarch and his armed following. If King John were to receive Arthur as his man, he would acknowledge that Arthur held lands which no royal act of succession had simply extinguished. If Arthur were to do homage, his people would have cause to see in it a new protection as well as a submission. The man who accepted someone as his vassal had duties toward him. This is the element missed when the arrangement is read merely as the outcome of a competition between two heirs.B3H

There were provisions for a marriage too. Blanche of Castile, John's niece and Eleanor of Aquitaine's granddaughter, was to marry Louis, Philip's son. The bride, like the young man passed from one king's protection to the other's, had relatives on both sides of a dispute the kings wished to settle. The marriage could survive the political conditions in which it was made. A list of fiefs assigned to the couple would still have to be dealt with if the peace failed. The clauses considered even the contingency of John dying without an heir by his lawful wife. The people who drew up these provisions were thinking about what the unborn might inherit as well as what their parents could concede. Sixteen years later Blanche's husband would cross into England at the invitation of a group of John's enemies. No one at Le Goulet needed to have foreseen that extraordinary development for the marriage to have done its intended work that spring.B3J

The price placed on parts of the agreement was immense. John gave twenty thousand marks sterling. The text even specifies the number of shillings and pence reckoned to a mark. Before thinking him uniquely profligate, consider the practical advantages of a sum for which one could account over another army whose fidelity, victuals and duration in the field one could not guarantee. At the border, sections of road and forest were named. There were places where one king was free to strengthen his position and places where he was obliged to stay his hand. The earlier settlement of the archbishop of Rouen's manor at Andely now served as a point of reference for dividing rights in the Norman Vexin. A bargain made to secure the site for Richard's great castle had become a useful precedent for the division of territory between John and Philip. A dead king could leave his brother quite as many arrangements to observe as places to defend.B3K

For Arthur there was a promise in the twentieth clause of the act issued by Philip. John was not to diminish what the young duke held of the fief or lordship of Brittany on this side of the sea except by rightful judgement of his court. The following clause contains the names of William and the other guarantors. Their proximity on the page is important. It does not establish that, the moment Arthur suffered harm, the barons embarked on a prescribed course of legal proceedings.

But the security they offered was security for a peace in which a junior prince had express protection. The document does not commit all its moral weight to the powerful adult uncle. John had given Philip his word concerning Arthur. Before John could take away any of those Breton holdings, he would have to obtain a judgement in his court.B3L

A royal marriage of John's own did something to upset it. In 1200 he married the young Isabel of Angoulême. She is not Isabel de Clare; and John had previously been married to yet another Isabel, of Gloucester. These women brought interests to their marriages which their husbands could neither easily discard nor secure by fiat. The Lusignans, whose plans for the Angoulême marriage John had crossed, could take their grievance to Philip in his capacity as feudal lord. A quarrel in Poitou could thus become an issue between the two kings without any Englishman having violated the terms for a bridge or a forest in Normandy. Attention to what happened next in the domain of the French king saves us the trouble of inventing a single overwhelming cause for the failure of the peace. The Lusignans still wanted redress. Philip had reason to hear their complaint, and John had reason to resist a summons concerning lands he believed he had the right to govern.B3M

In 1202 the war produced something an occupied map of France does not let one predict. Arthur and men allied to him threatened his grandmother Eleanor at Mirebeau. The town had fallen to them; the keep in which she sheltered held out. The grandmother was not a helpless appendage of either of the men competing for power. Her survival, her own interests in Aquitaine and her support for John mattered to people who had to decide whether a local fortress should open its gates. When help came, a man who had once been a comparatively poor knight played a decisive part in bringing it. This William was Guillaume des Roches, seneschal of Anjou. Like his better-known namesake, he had made a marriage that brought him landed power. He too had more than one lord on whom he could lay a good claim.B3N

The Anonymous of Béthune gives Guillaume obligations to Arthur while acknowledging that he owes John prior allegiance. He brings his offer to John at Le Mans. If John will accept his counsel in dealing with Arthur and those taken with him, Guillaume can bring him to the siege before the besiegers have their guard up. The family of William Marshal also remembered the service and the conditions on which it had been given. Their subject was elsewhere; the episode in his life has the interesting quality of admitting another great household's business into a story that could have been made to do without it. The royalist expedition arrived with devastating speed. Through the ranks and tents of men astonished to find the king upon them John's force advanced; Arthur and the Poitevin leaders became

prisoners. A meeting between a king and a knight at which one man had to promise to be advised by the other had delivered both the relief of a royal mother and one of the most striking successes of John's career.B3P

There is an alarming tendency in some accounts of John's reign to have the king defeated in advance by his personality. At Mirebeau the capacity of the man and the possibilities available to him have to be reckoned with. He could win a fight, make a rapid decision and take possession of the person who threatened him. What he did with prisoners mattered rather more than how quickly he had ridden. The earl's biographer and the Anonymous tell different versions of the guarantees understood by Guillaume des Roches. They agree that the treatment of Arthur and the other captives gave men in the region reasons for withdrawing support from the uncle. Someone who has fought to procure a negotiated settlement can reasonably feel himself betrayed by a lord who treats his victory as a licence to take everything. In wars fought with the help of great regional men, the reputation lost with a single man in that position could mean much more than the immediate loss of his castle.B3Q

Arthur disappears in John's custody. An English biographer who has given the reader so many intimate family scenes does not tell the story of his death. The Anonymous is prepared to say that he died at Rouen and adds that the precise circumstances were unknown. Other accounts, including one preserved at the Welsh abbey of Margam, make John personally responsible. They have never added up to a recoverable death scene. The missing youth could no longer appear to reassure anyone. People whose support for his uncle depended on what was to be done for him were left with no satisfactory answer. It is possible to say this without trying the king for a secret killing on evidence no court can now examine. John's custody of Arthur had been public enough to carry political consequences whether anyone outside a small circle knew exactly how it ended or not. We should not use uncertainty about a weapon or a day to create an equal uncertainty about the effect of a boy's disappearance.B3R

Philip's greatest obstacle on the route by the Seine was the new complex of fortifications at Les Andelys. It had taken an archbishop's quarrel and a territorial exchange to build it, and it would take a substantial operation to reduce it. The garrison was commanded by Roger de Lacy. In 1203 Philip took outlying positions and invested the stronghold. John tried relief. Which commanders took part in that operation ought to be an easy question if William Marshal was personally in charge. A French chronicler, William the Breton, describes an attack with professional soldiers and a few knights. In a verse epic on Philip's deeds he turns it into a much larger operation and gives the Marshal a leading part. That is one author in two

genres. His prose narrative does not name the leader. The Marshal household, never ordinarily indifferent to its lord's important commands, passes over this one. Paul Meyer doubted that he had led the attack. An army's coming to relieve a castle is a satisfactory fact to give a reader. A detailed scene of the earl directing its boats and men goes a good deal beyond the secure evidence.B3S

During the siege, the very walls Richard had built for protection became a danger to the families who lived below them. If the garrison had to shelter people living below the fortress, its provisions had to be shared. If it expelled them, there remained a French force waiting outside. French narratives took account of the civilian suffering as the siege tightened. A biographer can look at the formidable sequence of walls, the river approaches and the difficult ground and understand something of what Philip faced. The residents who could not simply make their way home had reason to think of the place differently. For them the question was who would let them through. When the castle fell on 6 March 1204, it had held into a second calendar year. The military value of resistance had depended upon someone else doing something with the time the garrison had bought. John had crossed to England in December 1203. The expected return with the forces to recover the duchy did not take place.B3T

Why not? The family poet had reason to stress the failure of English magnates to follow John readily overseas. Among the men who would soon be accused of refusing to do so was the subject of his poem; an audience which remembered a collective reluctance to commit more blood and money to Normandy might see the earl's personal predicament more sympathetically. Many modern histories have in some measure accepted the notion that English barons had lost interest in the continental half of the old Anglo-Norman dominion. The balance of their property had changed. A family with its principal holdings in England or on the Welsh March might be asked to contribute a great deal to preserve what remained to it on the other shore. Yet there is evidence of repeated service by men with major English holdings in the campaigns of both Richard and John. One can do something better than taking a vote on whether barons were collectively disloyal. One can look to see which men had arrived ready to go.B3U

Nick Hopkinson worked through the evidence for those who served and those who paid money associated with failing to serve. Of the sixty families he studied, at least forty-four had representatives in Normandy in 1203. In early April 1204, when further fighting was in prospect, many important men were in the Portsmouth and Winchester area from which a crossing might be expected. The names included men with different landholding interests: it is difficult to regard their presence as proof of a uniform determination to oppose the expedition. Nor is being recorded

somewhere near an embarkation port the same thing as embarking or as possessing a coherent plan. The underlying question remains why the projected expedition in 1204 was deferred and then abandoned. The records answer the narrower question rather more securely: the simple explanation that a whole class of Englishmen declined to come has become much harder to support. William's predicament in 1205, after Philip had obtained the duchy, arose in different conditions from those facing its defenders the year before.[B3V]

In the spring of 1204 John sent William to negotiate with Philip. Diplomatic missions were one of the ordinary forms of the earl's service; the difference on this occasion was the speed with which the other king's victories were converting individual ambassadors into interested parties. Robert, earl of Leicester, was in a similar position. If there were no agreed peace that restored the duchy to John, what would these men do with the property their families held there? Philip had the means to make his rights as lord tell. The earls bought time. Five hundred marks figure in the terms for William, and the arrangement involved the surrender of his Norman castles in pledge. John had time to recover the duchy; William had a limited interval before he would have to acknowledge a lord or risk his property. We know that the earl negotiated while he was supposed to be doing John's business. The distinction between an authorised embassy and a private arrangement was much easier to detect in hindsight than to maintain while events unfolded.[B3W]

Falaise provides a glimpse of what taking control of a duchy involved besides receiving the homage of a few powerful men. In May 1204, at Falaise, Philip granted the inhabitants liberties and recognised their commune, the body of people organised under oath for the town's business. A roll setting out its arrangements had been read in his presence and copied into his register. We can even trace some of those arrangements, because the government recorded the first twenty-eight articles of a version of the rules already used in Rouen. If a mayor had to be chosen, a hundred peers were to select three suitable men. They would present them to the king, who chose which of them was to serve. There was a real act of collective judgement and a real royal prerogative in the same short provision. Repeating that a commune enjoyed privileges tells us very little until we have asked who was to pick the man people in it would actually have to obey.[B3X]

The same king gave the people of Falaise and their heirs exemptions from various tolls on their own merchandise throughout his lands, with an exception for Mantes. He even specified a penalty for interfering with the concession. In the wake of fighting, an exemption that made a town's traders profitable partners in the new order could do much more for a conqueror than a speech announcing a change of regime. In another act Philip singled out André Propensée, the mayor of Falaise, for

an endowment: interests formerly held by a list of other named men, up to a hundred Angevin pounds in annual revenue. If the properties turned out to yield more, the king was to receive the excess. For the traders of Falaise the new king offered relief from tolls. For the mayor he offered rents. The men who had previously drawn those rents had a different decision to make. The same process that protected the trades of one group and rewarded a named officeholder could leave other families to decide whether to accept a new overlord or take their chances somewhere else.B3Y

On the first of June Philip made an agreement outside Rouen. It survives in a counterpart with remnants of the seals of the besieged. A mayor called Robert, sworn councillors and the commune acted for the city. Knights inside it had positions to defend too. William Marshal did not have to witness their arrangements in order for them to belong to the story of how his own choices narrowed. Here were other people with lands and children, in the face of much the same pressure, making a bargain that exposes with extraordinary clarity the real work of changing sides. It began with an interval of thirty days. If the city obtained relief by force, or if peace was made on terms that suited the agreement, one set of consequences followed. Otherwise Rouen was to pass to Philip. The agreement was a means of giving John a final opportunity to prove himself capable of defending his people. It was not the record of an immediate surrender.B3Z

In the meantime Philip would choose forty hostages from the sons or near heirs of the burgesses. The fortification at the end of the bridge on his side was assigned to him, and a further ten feet on the water towards the bridge. At his demand four arches were to be demolished. At the end on the city side an entrance was to be made or closed as he saw fit. The language has the precision warranted by a problem that could be measured with a stick. Both parties had an interest in knowing exactly how far an armed man might advance without anyone being entitled to cry treachery. For a man who ordinarily crossed the river on that bridge, there was a separate practical consideration. A city did not cease to eat, sell, move, borrow or shelter travellers simply because it had thirty days in which to change its allegiance. For a father who had one or two sons of an age to be taken, the interval had another meaning again. Philip reserved the selection to himself.B4A

The merchants of Rouen could move goods by land or water during the truce, even trading into the French king's territory and returning, but bread and grain were excluded. Toll had to be paid where it was due. A knight or a sergeant who did not want to abide by the arrangement had provision for departure; men ready to take their lands of the new king had an opportunity to present themselves. There were rules about the return of hostages after performance and provisions extending

an opportunity for similar terms to men of other towns who met the prescribed times. Robert the mayor had to answer for an undertaking concerning Frenchmen who had been beheaded. The document has room for the fate of an individual as well as the future of a whole city. The same French chancery that drew up these careful conditions could on that same day promise the monks of Bec that the liberty they enjoyed in the time of Henry II, the son of the Empress Matilda, should continue to be the measure of their liberties. Conquest produced no automatic requirement to discard good privileges merely because the wrong dynasty had granted them.[B4B, B4C]

The city passed to Philip before the end of June. An act naming William in the peace of 1200 had envisaged him going over to the French king with his continental fiefs should John break the terms. There is no reason to suppose Philip now presented him with the old treaty or called on him to honour that undertaking. At Le Goulet the guarantors had sworn to take their French fiefs over to Philip if John broke the peace. At Rouen a city bargained for thirty days in which John might still relieve it or make peace. It would take considerable ingenuity to maintain that when William took time to consider what his wife and children stood to lose, he alone was acting out of an inexplicable defect of character. Nor was there anything so automatic about the transaction that John had no legitimate political interest in the outcome.[B4D, B4E]

By the spring of 1205 the situation was pressing. The family's account has William seek the king's assurance before he returns to Philip. John's answer, as the poet reports it, is permission to do homage; the earl is encouraged to trust the king's high opinion of his loyalty. In a later quarrel the scope of that permission would become precisely the matter in dispute. The audience had very good reason to be told that William had applied for it. No contemporary memorandum of the conversation has come to hand to establish exactly what John meant, much less what either man thought the other had understood. Where had the earlier negotiations taken place? The family poem puts the embassy's audience at Le Bec. Paul Meyer points out that William's written undertaking was drawn up at Lisieux. Nick Hopkinson places their meeting with Philip at Falaise. The written pledge gives us a place for that act. The accounts of the negotiations still differ. What is secure is the public outcome. William acknowledged Philip for the Norman lands in 1205. He survived with interests on both shores when many other families were compelled to choose just one.[B4F, B4G]

For Isabel, the outcome was quite material. Her own recorded assent concerning the church of St Mary of Orbec rested on the gift of her ancestors. A change in who occupied the throne of England could hardly supersede the history of that title. Her

act is not precisely dated and cannot serve to put her physically in a room with her husband during the negotiations. It could have been issued over a span of years stretching beyond his death. The Norman interest outlasted William in fact as well as on parchment. In her widowhood she negotiated with the French king. When she died the younger William transferred the Norman holdings to his brother Richard, who later succeeded to his family's other honours. Following those rights forward goes some way toward answering a question William's contemporary judges were not obliged to ask. What might his wife have expected of a husband if, to preserve his reputation for undivided fidelity, he had offered to surrender what came to him through her? We know the rights were important enough for Isabel to act upon. We have no right to write her answer for her.B4H

At John's court William was required to stand behind the choice he had made. The family poet's account of his quarrel over an expedition to the continent defends his right to distinguish the land he held from Philip from the duty he owed John. A king assembling men for an operation that could reclaim his lost lands was well placed to see the political disadvantage in such distinctions. If the most capable men with interests on the other shore each came to a private arrangement with the occupier, who could be counted on to help take the duchy back? The refusal to sail of a man powerful enough to influence others could make a great deal of difference to whether the king could sail at all. William was not the only English lord whose arrangements in Normandy affected his conduct afterwards. Nor did performing homage to Philip erase the political calculation by which he had crossed from Richard's service into John's six years before.B4J

In the end there were two people whose claims stood every chance of surviving a quarrel between men now powerful enough to detain one another's children. One was Isabel, long accustomed to the difficulties of having her rights laid out for her by kings. The other was William's eldest son, named like his father and old enough for a king to accept him as a guarantee. Rouen had had to supply forty from among its sons and heirs. The earl of Pembroke would be obliged to consider how much his word was worth without one of his own children to stand behind it. The lands for which the price would be exacted lay on both sides of the Channel, and across a second sea in Leinster.B4K



CHAPTER 10

The Irish countess

About the illumination

Aífe assigned the nuns of Ickleton a mark a year from her mill. One half supported their kitchen and the other paid for lights in their church.

Historical source B4L

Visual exemplar B4M

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

To see what Isabel brought to the marriage, go back to England in 1185. That year royal commissioners wanted to know what had become of the family of the late earl of Striguil. His widow, Aífe, held estates at Weston in Hertfordshire and Chesterford in Essex. Her son was twelve. The inquest leaves the boy unnamed, but in a charter for the nuns of Ickleton his mother calls him Gilbert. Such information had a cash value. While the boy was under age someone could take the income of his inheritance. Whoever arranged the widow's next marriage could put a new man in possession of wealth and influence. The returns placed her among the women whose marriages were in the gift of Henry II. They named her countess of Ireland.B4N

Some years later Aífe confirmed lands to the archbishop of Dublin. In that document she chose how to describe herself. She called herself a countess and the heir of King Diarmait. Her marriage to Earl Richard accounted for the title of countess. In confirming these lands she invoked her descent from her father. Richard also appears in a request concerning his soul. Before there could be a William Marshal who had anything to say to the people of Leinster, there had to be an Aífe who could make such a claim, and an archbishop to whom her confirmation was worth having. The commissioners in England and the archbishop whose church received the confirmation had good reason to want different things from the same woman.B4P

Go back twenty years. In the Irish Sea country in which Aífe grew up, the land later called the lordship of Leinster could not have been pointed out simply by running a finger round one border. Her father, Diarmait Mac Murchada, had a family territory in the southeast. The Uí Chennselaig, his own dynasty, held their strength around Ferns. To the north were other royal families with claims in

Leinster, to the west the rulers of Osraige, to the northeast the walled city and the ships of Dublin. A king's standing might extend far beyond the lands from which he could draw food or horses for his own household. It depended on what other kings would do at his summons, what hostages he could demand and keep, and what he could promise the men who came. The death of an ally could sharply reduce the reach of a king who still held every acre he had held yesterday.B4Q

Through her mother Aífe was related to another ruling family and to the archbishop of Dublin. Her mother Mór was a daughter of the ruler of the Uí Muiredaig. The archbishop of Dublin, Lorcán Ua Tuathail, was Mór's half-brother. Aífe was therefore niece to the man who had responsibility for a major church on the approaches to her father's territory. In the next generation it would serve her daughter to be known as the child of an earl. Among Aífe's contemporaries a listener might equally want to know who her mother's father was, and whose sister her mother was. There were relations of obligation here long before men called Marshal or fitz Gilbert thought of claiming a voice in them.B4R

Diarmait could make friends, endow churches and keep enemies. He had made enemies powerful enough to force him overseas in 1166. In the wider struggle a northern protector had fallen, and Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht, was on his way to establishing a claim to rule Ireland. One of the men with a particular grievance against Diarmait was Tigernán Ua Ruairc, ruler of Bréifne. Years before, Diarmait had carried off Tigernán's wife, Derbforgaill. Whether she went willingly became a considerable subject for people who had not been there. An explanation that makes a woman's abduction by itself the cause of the invasion of Ireland asks the incident to bear much more than it can. A change in the balance between kings made it possible to act on old grievances. The military support that could have kept Diarmait at Ferns failed him.B4S

He went first to Bristol, a port with connections to Dublin that did not begin with the conquests to come, and sought out Henry II on the Continent. Henry had other business and offered no royal army to take Ferns for him. He was willing to let men who owed him allegiance go to the aid of the dispossessed king. Here was a considerable opening. The lordships along the Welsh coast contained armed men with experience of conquering land, kinship across the water, and varying prospects of making a living at home. Some could supply archers. Some could call upon their relatives for ships and fighting men. A king looking for such services had something to offer. Once back in power he could reward help from lands, dues and offices which he did not at present control. A man who agreed to go would be gambling on the king's recovery.B4T

The most consequential recruit was Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare, the lord of Striguil, better known as Strongbow. His castle of Striguil, now Chepstow, stood on the Wye, with access to the Severn estuary. His family had also had an earldom at Pembroke, though his position under Henry II was less secure than his father's had been under Stephen. A lord whose rights in Wales and England depended on the goodwill of that same Henry might hesitate to take a foreign king at his word. An invitation to go abroad was one thing. What if the expedition succeeded so well that it made the English king wish the adventurers had stayed at home?

In an Anglo-Norman verse history conventionally called the *Song of Dermot and the Earl*, Diarmait offers Richard a bride and a country. If Richard will help him subdue Leinster, he may marry Aífe and have the land. The poet has Richard answer with a scruple worthy of William Marshal himself. His estates have a lord. He needs the English king's permission to leave them. The voice belongs to a poem, composed after the event, which takes a close interest in the men who acquired estates in the conquest and in the services that earned them. It is remarkably good at remembering who got what. That is also a reason for care in using the bargains it puts in men's mouths. A public promise, honourably made and honourably earned, is an excellent foundation for a title. We have the story of the promise. We have the marriage which eventually took place. We have no instrument in which Diarmait settles the succession to his kingdom in the terms the poet gives him.B4U

It took several expeditions to make even part of the bargain good. Diarmait returned in 1167. The *Annals of Ulster* can get him across the sea and home again in a single sentence. For the annalist his return made news with no need to tell the story of his conversations overseas. In 1169 men including Robert fitz Stephen came from Wales and helped him take Wexford. Richard himself did not land until 1170. People later called those who crossed Normans, English, Flemings or Welsh, depending on which people they were thinking of and what they wanted to explain. Robert, for instance, had been a prisoner of Rhys ap Gruffydd, a Welsh ruler. Release made service in Ireland possible for him. A single collective name can be helpful as long as it does not conjure up a single army sent by a king of England to carry out a plan of his own.B4V

For Ruaidrí the question was what kind of submission Diarmait could still be made to offer. An earlier accommodation had put one of Diarmait's sons in his hands as a hostage. The son's body guaranteed something quite different from the guarantee Richard had been offered. If the father exceeded the terms of his agreement the boy would be at the victor's mercy. In the *Annals of Tigernach* the taking of this hostage belongs to a sequence of raids, submissions and renewals of war. The sea crossing that was to become so large a fact in English histories forms

one move among many. To Ruaidrí the problem was a provincial king, one whose allies now included armed foreigners; to Diarmait, the men disembarking represented a means of recovering and then extending his authority. Both had people on the island who expected their king to succeed and could suffer if he did not.B4W

In August 1170 Richard's men took Waterford. Diarmait met him there. The marriage with Aífe followed upon the capture of the city. Historians can locate the wedding with some confidence in relation to the assault. They cannot do the same for what the bride thought as the two events came together. Around 1854 Daniel Maclise painted the couple above the bodies of the defeated. The idea came from designs for the Palace of Westminster. In the foreground Strongbow's foot rests on a fallen cross. The young woman's face belongs to that nineteenth-century vision of conquest. Aífe is recoverable elsewhere. There is work for a widow in a pipe roll, and there are acts that gave a church reason to keep her name.B4X

Dublin was the next prize. In an episode of the *Song*, Diarmait demands thirty hostages from the city. Its people cannot settle which thirty to give him. Their ruler Ascall asks until the next day. For the besiegers, thirty was a number. For the families inside Dublin, every place on the list had to be filled by somebody's son or kinsman. The poem supplies no names and we cannot eavesdrop on the deliberations. We can see why the offer of time matters. The besiegers are on hand while the townspeople try to decide whose households will pay for a bargain made in the name of them all. The city fell. A man who had been its ruler survived to make another attempt to take it, and died in the attempt.B4Y

Another account devotes less attention to the doings of individual warriors. In the *Annals of Tigernach*, Ruaidrí gathers an army and waits at Dublin. The allies do not fight him there. Diarmait and the newcomers eventually take the city by force. The violence proceeds inland. Clonard, Kells, Dulane and Slane appear among the churches the annalist says were plundered or burnt in Meath. The same annals say that, at Tigernán Ua Ruairc's urging, Ruaidrí killed hostages from Leinster and Diarmait's family. One of those named is a son of Domnall Cáemánach, Diarmait's grandson. Religious houses kept memories of the men who had harmed them, as well as the charters of the people who gave them land. A military expedition that an Anglo-Norman poet could break up into the actions of named captains could enter a quite different record as a list of places where people had lost the things they needed to live and worship. It is possible to take both kinds of evidence seriously. Their authors are counting different losses.B4Z

Diarmait died at Ferns in 1171. The *Annals of Ulster* call him king of a fifth of Ireland, the provincial kingdom of Leinster. They say he died without unction,

communion or penance. The judgment belongs to the same entry as the accusation that he destroyed churches. A reader who takes the words as a bedside report misses what the annalist has made of his death. The saints have had redress. The next entries return to Ascall's death, a killing involving men of Osraige, and the death in penitence of an abbess of Kildare. Diarmait's obit is one grave reckoning among others. A churchman's wish to explain the fate of a great enemy can go some way towards explaining the condition in which the annalist has him die. We have better grounds for saying where he died and who remembered him with anger than for saying who stood beside his bed.[B5A]

Who was now entitled to call out the men who had served him? Richard held a city, a marriage and a formidable following. Diarmait also had an adult son, Domnall Cáemánach. A living male relative with supporters does not disappear because his father has made a promise to a son-in-law. The rulers who had opposed Diarmait had every reason to contest a claim by Richard to succeed him. Ruaidrí could gather men against Dublin; displaced townspeople could look for help from overseas; men who had resisted Diarmait as king could join an attack on his successors. Aífe's marriage explained why Richard thought he could claim what he had gained. It could not make his right self-evident to those who might lose their lordships if he held it.[B5B]

Henry II now made the intervention about which Richard had had reason to be anxious. He landed at Waterford in October 1171. His presence changed the scale of the calculation. A king from over the sea could claim the submissions of men who had until then treated with Richard, and exact the submission of Richard himself. He had an interest of his own in retaining coastal towns, above all Dublin. If a great territorial lord was to grow up alongside royal government in Ireland, the king had good reason to secure his own landing places and a share in the wealth that ships brought ashore. William Marshal's later troubles at a port on a Leinster river had a history. An earl founding a town in Ireland would have to reckon with a king already accustomed to getting something out of the movement of goods by sea.[B5C]

There was no general peace. After Henry went away the fighting went on. Grants by Richard to his followers tell us the names of some of those who expected to benefit; records of the losses of men and strongholds tell us what it cost to make the grants effective. A man could be promised more land than he could ever visit in safety. He could also be given jurisdiction, the chance to hold court and take the proceeds of fines, and find that somebody else could summon his tenants to answer him elsewhere. Beneath such contests remained the old resources of a kingdom. There were fields that produced grain, rivers with crossings, ecclesiastical settlements with rights to lands and dues, and men who knew where supplies were

kept and how far horses could be ridden. These things changed hands at different speeds. A new name on a charter could come well before a change in the officer who turned up for the rent.B5D

Strongbow died in 1176. His son Gilbert, the heir, was a child. So was his daughter Isabel. Neither was old enough to direct the defence of the family estates. Aífe was left a widow. Marie Therese Flanagan has put together fragments of her subsequent career that the spectacle of the wedding can easily eclipse. In 1183–84 the king advanced Aífe twenty pounds for her support on the Welsh frontier, very probably at Chepstow. Its amount and the later allowance for a royal keeper suggest that she may have been responsible for defence there. The accounts do not tell us that she directed an attack or stood on the wall. A sum assigned to her for a place that mattered in war is interesting enough. Aífe also granted a mark a year from her mill to the nuns of Ickleton in Cambridgeshire. Half would support their kitchen and half would light their church. The charter does not tell us whether Strongbow was still alive. The grant to the nuns and the confirmation for Dublin allow us to see a woman with interests on both sides of the sea.B5E

The Dublin charter can be dated more closely. It refers to Count John, a title he received in 1189. By the time Aífe confirmed the cathedral's possessions, Gilbert was dead and the inheritance had come to Isabel. The surviving copy leaves out the witnesses. We can follow the reach of Aífe's confirmation across Leinster without knowing on which side of the Irish Sea she issued it. The archbishop who sought it had found a use for the authority she claimed through her father.B5F

Gilbert was still living at the time of the inquiry in 1185. By 1189 he was dead, still under age, and Isabel had become the sole heir. The difference was enormous. Had the boy lived, the man who married Isabel might reasonably have expected a portion, connections and the goodwill of a brother-in-law. Now the future of the lordship depended on her. That four-year interval is as closely as we can date the change. No precise day is needed to recover its consequence. In 1185 a royal officer could still expect Gilbert to grow up, marry and take charge of his lands. By 1189 it was Isabel who could transmit a claim to them. William's prospects changed because hers had changed first.B5G

Henry II had undertaken to give her to William Marshal. Henry's death in 1189 left the fulfilment of the undertaking to Richard I. The marriage took place in London. The young woman had been in royal custody under Ranulf de Glanville. In the family account the groom has to do a good deal of hurrying to secure his promised marriage and set himself up respectably. At least as important for the future were the things he could not hurry. He could not by getting married compel John's officials to reverse grants they had made in Ireland during Isabel's minority.

He could not declare that the earldom associated with Pembroke had been given back to her father's line on the same day. He could not go up to the first Welsh castle he fancied and ask for the keys on the strength of his wedding. Even in Normandy a church that remembered Isabel's ancestors would one day be glad to obtain a confirmation in her own name.B5H

All the more striking, then, that this marriage did in fact give him a position from which he could attempt some of these things. The promises that made him a great landholder had been made by men who had since died, in places where he had never set foot, often over the heads of people still alive. Beside him was a woman for whom the names of those places and of several of those dead belonged to a family history. When it was necessary to ask the barons of Leinster to look after a castle and stand by a household, the household poem gives William an appeal they had reason to hear. He reminds them that Isabel is the daughter of the man who granted them their lands.B5J There would come a winter when William could do nothing to help those inside that castle. Isabel would be there.



CHAPTER 11

The place they shall choose

About the illumination

The Cistercians from Stanley tried more than one site in Leinster before settling at Duiske on the Barrow.

Historical source B5K

Visual exemplar B5L

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

In the early 1190s, Máel Sechlainn Mac Gilla Pátraic was king of North Osraige. His father Domnall had held his territory under Strongbow and died in 1185. Máel Sechlainn lived to see much of the good land around Kilkenny pass out of his family's hands. He died in 1193 or 1194. William Marshal claimed authority at Kilkenny through Isabel's inheritance. He could be a long way off, defending a king's interests in Normandy, while a man who called himself his officer took decisions about where to fortify the river. For the men who held the country under Máel Sechlainn, a new castle on the Nore meant that a lord usually absent in England or Normandy could keep a garrison on their ground.B5M

The Nore runs through the town. Two fords made it possible to cross it. The Breagagh comes in from the west, and the meeting of the streams and a road running across Osraige made this useful ground for travellers with much humbler things to do than capture a kingdom. The Irish name, Cill Chainnigh, preserves the church of Canice. There had also been an early church associated with Patrick, on the rise to the south. By the twelfth century Canice's church had become the centre of a bishop's see. The bishop's town and the town that grew up around the earl's castle came to have different lords. Someone asking a resident of medieval Kilkenny who governed him might first have had to ask exactly where he lived.B5N

Strongbow had had a fortification at Kilkenny before his death. One of the few things recorded of it is that its garrison abandoned it. In 1173 an approaching army from Connacht and Munster made Waterford seem the safer place to be. The next evidence for building is associated with a campaign in 1192. The annals connect the appearance or strengthening of castles at Kilkenny, Kilfeakle and Knockgraffon with fighting across a broad stretch of country. One may reasonably suspect that a man intent on holding the Nore wanted the approaches from Munster made safer too.

We cannot lay a memorandum from William beside the annal and show that its three castles were the execution of his design. We can see from the company in which Kilkenny occurs what a small part of the story is contained within its present walls.[B5P]

Archaeologists have found the earthen ramparts of a substantial earlier enclosure beneath the stone castle. It is uncertain whether this was the place from which Strongbow's men fled or a subsequent work. A castle can be called new by a writer who saw timber defences raised on an older bank. Another observer, seeing stone walls replace those defences, might with equal justice call it new again. Some of William's stone structure survives in a building altered repeatedly by the Butlers and their successors. There was a substantial south tower with thick walls and space above the river for a hall and several other buildings. In 1307 an official valuing the property counted four towers, a chapel and a hall. He was valuing a residence that had lived through nearly another century of ownership. His entry is good evidence for the resources of the castle then. It gives us no seating plan for a meal in Isabel's day.[B5Q]

While these things were being undertaken in Ireland, William was busy enough elsewhere for its annalists to tell the better part of certain years of his lordship without mentioning him at all. When the annalists spoke of the English of Leinster, they might mean men of his following, former followers of Strongbow with their own households, and men who would serve the king when their earl preferred a different course. Gaelic rulers appear on both sides of fights in which these men took part. In the campaign against Domnall Ua Briain in 1192 it was in the interest of his rival Domnall Mac Carthaig to assist the invaders of Ua Briain's territory. An Irish alliance helped bring the expedition to the Shannon. A reported defeat in the fighting did not prevent some castle-building. Who won depends in part on which day the account stops and on what the army had set out to do.[B5R]

In William's absence there was an officer to whom an Irish landholder could make his wishes known. Geoffrey fitz Robert was seneschal, the steward of Leinster. He had standing in the country, a household and interests of his own. A seneschal could arrange for local business to be done in his lord's name. He could also create a settlement in which later inhabitants would want an undertaking of his confirmed by the earl. That happened at Kilkenny. When William granted privileges to its townspeople, one of the questions about money already had its answer. Geoffrey had fixed the annual rent of a burgage, a town holding, at a shilling. Before his lord's charter, his decision had made it possible for a householder to know what it would cost him to stay put for another year. William ratified it.[B5S]

There are reasons to be wary of the familiar picture of an absent owner who only came alive as a ruler on his arrival at the castle door. William was sometimes at royal courts in France where men who wanted something done in Ireland also appeared. Charters made at Rouen in September 1199 dealt with land in Munster. At Chinon in June 1200 William witnessed a grant concerning a castle beside the Suir, in what is now County Kilkenny. Meiler fitz Henry, the man who would fight William's people in Ireland, was there too. A witness list does not preserve whatever they may have said to each other. It locates both within reach of a royal decision. A man in France might learn of a new neighbour in Ireland before the grantee himself had even sent anyone to look at the land.B5T

There was a further difficulty. John, now king of England, had been lord of Ireland before he was king. He had made grants in his own name. During Isabel's minority there had been years in which interests could be granted to men who had done him service, including interests which conflicted with what an adult Isabel or her husband understood to be their inheritance. It is possible to tell this story as if a careless man had sold the same field twice. In practice there might be two different things on offer. The right to take rents and services was one. The right to decide a case concerning those services, or to hold a fortress to which men came for protection, could be another. If a royal grant was drawn in words broad enough, a tenant could argue that, whatever the earl said, it was the king to whom he must now answer. He would have excellent reason to keep the charter safe.B5U

At the beginning of the century John and William could still get a good deal done together. On 3 December, probably in 1200, at Hamstead Marshall in Berkshire, the king approved William's will. It is the act with which we began. John's clerk singled out one of William's promises. He had vowed to found a Cistercian abbey in Ireland. There were to be thirty carucates of land, a measure expressed in terms of ploughing. Now came a practical matter. Which land? The place was to be a suitable one, in the judgment of Isabel and Geoffrey fitz Robert. The bishop of Exeter and the bishop of Worcester were among the witnesses. The Irish people who might have to move a boundary or meet the monks' claim to dues do not appear among them.B5V

The word suitable repays a moment's attention. The founder's soul could benefit from the prayers of monks anywhere. Monks living together every day needed a place at which an institution could endure his death. They had to be fed. They needed access to water and to their outlying land. They needed neighbours who would acknowledge their right to occupy the place when a king or a lord had died and people in the neighbourhood started asking to see the authority under which their predecessors had acted. Nor were these monks necessarily newcomers to an empty countryside. Other religious houses already had an interest in streams, roads,

grazing and the men and women who worked a holding. Saying that the land belonged to William did not settle whether he might put any thirty carucates he pleased into a new abbey's hands.

An old story tells how he came to make the vow. On a dangerous crossing from Wales he promised to found a monastery if he reached safety. In the county of Wexford, on the western side of Bannow Bay, there was indeed a monastery called Tintern of the Vow. Monks from Tintern on the Welsh side of the water came to live there. Those are several good reasons for the story to have lasted. The royal notification gets as far as the vow. It says nothing about how far the ship had gone, who was aboard, whether Isabel was beside her husband, or what he promised about founding on the particular shore where he came to land. Accounts of the peril and safe arrival belong to the foundation's tradition, with an important place in later retellings by Irish antiquaries. The danger of landing in Ireland after a difficult sea crossing needed very little explanation to the people who first heard the story; its plausibility cannot tell us when the crossing happened.[B5W]

We can get quite close to the actual business on land. Dunbrody, another Cistercian monastery, stood only about eight kilometres from Tintern. Their lands did not everywhere run up against one another. It may be that a strip deliberately kept between estates helped head off troubles over boundaries. The church that rose at Tintern has been excavated. Part of the nave and the south transept, the chancel and a crossing tower survive after changes that included conversion into a family residence. Some carved stone from the west end helps put an early phase of construction in the thirteenth century. There is no archaeological trace so far of a temporary wooden monastery. It would have been a practical way to begin, but no one should have to imagine a timber church on the strength of the later stone church's existence. We know that a religious community came here and that it built. Both are more than what could have been known by reading John's confirmation in December 1200.[B5X]

There is even a small difference of view hiding in the question of who picked the spot. David Collins, writing of the archaeology and of the long experience of these monks, thinks it likely that men from the Welsh house selected the specific site. John's notification assigns the choice of a suitable place to Isabel and the seneschal. These need not be rival versions of a single day on the riverbank. The woman and the local officer authorised to provide a suitable place might accept a recommendation from the people who would have to live there. More importantly, the king's act is contemporary evidence for their responsibility, while participation by the monks in the practical choice is an inference. The monks may have

recommended a site. William had entrusted the choice to Isabel and Geoffrey. John confirmed it.B5Y

Elsewhere another Cistercian foundation under William's patronage did have to try more than one place. This was Duiske, at the modern Graiguenamanagh. The monks came from Stanley in Wiltshire. They can first be placed near Kilkenny, then further south on the Nore before their settlement on the Barrow. Records put them at Loughmerans in 1202 and at Annamult in 1204. The dedication of a cemetery at the final site is a more persuasive sign of an intention to stay than a story that someone had given the place a name. The reasons for trying several sites are less plain. Annamult was close to the established house of Jerpoint. A community could have a perfectly adequate site from the point of view of drainage, timber and water only to find that it had chosen a poor one from the point of view of people who already had rights nearby.B5Z

William's charter for Duiske belongs later, probably to the period beginning in 1207. Isabel's agreement is recorded. The house was to have lands in more than one place, and town plots at Kilkenny and Wexford as well as a further burgage. A house endowed only with a secluded site for prayer might have had great difficulty paying its way. A town holding brought it closer to buyers, sellers and carriers. A grant protecting its people against the lord's forest jurisdiction mattered to servants going about their work beyond the walls. The earl reserved the highest justice. He threatened his own men with a fine of ten marks if they troubled the abbey in its lands. To make a durable gift he had to think about what the men who owed allegiance to him might do to those who received it. His successors returned to confirm the gifts. A son and later a daughter helped carry their father's decisions into a generation which had never seen him.B6A

Look, too, at one of the witnesses reported for that grant. Alongside the bishop of Ossory stood the bishop of Ferns. This is Ailbe Ó Máelmuaid, the churchman whose land dispute with the earl makes the most serious breach in a picture of uniformly generous patronage. His appearance among witnesses is easily overlooked by readers in a hurry to reach the quarrel. A bishop might welcome an endowment, work with the family behind it, and still have to fight measures taken by that family affecting his own church. William could help one community hold its lands securely and leave another considering an appeal over his head. A list of monasteries founded is a very incomplete measure of the experience of living under a pious lord.B6B

These were also experiments in what it was possible to do by water. A community in Wexford could have close relations with a house on the Wye. Traders able to go up the Barrow could reach a river crossing and the lands beyond it. A

steward able to have a bridge constructed could change the value of a holding miles away from his bridge. Waterford already gave the king a profitable port on the route up towards the Suir, Nore and Barrow. A new port further upriver could give merchants the choice of dealing nearer the places where packhorses would otherwise begin or end their journeys. That might please growers who had something to sell; it could have quite the opposite effect on those who had invested in the expectation that merchants would always have to come to Waterford.B6C

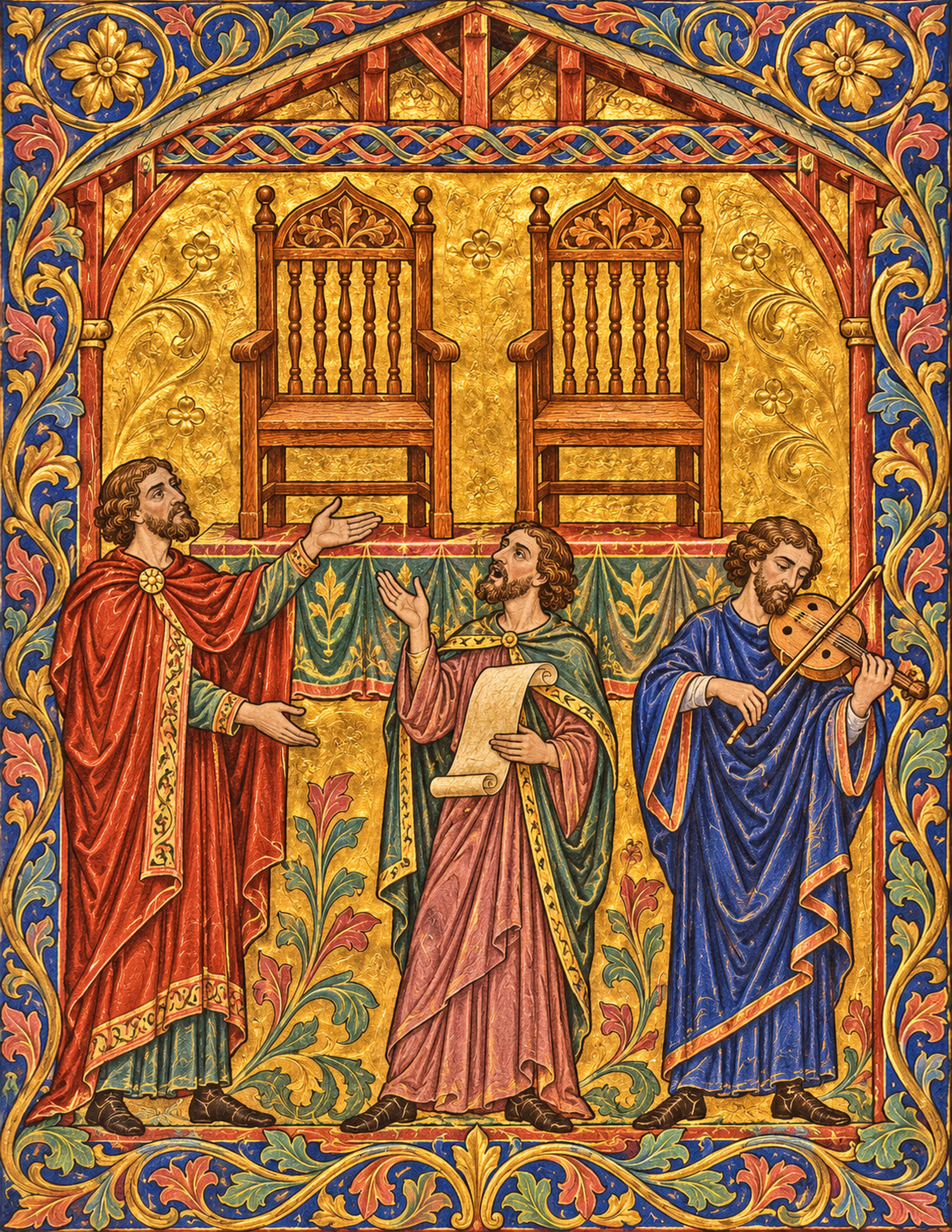
New Ross grew on the Barrow below its meeting with the Nore. A bridge and a town belonging to William are secure there by 1210. The family poem mentions damage to the new town in the fighting several years earlier. The earl did not simply pick an expanse of undisturbed ground with no history. The local settlement names, the river and its crossings belonged to earlier inhabitants; his distinctive achievement was to give an existing route a commercial destination sufficiently attractive to competitors, and sufficiently valuable to his opponents to be worth attacking. Anyone going there who hoped for the privileges of a townsman needed to know where he would answer a charge, what he must pay on bringing goods ashore, and whether he would still enjoy a privilege on entering another town. Those questions took actual shape for burgesses at Kilkenny. On the river leading to New Ross they would bring the earl into competition with the king.B6D

A further document of Isabel's, quite impossible to date to a particular crossing, makes a useful companion to the grants of Irish land. It concerns St Mary of Orbec in Normandy. Her ancestors had given the church to the abbey of Bec. William had acknowledged the abbey's right. Isabel now confirmed that acknowledgment. The abbey was to have the church for its own use; neither she nor her heirs would claim rights in it. The text is known through a much later copy and its modern editor can give only the broad interval 1199 to 1220. Isabel could have made it during her marriage or after her husband's death. The order of events is clearer than the date. Isabel's ancestors made the gift and William recognised it. Isabel now gave the monks something they might need long after her husband's death, her own word about what her heirs could claim.B6E

Why should the monks have needed another declaration once the earl had given them his? A man who could govern a place in right of his wife could hardly be expected to outlive every claim arising through the woman from whom his power came. The confirmation would be kept by the community with an interest in invoking it. As with the ordinary rent of a town holding, there was a future transaction already present in the document. Some day an officer acting for a descendant might ask for something from Orbec. The abbey could tell him his employer's own ancestor had renounced the claim and could show him a text in her

name. An ancestor's word did not reach into the future unaided. It needed somebody to set it down, somebody to value it sufficiently to keep it, and somebody from whom obedience could still be obtained.

Before William could travel to Ireland for the extended stay of 1207, he had thus become involved in a good deal of Irish business. There were town holdings for which rents had been fixed, a fortified site of growing importance, a religious house whose site Isabel and his steward were to provide, and men with grants from both him and the king. It required local judgment to build any one of these relationships and local force to maintain some of them. He had been able to put a household together which could exercise both. When men who had formerly accepted his grants found themselves answering to a king with his own plans for Ireland, the difference between commanding a household and commanding a country would become painfully clear.



CHAPTER 12

The keys of the Teifi

About the illumination

At Cardigan in 1176 the Lord Rhys offered two chairs, one for poetry and one for music.

Historical source B6F

Visual exemplar B6G

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

At Cardigan there were two chairs to be won. For the great gathering the Lord Rhys held there in 1176, one was to go to the winner among the poets, the other to a performer of instrumental music. A Welsh chronicle says the announcement went out a year in advance, even to Ireland. The men from Gwynedd did well in the poetry. The son of a fiddler attached to Rhys's own court won the music. The host gave gifts to the other performers too. There is a very practical measure of princely power in this story. To issue an invitation a year in advance is to be confident that the castle will still be yours when the guests turn up.B6H

Rhys ap Gruffydd, the Lord Rhys, was ruler of Deheubarth in south Wales. The castle where he laid on entertainment had been taken and burnt in earlier fighting. The Welsh name is Aberteifi, the mouth of the Teifi; the English name Cardigan now appears on most maps. A short way upriver stood Cilgerran, above a deep gorge. To speak of Cardigan or Cilgerran as an English castle or a Welsh castle without supplying a date is to leave out the most interesting part of its history. An early account of Cilgerran finds Rhys attacking the castle and his cousin Robert fitz Stephen, the son of Rhys's aunt, defending it. Rhys took Robert prisoner. In time Robert would be one of the first men to take troops over to Ireland to help Diarmait Mac Murchada. Before he could think of taking a town in Leinster, someone had to get him out of a Welsh prince's custody.B6J

Rhys's capture of Cilgerran belongs in the mid-1160s, while William Marshal was making his way as a young man on the Continent. The chronicle connects it with an attack on Aberteifi. Men from Pembroke, identified as French and Flemings, subsequently tried to get Cilgerran back. Some were killed; the survivors returned without recovering it. Then the event takes its place among local deaths, foundations of religious houses and family disputes. The Welsh annals do not

always align exactly with the years attributed to these events by modern scholars. The two sides of the struggle were much less simple than a national name on either army would suggest. There were Flemings settled in southern Pembrokeshire whose families had been there for generations by the time William had business in the area. Some of those labelled French had lived their lives in Wales. Robert fitz Stephen, who had cause to remember Rhys's power, was himself a son of a woman from the Welsh ruling dynasty.B6K

That family connection takes us back to a woman often lost in the story of the much more famous men who called her their mother or grandmother. Nest was the daughter of Rhys ap Tewdwr, an earlier ruler of Deheubarth. Through different unions she had descendants who laid claim to a remarkable array of lordships and offices. She was Robert fitz Stephen's mother; a son of hers by Henry I was the father of Meiler fitz Henry, who served King John in Ireland. A Marcher lord's enemy in one place might be a cousin of a man holding land of him elsewhere. To William the men who answered his summons could look like his Welsh following when they assembled at a castle, and like Irish landholders with quite definite loyalties of their own when they had crossed the sea. Connections through women helped put those fighting men within reach in the first place. They did not determine how men so richly provided with relatives would choose between them.B6L

Rhys had reason to get on terms with the king of England. Henry II, newly involved in the governance of parts of Ireland, had reason to come to terms with the exceptionally able ruler of the territory near his Welsh routes to that island. Their accommodation in the early 1170s gave Rhys a recognised position in south Wales. That was one way in which a prince could improve the position of his own followers without changing his ancestry or giving up his ambitions. Henry could accept his homage and treat him as someone capable of keeping the peace. He was also accepting that it would be this man and this man's household who received oaths, decided grievances and held castles through a considerable part of the south. Such an arrangement could work extremely well while both had more to gain by keeping it than by trying their strength once again. The harder question concerned the length of its life. The English king had sons; the Welsh ruler had sons and grandsons with interests that would prove even more difficult to reconcile.B6M

Consider what a castle meant in this relationship. It could shelter a garrison and discourage enemies from moving by a particular road. If a landholder's neighbours had something to sell, it could help protect the meeting at which they sold it. It was space to keep prisoners, including men or boys given as security by people who hoped the prisoners would never have to be punished. It was a residence at which competitors for a prince's favour could be received, and a place for a pair of chairs

and a public celebration in which patron and recipient alike acquired honour. To restore a castle to a man, or promise to restore it and then put him off, could alter the following he was able to maintain as surely as a victory in battle. A prince's son would have more than sentimental reasons for wanting his father's hall.

In the years before the marriage of William and Isabel, there were already places on the Welsh frontier at which her family had exercised an authority as disputed as Rhys's. At Chepstow the Wye runs below the rock on which Striguil Castle stands. Isabel's father had been called earl of Striguil. His ancestors had also been associated with Pembroke, much further west, where the castle looked towards the sea routes. Chepstow, where Aífe had probably lived in widowhood, was at the eastern end of this span of territory. From there the route west to Pembroke ran past the approaches to Glamorgan and Carmarthen before reaching the long inlet of Milford Haven. Westward, in some of the fighting grounds where Henry II could make terms with Rhys, men who had never heard of Aífe might be found insisting on rights of their own. In this country a title was indispensable for some purposes and wholly insufficient for others. When John recognised William as earl of Pembroke in 1199 he could give a name to his rank; he could not at a stroke supply him with a loyal company for every stronghold that lay near the lands of his wife.B6N

Rhys died in 1197. The guards at his castles had to decide who could give an order that their former master could no longer give himself. His sons Gruffudd and Maelgwn were rivals. Other brothers and, later, Gruffudd's sons also had a claim on their family's acquisitions. North of them there was a prince, Llywelyn ap Iorwerth of Gwynedd, on his way to exercising authority well beyond his own country. In England Richard I had scarcely two years left to live. John, after him, would be an ambitious neighbour with a very pointed interest in who held the castles of south Wales and how their holders proposed to live. No one who wanted a rival prince kept safely in prison or a particular castle brought within reach could overlook the usefulness of an alliance with any one of these men. Its effect on everyone else in the family might be less agreeable.B6P

A Welsh account of what happened between the brothers gives the monks and relics at an oath a central place. Maelgwn had hostages from Gruffudd. He promised before monks that he would give up both the hostages and the castle of Cardigan on an agreed day. The day passed and, the writer says, neither undertaking was kept, although providence subsequently released the hostages. Here are most of the guarantees people of the time could devise. There is an appointed day. There are men of acknowledged standing to hear the oath. There are sacred objects to make it perilous for an oath-breaker to meet his God. There are living bodies in custody. The man who controls the castle and holds the hostages still has a choice about opening

the gate. Words said before relics can add fear of divine judgment to a man's calculation. They cannot recover a castle for his brother.B6Q

The chronicler had his own view of the two brothers. In his way of telling it, when Gruffudd recovered part of his inheritance he acted manfully. When he obtained Cilgerran he did so by treachery. Maelgwn, too, draws the writer's indignation. He sold Cardigan to the English for what the writer considered a paltry sum because he feared and hated his brother. One could tell an entirely intelligible account of the same decision as prudent resistance to a family rival. If a prince cannot safely hold a castle, he may still be able to prevent a brother from possessing it unconditionally; the king of England might be a dangerous neighbour, but a useful purchaser. We know how the author judged the bargain. We have no letter from Maelgwn explaining the calculation. It was Cardigan, at the river mouth, that Maelgwn sold. Upstream at Cilgerran the struggle continued.B6R

From inside this story William first appears in 1204 as one more man taking advantage of a crisis in Deheubarth. Hywel, another son of Rhys, had been stabbed by men of Maelgwn, according to the chronicle. Gruffudd's sons won Dinefwr and Llandovery from their uncle. Into the same few lines comes the earl of Pembroke, outwardly a tremendous interruption to the business of a family, and he takes Cilgerran. The writer gives William a large army. He gives us no roll and no credible figure for its strength. He gives far more space to who had injured whom in the family and to the burial at Strata Florida of a man who had taken the religious habit before his death. An English reader might think the point of the entry is the foreign earl's appearance with an army. A family that had lost a son by violent means and a following that had lost two of the principal levers of its power would have understood its proportions differently.B6S

For William it was a real acquisition. The Teifi gave access to the country inland and linked the lower reaches of the river to the Irish Sea. The castle occupied a spur between watercourses. On the gorge side the rock itself did part of the garrison's work. On the other approaches ditches and defences mattered all the more. A lord who held Pembroke could extend his influence towards Ceredigion by holding here. He would also find himself committed to feeding a garrison at some distance from the seat from which his earldom took its name. Most of the great fabric visible now, including the two round towers within the walls, belongs to building undertaken after the elder William died. His eldest son bore the same name, held the same rank, and came back to the same castle. An early thirteenth-century tower can be a contemporary witness to the son's expenditure and yet a very poor illustration of precisely what his father found when he first entered the gate.B6T

There is a complication here shared by historians of castles in England, Wales and Ireland alike. The earliest reference attaching a name to a stronghold might refer to a work in earth and timber, to stone laid amid that work, or to an entirely different work a short distance away. A name may travel with a community or an office. An attractive early story associated with the abduction of Nest belongs to a castle called Cenarth Bychan. There are candidates for the location; the identification with Cilgerran is disputed. To draw a straight line from that abduction through the capture of Robert fitz Stephen down to the round towers on the Teifi is to purchase an excellent sequence of scenes at the expense of the uncertain first step. The firmer starting ground for our purposes is the attack by Rhys, the subsequent defence against men of Pembroke and the explicit appearance of William in the annal of 1204. Rhys took the fortress, then kept it when the men of Pembroke tried to win it back. A later generation had to face William's army on the same ground.B6U

The contrast with Pembroke is instructive. At Pembroke it is the elder William to whom architectural historians commonly assign the great cylindrical keep. The building is part of what he was able to do once John's favour and Isabel's inheritance gave him the position and resources to do it. Standing water around much of the promontory gave access by boat. A growing town lay near the castle. A residence designed to dominate those approaches made a statement to people arriving to do business quite apart from what it might do in an assault. To raise such a building took an institution with the power to command expenditure when a lord was occupied elsewhere. If the common attribution is right, a considerable achievement of the marital lordship is still standing. What the stones cannot tell us is how William and Isabel divided decisions about the money or how a particular tenant felt about a structure to which he might someday have to bring supplies.B6V

There was also an eastern March, closer to the Wye and to the English counties, where an English king, a Welsh claimant and a Marcher lord might each have a different account to give of a perfectly well-known fortress. At Caerleon on the Usk, Henry II recognised Morgan ab Owain as lord in 1154. When Morgan died in 1158 his brother Iorwerth succeeded him. Iorwerth lost Caerleon and regained it, lost it again and obtained it again after coming to terms with Henry. Some of those who fought on the English side were his own close relatives. His son Hywel held after him. The sons and nephews of these men were no strangers awaiting admission to an English king's territory. They had given and received submissions, negotiated with the Lord Rhys and held the place by force or by agreement well within living memory. Even after William's people took Caerleon in 1217 there remained the question of what to do with an heir prepared to maintain that his right survived the loss of his castle.B6W

It is tempting to make these relationships add up to a Welsh side and an English side with a few exceptions on either flank. But the lord of Gwynedd might serve an interest of the English king by checking a Welsh rival; a family with a French surname could need Welsh help to get back a castle its father had held from the king; two branches of a Welsh household could call in different neighbours. Such choices were particular, and people might be held to one long after the advantage that led to it had vanished. William's own marriage multiplied the number of choices. Isolated in Wales, the seizure of one river fortress may look like a straightforward addition to the earldom of Pembroke. Placed alongside the plans being made for the family's Irish lands, it bears upon who could raise troops around the points of embarkation, who had means to put men across the water, and where a man could go if a rival made it dangerous to stay where he was.

John had his own programme for the castles of the March. He granted an office or took it back, put men of his household into strategically important places and spent on fortifications. William's standing with him was falling in the wake of their trouble over the Norman lands. A title of earl did not guarantee continuing employment by the king in a sheriff's county. In the course of 1207 the king made changes in the western sheriffdoms while seeking tighter command over key strongholds. The effect could be felt both by a dispossessed local lord and by a trader whom a different officer now expected to answer. Fanny Madeline has followed the expenditure on royal castles here through the accounts; John was strengthening places with a view to defending his own access to Wales and, beyond it, to Ireland. A grant which gave a marcher lord freedom to act in some parts of his lordship sat alongside a royal policy which could make him distinctly less free in others.B6X

The position William established at Cilgerran in 1204 endured about eleven years. It is worth looking ahead a little, because possession is sometimes reported as if the capture made the castle permanently his and the Welsh quite forgot it. In 1215, while men on the other side of the Severn were fighting about the obligations of the king of England, Llywelyn came south with forces from Gwynedd. Other rulers joined from Powys and Deheubarth. Their campaign spread from Carmarthen to castles along the coast. The Welsh chronicle distinguishes places knocked down from places delivered up. At Cilgerran the garrison delivered the place to Llywelyn on the feast of St John the Apostle, the day after St Stephen's Day, 27 December. The account does not say that William was confronting Llywelyn in person. It names members of the Lord Rhys's family among the men of Deheubarth who came on the expedition. Some had been trying to take castles from each other only a few years before.B6Y

In 1216 the descendants of Rhys assembled at Aberdyfi. There, in Llywelyn's presence, the lands of Deheubarth were divided among them. The chronicle specifies the territories that fell to Maelgwn, among them Emlyn and Cilgerran Castle. This is a particularly clear instance of a Welsh prince with choices of his own. A negotiation with the English king was one means by which Llywelyn might get a settlement to stick. An assembly at which he was able to oversee what the descendants of Rhys should possess was another. To the man given Cilgerran in a division among Welsh rulers, a council in England judging what William or his heirs ought to have might seem at best to be dealing with half the question. William's son had to return in arms after 1219 to obtain the place again.B6Z

Back in 1207 the elder William already knew what it meant to exercise authority on one shore while he stood on another. A summons that took him out of Ireland could leave his household there in the charge of Isabel and the men who worked for them both. At a castle on the Nore a Welsh or Anglo-Norman family name could be as familiar as on the Teifi. The choices offered to people once William crossed to the king would be their own. An argument that had begun over obedience to royal officers would soon divide men who lived off adjoining land, and give the king an opportunity to test what the word of the lady of Leinster could still buy when her husband was at his court.



CHAPTER 13

The lady at Kilkenny

About the illumination

In the family poem, William takes Isabel's hand and reminds his tenants at Kilkenny that they hold their lands through her family.

Historical source B7A

Visual exemplar B7B

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

In 1207 there were two ways of summoning Meiler fitz Henry to explain himself. As Meiler's lord in Leinster, William could summon him over the lands he held there. As king, John could summon the same man to answer for his conduct as head of royal government in Ireland. Meiler, faced with a summons from William, had a very good answer available to him. The decisions over which the earl complained were made in his capacity as the king's justiciar. If that was so he owed an account to the king. It was a dangerous argument for a man inclined to pursue his private quarrels with the resources of an office. It was also quite a good argument against a private lord who wished to judge his own dispute with a royal officer.B7C

Meiler was well past the age at which one could dismiss him as an ambitious young newcomer. His father was a son of Henry I and Nest; the justiciar was a relative of King John. His people had taken part in the first campaigns of conquest. Gerald of Wales, his kinsman, had reason to think that the experience of men of this generation deserved more recognition at court. Meiler had indeed witnessed acts when John came over in 1185, though most of the surviving acts have no Meiler in them and his place among the witnesses was hardly that of a chief adviser. Once John was king, he appointed Meiler his justiciar in Ireland. There was also a grant of lands in southwest Munster for service assessed at fifteen knights. A grant might be effective only as far as the grantee could go into the territory and make people accept him. But it did give this particular man something to hope for outside the older lands on which he acknowledged other lords.B7D

That history makes him a difficult villain. The family poem of William has a hero who needs an adversary in Ireland; it gives him an accomplished one. Other Irish barons had grievances against the justiciar, and an office carrying broad royal powers could undoubtedly be used to harm neighbours. Yet a king who wanted to

stop a handful of leading lords from turning their lands into practically independent jurisdictions needed an officer capable of opposing them. Meiler's understanding of the families, castles and competing title deeds of the country made him much more serviceable than an honest stranger with no idea which way to ride. There was a further advantage for the king. Men who had obtained their positions through one or other of the leaders of the conquest could be encouraged to see themselves as clients of the royal government too. William, who had himself come up through the households of kings, was peculiarly ill placed to complain about that in principle.

A disputed piece of land did not have to be large. Take the case of Adam de Hereford, which Marie Therese Flanagan follows through John's correspondence. An earlier instruction had specified five carucates. By February 1207 Adam had been assigned three and a half. He told the king he would accept four. On 21 February John ordered Meiler to assign another half-carucate at Femessid. The order fixed the size of the settlement. It was the justiciar who still had to put Adam in possession.B7E

The name Adam de Hereford turns up in the quarrel between king and earl. So does Philip de Prendergast, who had witnessed William's grants, including acts touching land in England. A man asked to witness a gift was a useful person to have nearby. He could later remember the grant or confirm that the lord with the right to make it had done so. Philip belonged in William's company and had a marriage connection to Isabel's family. None of that deprived him of the ability to take a gift from the king. Adam held land of several lords in Ireland as well as across the sea. Historians can reconstruct some of those holdings, find men's names together under charters, recognise a marriage and work out who was in a position to exert pressure on whom. A witness list does not tell us that the fourth man to hear a grant liked the third, or that either would come armed if the other asked.B7F

In February 1207 John extended protection to William's lands and tenants for as long as he was in Ireland with the king's licence. The elder son, also named William, was already a hostage. In the family account the king now demanded his brother Richard as well. Isabel opposed giving up a second son. William sent Richard to John and crossed to Ireland. A modern reader may well think of William's own childhood. For Isabel the children at risk were these children. She had to contemplate an Irish lordship which depended for its future on sons whom another household now kept in its power. An earl had to secure the land which would be theirs. If his attempt went wrong, the boys most likely to succeed him would be within easy reach of the man he had offended. Royal records establish the pressure on William to settle his position. The conversation between husband and wife comes from the poem their eldest son commissioned.B7G

In the spring the couple were in Leinster. A letter of John's in May illuminates the division which developed there better than any generalisation about a suspicious king. A group of barons of Meath and Leinster had written to him about lands taken by the justiciar. Their letter itself is missing. John, in answering, made a point of putting his understanding of their grievance and their demand on record. He thought they were trying to establish a new procedure in his land without the consent of its prince. He insisted that Meiler had acted on his instructions. It was not to them that his justiciar owed an explanation. The answer names Walter, Hugh and Robert de Lacy and a number of others, including Adam de Hereford and Philip de Prendergast. It does not name William among its addressees. The disputed holdings directly affected his rights. Whether he joined in sending the lost petition remains uncertain.B7H

An official who tells us how outrageous a petition was may preserve more evidence of the petitioners' case than he intended. John found it worth rebutting the idea that barons might put the justiciar under an obligation to restore lands. They evidently thought there was some practical reason to put an objection before him together. That much can be said even if his version underplays the best of their grounds. A baron in Ireland might resent an officer who used a royal order to take something when the king was far away. The same baron, offered a royal direction which gave him land of his own, might be perfectly willing to go to court to collect it. John answered a collective grievance. When individuals made the crossing, he could deal with them one at a time.

William had to return to England. Before he went he brought Isabel before the men at Kilkenny. In the poet's account he takes her by the hand. It is a memorable action for a man asking a group to accept a woman as their ruler in his absence; it is also almost all the physical business the occasion needs. He reminds them who her father was. The earl who conquered the land had given them their holdings. She is their lady by birth. William has an acknowledgment of personal dependence to make in their hearing. In Meyer's French edition the speech ends, "Ge n'i ai rien si par lui non." I have nothing here except through her. That is our rendering of the poet's line, written in the next generation. Other documents confirm the fact of Isabel's hereditary right. The poet is our witness for the words later put into William's mouth.B7J

The poet gives us little sense of how Isabel looked as she stood before the men at Kilkenny. We know more about what William was asking them to risk. Some were old retainers personally committed to the absent lord. Others had powerful kinsmen nearby, estates they owed to Isabel's father, and good reason to wonder whether obedience to a woman at Kilkenny would expose their English lands to forfeiture.

An oath of support could be given to Isabel with complete sincerity by a man who still expected to obey the king of England. Everything depended on whether two such demands would ever directly conflict. The instruction to keep guard sounded comparatively simple. What if the king ordered the guardians themselves to come to England?

William set a division of responsibility in place. Jordan de Sauqueville had charge of territory to the north; John of Earley and men with whom he had ridden for years handled the south. Geoffrey fitz Robert and other substantial local figures were to be drawn upon for advice. Isabel remained the lady to whom these officers were to answer. In that arrangement there was room for a considerable difference between exercising command and leading a sortie. The countess did not have to ride into a melee to be the person who could receive a hostage once the fight was over. The men appointed to the military commands were more likely to be able to call a particular force into the field. Jordan, for example, had lands in Ulster from the de Lacy interest. In a struggle in which the men of Leinster could make no headway unaided, the person with an open door to the earl of Ulster had a particular usefulness.[B7K]

In November John made grants of his own. Philip de Prendergast was offered forty knights' fees in Munster. A knight's fee was a measure of landed service; forty fees did not mean forty similarly sized fields with a knight conveniently living on each one. Adam de Hereford obtained four carucates in Dublin. In other grants men called de Rochefort got lands in Cork and Dublin. William himself did not witness the grants. Nor was the competition confined to men who could plausibly be described as outsiders in his company. His nephew, another John Marshal, received the office of marshal of Ireland and land from the king. This nephew had kin to consider as well as an English king whose patronage carried extraordinary opportunities. The office given to him did not pass to his uncle, the hereditary marshal in England. The different men had a common family name and separate futures.[B7L]

Was this the effective purchase of loyalty? In the case of Philip the poem eventually assigns him a place among men William had cause to forgive. The conjunction of royal gift and apparent desertion in the account is striking. John Marshall, the modern historian, thinks the gifts likely to have influenced Philip and David de Rochefort, an instance of the special room for manoeuvre enjoyed by important tenants. David Collins cautions that other recipients may simply have disliked the prospect of incurring royal displeasure for refusing a gift, and that some tenants may have kept out of the fighting altogether. The nephew soon appears in his uncle's service again. These readings are closest when the evidence is most

particular and furthest apart when one tries to classify a whole company on the basis of a few charters. Even for Philip a grant measures the magnitude of an inducement more readily than it reveals the private moment when he committed himself to a side.B7M

Meiler's men attacked New Ross. In a quarrel often remembered as the defence of a lady in her castle, damage to this relatively new town is easy to dismiss as a preliminary. A port and river crossing equipped with goods worth carrying off made an intelligible target. Neither side needed the king's permission to set a loss to someone else's account once a force had reached the town. The people who had just invested in settling there depended on William's household for a degree of protection that the rival royal town of Waterford could claim directly from the king. Anyone choosing where to take valuable goods the following year had reason to remember which place could be raided. We do not have a roll listing the residents who bore the loss. The poet writes of what was done to the earl and of the response of his men. The men at the new bridge cannot all have had identical interests in the military reputation of their lord.B7N

When the royal summons came for the household knights in Ireland, John of Earley had something to lose by either response. The man whose office it was to demand his attendance was also king in the country where John held land in his own right. If he went, his lord's family and Irish lands would be deprived of the services for which he was trusted. In a speech the poet assigns to John, he reckons the cost in land, honour and his lord's affection. King John could reach their English lands even while these knights stood guard in Ireland. He moved against the holdings of Earley and Stephen d'Évreux. Both men stayed with Isabel. It was an excellent story for the family history, in which a man under considerable pressure preferred service to William. It was also a situation in which the knight's own future depended on keeping William and his heirs in a position to help him recover whatever the king took away.B7P

Isabel and the household officers had friends with armed men. Hugh de Lacy, earl of Ulster, came south. He had grounds for conflict with the justiciar quite independent of the appeal from William's men. His brother Walter, lord of Meath, also had the experience of fighting over interests threatened by the king's agents. Men of the de Lacy following could inflict losses on the justiciar in places where Isabel's own men had little prospect of getting at him. An entry preserved by the Four Masters tells how the sons of Hugh de Lacy, with the English of Meath, besieged Meiler's castle of Ardnurcher for five weeks. This Hugh was the brothers' father. The annals put the surrender and loss of territory under 1207. The chronology can be made more intelligible by thinking of a winter of fighting which

outlasted the calendar year. No letter from the castle gives us the precise five weeks. What the annalist remembers is where the losers had to give way, and the names of the family who made them.B7Q

On the English side of the water the royal household had a different problem. Once William and Meiler had both crossed and recrossed, what could either king or earl actually know about the fighting on a particular day? In one of the poem's most disturbing exchanges the king says he has news. The countess was at Kilkenny; John of Earley and others sallied out, Meiler arrived and Isabel found herself in danger. The report becomes worse as the king goes on, with deaths among William's closest men. It is in this conversation, before the poet discloses what has really happened in Ireland, that he puts the vivid scene of Isabel under siege. John of Earley was alive, as the audience of this biography very well knew. John Marshall and David Beresford accept a siege in their modern accounts. It is important all the same to remember where the full dramatic detail comes from. A tale told by the king in the poem to shake a husband's confidence will not bear the weight of a reconstruction of the countess's movements during the attack.B7R

The situation at the end of the fighting looks quite different. The justiciar had lost ground and was obliged to give security. In the household tradition his son was delivered as a hostage to Isabel. Other men who had supported him had to supply a son or a close male relative. Here, again, it is possible to see her exercising power without recovery of a single sentence she said. In the family's account Meiler's son was now in Isabel's keeping. If the father went back on his word it was the boy who stood to suffer. The same poem that gives her grounds for objecting to the king taking a second of her boys makes her an effective participant in a settlement secured by other people's children. The two acts need not have seemed contradictory to the men who made them part of the family's memory. Her children and her right had been put in danger. With armed help she had succeeded in putting another family in her power.B7S

In March 1208 John ordered his justiciar to make peace with the earl and with Walter de Lacy. On 21 March he ordered the transfer to William of land and castles claimed in Offaly, for three hundred marks paid or guaranteed. On 28 March he regranted Leinster. The regrant tells us how far the victory at Kilkenny reached. William had shown that his following could keep the justiciar from conquering all it had been left to defend. He also had to come to an agreement with the king who could state what the lord of Leinster was henceforth entitled to do. The settlement reserved important matters to the crown, including particular serious offences and interests in the church. It allowed a form of resort to the king's courts. Wardship and the choice of marriages of heirs, the very kind of transaction that had made William

lord of anything at all in Ireland, required careful division. Victory over Meiler did not leave him free to do whatever he chose with every tenant who was a child.B7T

Meiler did not cease to matter the day he lost. Records of Irish revenues a few years later put income from some disputed lands in the king's hand, though the poem presents a more decisive yielding of land to William. It is a useful difference in the evidence. The poet follows a knight's concessions after the loss of castles and men. The accountant is trying to discover how much a royal officer must answer for. Someone claiming before the earl that Meiler had given up a holding could find that elsewhere a receipt was still being demanded by the crown. In this case an older officer, several lesser men and two great regional lordships had all learned the limits of what Richard's gift of marriage could confer on a knight. The royal records suggest a further limit. Once the king and earl fell into step, the people they labelled robbers could find both sets of authorities bearing down on them at the same time.B7U

On his return William met men who had opposed him. The poet gives Philip and David tears, a plea for mercy and a request for a kiss that would show their lord's anger had ended. William gives the kiss, though he reserves his claim against them. The scene goes well beyond what can be read in a record of pardon, if such a record had been kept. It makes his attitude visible to people who would have to live with these men afterwards. Tenants could act on different sides, obtain lands from the king and then find their way back to an earl who still wanted men on whom he could call. A personal reconciliation might do more to secure William's next winter in Leinster than an attempt to dispossess every family the poet thought had been slow to help him. There would soon be another test. The king who had tried to use local barons against the earl was preparing to come to Ireland in person.B7V



CHAPTER 14

The king at the New Bridge

About the illumination

In the Annals of Loch Cé, Cathal and his household kept his son Áed at home. John took four other men back to England.

Historical source B7W

Visual exemplar B7X

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

On 21 June 1210 a clerk travelling with King John entered a payment to three men at a place called the New Bridge. Aymar and Reiner de Cleri and Ralph de Samford got forty shillings between them. Another entry for the same day records a much larger sum, five hundred marks advanced for the mariners and galleymen who had come to Ireland with the king. The day before, at Crook near Waterford, a hundred pounds had gone to the bishop of Norwich to pay Irish soldiers taken into royal service. On the day after the New Bridge entry there was money for six galleys going in search of pirates. A king moving at the head of an army needed clerks who could say where the money went as well as knights who could get to an enemy's castle. Where people were paid turns out to be one of the more dependable ways of finding their king.B7Y

New Bridge was William's place on the Barrow, New Ross. No speech of welcome survives in the account. A pair of men with the same byname got some money there and a clerk thought the crossing a sufficiently familiar point to identify the payment. The clerk used the new bridge as an address. The bridge at William's town on the Barrow now marked a stage on the king's route. At Kilkenny William could offer John hospitality. The poem allows William two days of hospitality there. For a man so recently at odds with the king, the practical privilege of feeding a royal army must have cost a considerable sum. No surviving menu can improve on the simple political fact that he had the means to do it.B7Z

John had sailed from Pembroke in pursuit of William de Braose and his family. Once a royal favourite, de Braose now had cause to fear the king. De Braose had owed money for Limerick. Debts nearly inert for years of royal favour had a dangerous tendency to come to life when favour ended. Men who held great castles in the Welsh March could try to evade a demand from the king by taking their

households across the sea. Once in Ireland the fugitives could find kin, neighbours and retainers doing business in other lordships where even a royal justiciar had limits to what he could accomplish. The question for William and the de Lacys was how to receive men with strong claims on friendship without being deemed to have taken their side against the king.[B8A]

It was particularly uncomfortable for William. The family of de Braose had connections with the de Lacys. William had benefited rather recently from the arrival of de Lacy troops to help defend Leinster. Hospitality might give a pursued man the means to escape. Refusal could make a man appear to have betrayed a friend before his guilt had been established. According to William's own biography he gave the fugitives hospitality and resisted the suggestion that a guest should be seized in his house. Such a story places the knight between his obligations and lets him keep the best of them. John had an equally intelligible way to describe a lord who received the family of a royal debtor and could produce none of them for him. The earl was well advised to take the king's summons to Pembroke seriously. Giving dinner to a king at Kilkenny might be expensive. There were friends of his in Meath and Ulster for whom John's arrival would prove far more costly.[B8B]

The expedition was substantial. Its accounts had to cover men doing work which did not resemble what a knight did in a tournament. To take a fortress one might need men who could quarry, build, dig or handle timber. To take an army from Waterford through Meath and up into Ulster one needed money in the right place to get ships working for those on land. The supplies crossing the sea were also an invitation to raiders. The entry for six galleys searching for them is one small reason why royal intervention could change the experience of shipping even for someone who knew nothing of the dispute between John and de Braose. The king of England had far more men and money to bring to bear than a frontier earl, once he was willing to leave England and bring them over.[B8C]

By the end of June he was at Dublin. Men of Walter de Lacy's had tried to arrange a submission. The king proceeded into Meath and towards Hugh de Lacy's stronghold at Carrickfergus in the north. Royal officers and Irish rulers seeking audiences met the expedition as it went. A force of Irish soldiers paid by the bishop in the king's service at Waterford belonged on the same map as the native rulers in the north who could deny him cooperation or offer it on terms. William appears with great clarity in the sources where his own lordship, his hospitality and his relationship with the king are at stake. We should be much more cautious about putting him personally beside the king throughout the northern campaign. A John Marshal who could be detached with a body of men was his nephew, the recent

beneficiary of royal favour. William's name and honour were engaged by John's campaign whether he rode every mile of it or not.B8D

In the *Annals of Loch Cé* the visitor is John, grandson of the Empress, king of the Saxons. A man described in royal government as lord of Ireland looks rather different when identified from a place which already knows who its kings are. John's descent through his grandmother links him to a woman whose place in the succession had once put a child hostage in danger in England. The Irish annalist was not writing a chapter in William's history. He wants us to know that John arrived with a fleet, summoned men to go against Hugh de Lacy in Ulidia, took control of Carrickfergus and put men of his own company there. Taking the stronghold and getting the man were different outcomes. Hugh escaped. Other accounts attach more importance to the way his brother was expelled or to the route of the army. A settlement based on the possession of a castle could outlast a ruler's visit. Its defender could also outlive the apparent extinction of his hopes.B8E

Another annalistic account, preserved in *Mac Carthaigh's Book*, makes room for a Munster ruler as well. The annal says that John knighted Donnchad Cairprech Ua Briain and gave him Carraig Ó gCoinneall with its lordship. The terms included an annual rent of sixty marks and the release of Donnchad's brother Muirchertach. Further along the route comes the meeting with Cathal Crobderg Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht. In this version Cathal came with men to do the visitor honour. Later the writer describes John making a bridge out of his ships at Carlingford. In the same campaign, therefore, there is a bridge over a river that a clerk treats as an address and a bridge across a harbour which a chronicler credits to the use of a fleet. They are quite different claims made for quite different purposes. An Irish source interested in the standing of rulers and in exceptional feats of transport noticed things that a document seeking to account for a payment had little reason to preserve.B8F

The king of Connacht's son gives us the best reason to attend to the variations between the accounts. Cathal needed to secure Áed's future. The nature of his relationship with the English king made a royal grant worth having; at the same time a son brought to a meeting could quite easily find he was a hostage. In the Loch Cé annals Cathal offered to bring him. The annalist adds that John had not made the request. John proposed that he come to receive a charter for a third part of Connacht. Back at home Cathal, his wife and his people took counsel, and decided against bringing him. The annalist considers it a bad decision. When the father returned without the son, John took four of Cathal's people instead. The writer gives their names, including Diarmait Mac Diarmada, ruler of Mag Luirg, and Toirberd, a man of Cathal's household. John took them back across the sea.B8G

Why so much care over who first suggested bringing the boy? In another version, preserved by the Four Masters, the English king asked for Cathal's son as a hostage. He did not get him, and four others went in his place. Seán Duffy has compared the surviving Irish accounts and identified relationships between the versions. The Four Masters and the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* should not be counted as two independent witnesses to a demand made in those terms. The Loch Cé account has particularly close interests in Connacht; Mag Luirg is no casual name in a chronicle associated with the family of that territory. A prince who promised a grant to a boy and then seized other men because a promise was broken cuts a different figure from one who simply demanded a king's child and took four other men when he could not get him. In both accounts Áed stayed at home. To understand what that safety cost, we have to follow the four men whom John took away in his place.B8H

Diplomacy had more instruments than a castle, a charter and a hostage. A French-speaking writer associated with Béthune recounts John's gift of a fine horse to Cathal in the course of their meeting. Duffy observes that a gift in such circumstances could be an acknowledgment of standing familiar to those present. Acceptance of a gift from a more powerful man could carry an expectation of service without deciding every future claim to tribute or hostages. That distinction helps explain why a king could make a public acknowledgment with men riding behind him and subsequently balk at putting his heir within reach. It also matters for William's position. A king who had eaten and been received at the earl's great Irish castle had received something of value. He was still capable of asking for new guarantees when he had finished eating. As their settlement in 1208 had shown, a public reconciliation still left room for the king to demand security.B8J

For Matilda de Braose and her son there was no release to set beside the fate of the other families. They were taken and died in royal custody. Starvation is the charge made against the king's treatment of them. The circumstances of their capture and the place of imprisonment are reported in varying terms. The fate of these two people had a terrible power quite independent of the precise words later attributed to Matilda about John's treatment of his nephew Arthur. A baron weighing whether to send his eldest boy into royal keeping could hardly claim that his boy's safety was a matter of course. There is room to question the dramatic particulars that chroniclers supplied; there is none to turn a family in John's favour a few years earlier into a group of people who could simply refuse his demands and go safely home.B8K

William retained his lands when Walter and Hugh de Lacy had to leave theirs. It was far from being an unconditional endorsement by John of the lordship of Leinster. By the end of the campaign royal government had advanced into lands

previously difficult to reach. Men in custody guaranteed future behaviour. Among those held in the course of the struggle was Geoffrey fitz Robert, the steward who had been named alongside Isabel in the royal approval of the abbey. He died in captivity. The man whose decision about a shilling's rent helped establish how a householder in Kilkenny might keep his property ended life with his own movements determined by someone else. The earl survived the expedition with his position largely intact. The political cost to the household included the services of a man whose work the king's own officers had recognised ten years beforehand.B8L

What had a town received in return for adhering to such a lord? The text of William's charter to the burgesses of Kilkenny gives a more exact answer than a list of its privileges might at first suggest. Twelve pence a year was one answer, the established annual rent for a burgage holding. Half fell due at Easter and the other half at Michaelmas in September. A householder who had six pennies ready for the first payment could keep the other six until autumn. Another answer concerned the mill. Corn had to be ground, a lord who owned a mill could take a payment for its use, and a householder who wished to make bread cared about both those facts. William allowed his burgesses to have their corn ground at his mills for a reasonable toll. He gave them no formula for what a miller should take from a particular load. Somebody disputing the charge now had at least the earl's commitment to a limit, among the other things that could be invoked in a town's court. A promise about the mill could make a more pressing demand on its beneficiaries' attention than a king's progress towards Ulster.B8M

There were provisions about a merchant guild, about local jurisdiction and about the tolls burgesses might face in other towns under William's lordship. In the Irish Historic Towns Atlas John Bradley points out the significance of the dimensions stated for holdings for free tenants. Twenty feet of frontage had an evident value in a street where trading and access from the street were part of the attraction. The long, narrow holdings discernible on historical maps bring such arrangements close to the modern eye. They cannot be traced without qualification to individual inhabitants in the earl's lifetime. A family might later buy the plot next door, or divide a holding between several households. A scholar measuring a frontage centuries later has evidence of the arrangement of land, though no guarantee that a boundary lay exactly there in the year when the earl gave his charter.B8N

The grant was made with the counsel and consent of Isabel. Its beneficiaries were the earl's burgesses. The distinction could mark a considerable difference in opportunity for two neighbours. People who served in a household or came in from the fields to sell something did not thereby acquire the liberties of the burgesses. Even within the community of the town, an inhabitant of the bishop's settlement

could not assume that being a neighbour of the earl's men made their liberties his. A pair of hooves, a cartload crossing a bridge, a ship bringing goods to a quay, a plea heard by a bailiff a little nearer home: the particular exemptions in such documents were significant because so many everyday acts could generate a payment or expose a traveller to a different court. A special liberty might be well worth buying a building plot for. It was still the better for an enduring relationship between the people who needed the privilege and the household with the power to grant it.B8P

We know how much use the institution of the borough found in William's charter because a later municipal book preserves it. The *Liber Primus Kilkenniensis* contains important early grants, including those of the elder William and his son. A modern reader can readily assume that the most important founding documents must have gone into the opening leaves when the book was made. Close examination by its editor Charles McNeill showed what actually happened. Extra leaves were inserted after an earlier numbering, on different vellum and in recognisably different writing. The text they carry is a transcript of an official exemplification, a certified copy, made in 1383. On manuscript page 68 the clause about the mill sits just above the calculation of the rent. The witnesses follow, and at the foot of the page a large red W begins the charter of William the younger. A few lines of ink take the reader across a generation. The book also has accounts of townspeople using documentary evidence to have cases heard by juries of their neighbours. Centuries after William's death a householder could still read what he had granted about rent and mill tolls. The officers of Kilkenny had kept his words in their town book.B8Q

The king who had sailed away from Ireland still needed people to speak for him there. Around 1212, William appears at the head of a declaration on John's behalf during the conflict with Pope Innocent III about the church of Canterbury. After the earl comes Meiler fitz Henry. Lower down the list are Adam de Hereford and Philip de Prendergast. Those who had been placed on opposite sides by the fighting could be represented as sharing a commitment in circumstances quite different from those of 1207. Much of the document is an argument about what the king of England was traditionally entitled to require when bishops were elected. It also says quite bluntly what the men understood as a reason for supporting their ruler. He and his ancestors had given these men and their fathers lands and honours. The obligation to defend him, in the document's argument, went with the benefit conferred.B8R

John's part in producing this declaration can be observed. A letter in the royal records thanks William and the barons in Ireland for good service and their oath. William has apparently signified his willingness to come to England. For the moment John wants him to remain in Ireland to help the bishop of Norwich. He sends a transcript of letters drawn up for him by English magnates and asks the earl

and other barons in Ireland to seal similar letters. Here is a way to produce the appearance of a shared political voice across the sea. If the supporters in Ireland use a similar document, the king can show the pope that his position draws support from both islands. Those who attach their seals still have a choice. They are also being asked to answer a question their king has already gone a long way towards framing for them. The surviving declaration is undated; a letter of this sort makes the editor's approximate dating to 1212 intelligible. It provides no reason to assign every name on the list to a gathering on a particular December day.B8S

At the end of the same letter John turns to William's son. The young man with the king lacks horses and clothes. William can provide, John can advance the expense, and there are negotiations about who may take the boy into his keeping and where he may go. John denies ever intending to send him to Poitou. William's associates recover the sons. The same correspondence that lets us hear a king dictating the form he would like support of his ecclesiastical policy to take also allows a worried father to be heard at second hand, enquiring whether his son is going to be sent overseas. A well-dressed knight could be assigned the dignity of a place in the king's household while his father was still trying to make quite sure he was at liberty to leave it.B8T

By 1213 John wanted William back in England. His own negotiations with Innocent III ended in his submission to the pope, under terms which included Ireland as well as England. An earl who had helped make a case for royal independence in ecclesiastical affairs had to live with what the king believed necessary to save his position. Meanwhile there was a bishop in Leinster who knew what it was to face an assertion of rights from this particular lord. Ailbe Ó Máelmuaid, bishop of Ferns, had disputed William's disposition of the hospital church of St John in Wexford to the Hospitallers. In an arrangement stemming from a hearing before delegated judges, other churches were conceded to the order instead. How this case related to the quarrel over episcopal land that subsequently reached Rome is disputed. It gives us contemporaneous reason to place Ailbe and his interests in the story before the famous later clash. When he went to the Lateran council in 1215 he had both a grievance and experience of trying to obtain a hearing above the authority of a powerful neighbour.B8U

It was now time for people in England to argue in earnest about the grace of kings, access to courts, the place of the church and the kind of security one could require from a man who broke his word. The English crisis was to acquire a charter much better known than the earl's grant to a town on the Nore. William would appear at Runnymede with reason to know what a charter could do and what kind of thing its clauses might leave out. He had also had the experience of arguing with

a king about what remained to a father when a king chose the movements of his sons. In Leinster there was a bishop preparing to put to a pope a question which the English settlement on its own terms could scarcely answer. What redress could a man expect when it was William Marshal who claimed the right to keep what he had taken?



CHAPTER 15

The meadow between Windsor and Staines

About the illumination

Magna Carta allowed a widow to remain in her husband's house for forty days while her dower was assigned.

Historical source B8V

Visual exemplar B8W

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

A monk looking for King John at the end of May 1215 found William Marshal instead. The monk had come from Bury St Edmunds. His house had been trying for years to get a new abbot acknowledged. The earl of Warenne was at Staines with the Marshal, and so was a man who had looked after the abbey's property for the king. Here was the right company for an anxious monk. A bridge crossed the Thames at Staines. Upstream stood the royal castle at Windsor. Downriver lay London, which the rebels now held. Before the field at Runnymede acquired its great name, people were going thereabouts to get business done.B8X

A vacancy suited people who would lose either office or income when the new man took possession. The abbey had been without an acknowledged abbot for nearly three and a half years. Hugh of Northwold had been elected in August 1213. On 9 June 1215 the abbot-elect saw both the king and Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, at Windsor. He was told to come back the next day to the meadow between Windsor and Staines. He waited. When John finally received him, the king kissed him in peace and invited him to dinner. A chronicler interested in Bury tells us what happened at table. Another of the monastery's officers appealed to John, and John swore in anger. On 11 June the king ordered the men administering the abbey to recognise Hugh. For the monks who wanted Hugh in office, this was what the great negotiations had achieved. A command went out, the keepers had to give way and at last there would be an abbot.B8Y

The monk's errand puts William by the river. He had happened upon the earl while looking for the king. The abbey's tenants and keepers had lived with the consequences of the vacancy for years.

What did a royal demand look like at home, on a baron's own estate? A baron could have much to complain of even if he never set foot on a battlefield. An eldest son could reckon with some precision the income of the lands which he expected to inherit; what would he have to pay to enter them when his father died? A man who left a daughter and no son could calculate what her marriage would be worth to an ambitious neighbour; what would become of her and of his estates if she were still a child? A lord who owed the Crown the service of a number of knights needed to know when the king would demand money in place of service. Those questions had put men and women at John's disposal all through the adult life of William Marshal. They concerned the future of his own children. His eldest son William now stood among men prepared to fight over them.[B8Z]

On the king's side of the argument were claims which his father and brother had exercised before him. The Crown could scarcely defend its remaining lands across the water or attempt to recover the others without men's service and money. William knew the cost of a lost castle and had fought in the campaigns which accounted for the loss. In July 1214 John had withdrawn from La Roche-aux-Moines near Angers before the army of Prince Louis. Later that month his northern allies were defeated at Bouvines, near Lille, by Louis's father, Philip Augustus. John's half-brother, the earl of Salisbury, was among Philip's prisoners. In England the king still expected men who had stayed at home to pay scutage, the money demanded in place of knight service. They had to find the money for an expedition which had failed to recover the lands for which it was undertaken. When his English opponents withheld obedience, they held the means of raising and paying the army over his head. John still commanded men who could take an opponent's castle, other men who could stop his ships, clerks who could order a sheriff to seize his land. Both sides were equipped to make the other poor.[B9A]

In January John had already asked William and Roger Bigod to issue safe conducts in their own names. Men who had brought their grievances to London could attend the king's court at Northampton after Easter and return under protection. The man who lived farthest away was to have time to get all the way home. Bigod would join the rebels. In January his written assurance and William's were both wanted.[B9B]

In the days before the June settlement John's whereabouts can at times be followed day by day. A letter of 9 June went under his smaller private seal because the great seal was away. The truce was about to expire. On the tenth the royal party

extended it until Monday the fifteenth, and the earl of Salisbury and other commanders received instructions to observe it. The barons' demands survive in a document known as the Articles of the Barons. The king put his seal to them. Historians have disagreed about the day. The truce, the Bury chronicler's account of Hugh meeting John in the meadow on the tenth, and the changes visible between the articles and the charter make a good case that negotiations over a sealed set of terms were already under way before the fifteenth. The chronicler recorded Hugh's invitation to dinner. In doing so he preserved a date the royal rolls do not supply.B9C

Magna Carta gives its place and date as Runnymede, 15 June 1215. John speaks in his own name. The man who had arranged marriages, charged heirs and held hostages speaks for his heirs as well as for himself. The opening records counsel received. Stephen of Canterbury is there, other bishops, religious men, officers, the earl of Salisbury who was John's half-brother, and William Marshal, earl of Pembroke, among others. That places the Marshal on the side of the king who grants. His name tells us whose counsel John claimed. The charter records none of William's words. Earls and churchmen whose names stood at the head could be asked what they had advised when the king failed to keep a promise.B9D

Some of the people the charter concerns can be brought into view without inventing any. Start with a widow. She was to be able to remain in her husband's house for forty days after his death while her share was assigned to her. She should not pay for the dower already due. A woman who wanted to remain unmarried was to be safe from compulsion to marry, provided she gave security against marrying without appropriate consent. If her land was held of the king, the consent was his. An English lord of great estate who had just lost his sister's husband could see several sides to this. The dead man's people would want his land and his fortresses in trustworthy hands. The woman would want her income, her house and some power over where she spent the rest of her life. The charter had particular words for the place where she could sleep while these people came to terms. It also preserved the right of an overlord to object to her next choice.B9E

Now take a guardian. He could draw an income during a minority. He was to leave behind something the heir could live on. He had to keep up the buildings and the equipment of the estate out of the proceeds, and hand the land over stocked to a reasonable level. Giving away a wardship was an established way of paying a useful man. The difference between paying him and allowing him to strip a working estate could be measured in ploughs. An earl who had acquired land by a royal marriage could hardly be indifferent to its future. Nor could the people who had made the last harvest and would have to make the next. The charter gave some of those people far less say than it gave their young lord. Even within the clauses often cited

as early promises of equality, an officer assessing a monetary penalty called an amercement had to leave a merchant his trading stock and a villein his means of husbandry. A villein was an unfree tenant. An officer knew whom he was assessing.[B9F]

There was a concession for a person trying to bring a case in court. Certain ordinary pleas were to be heard in a fixed place. A royal household travelled, and William had spent much of a lifetime travelling with one. Hunting for justice becomes appreciably more expensive when one has to find the court first. Other proceedings concerning possession and inheritance were to come to the counties, with royal justices and local knights hearing them. Officers were to be appointed who knew the law and meant to keep it. Merchants and Londoners had interests which could be affected by a sheriff's orders before anyone got near a courtroom. Barons had dependants of their own who might hope to benefit from some of the restraints on their lords which those lords were imposing upon John. Towards the close, the charter required laymen and clerics alike to observe towards their men the liberties which concerned them. Nobody at Runnymede had the means to ensure that happened in every lordship.[B9G]

Among the great questions at issue was whether a man could have his lands taken on the king's mere say-so. William's bitter experience under John gave this question particular force. John promised that a free man could not be seized, imprisoned or dispossessed except by lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land. Another provision dealt with losses already suffered. Those whom John had deprived of land, a castle, a liberty or a right without lawful judgment of their peers were to get it back. If there was a dispute, the twenty-five barons charged with keeping the peace would judge it. There was also a way of bringing a new breach before the king. Four of the twenty-five were to notify John or, if he was out of the kingdom, his justiciar. The king or justiciar would have forty days from notification to put it right. After that, the twenty-five and their supporters could take his goods, his castles and his lands to compel him to honour his grant. They had to spare the king himself, his wife and his children. Once the matter was put right, ordinary obedience was to resume.[B9H]

There had been no shortage in William's life of people willing to take castles from a king. Here the king authorised subjects to do it and promised to allow others to swear to help them. To the lord of a disputed castle, the passage from obedience to lawful seizure and back again might be difficult to distinguish from the ordinary course of a private war. Imagine the question from a castellan's position, for men in that office would have to answer it. On which person's showing could he be sure the forty days had run? Who would hold a disputed property until the grievance was

satisfied? Where would he find protection if he yielded to the twenty-five and the king later came back in arms? The barons' security clause addressed an obvious weakness of the king's earlier promises. It also went a long way towards making it unsafe for a man sworn to John to keep defending a royal stronghold against John's enemies.B9J

The Welsh had their own reckoning to make of an English king's promises. Llywelyn of Gwynedd had lost lands and given hostages. The charter required John to give up Llywelyn's son, restore hostages from Wales and return the charters pledged as securities for a peace. Grievances over land would be handled according to the locality, using Welsh law, English law or the law of the March. Men in the March, the border lordships in which William was a great proprietor, knew how much might be at stake in deciding where a claim belonged. What the king had done in his reign was distinguished from what Henry II or Richard had done; for some of their takings, John, who had taken the cross, claimed the respite due a crusader. A Welsh ruler who recovered his child would have received something very different from a claimant who found the delay over his grandfather's lands prolonged. The precise promises explain why people with an interest in this settlement might carry away quite different expectations of it.B9K

Stephen Langton had helped bring the opponents to the same patch of ground. For the Church, freedom of ecclesiastical elections had practical consequences of the sort the abbot of Bury knew. For the pope, John's status was equally practical. John had already resigned his kingdoms of England and Ireland and received them back from the papacy as its vassal. He had the protection due a man pledged to go on crusade. The bargain of Runnymede envisaged the organised coercion of a ruler who owed fealty to the pope. It contained John's undertaking that he would obtain nothing from anyone that might undo his concessions. The king could renounce an appeal. Whether he could prevent his overlord judging the bargain on his own authority was another matter.B9L

The peace was to run from Friday, 19 June. Chancery records show the Crown preparing to make it work. In Gloucestershire the sheriff had instructions about land taken from Roland Bloet. In Wiltshire knights were appointed to hear a long-delayed homicide case. Orders went out for prisoners to be freed and payments exacted from enemy land to cease. A letter announced the peace, and the sheriffs had to arrange oaths and elections. One such original, for Gloucestershire and dated on the twentieth, survives at Hereford Cathedral. The man charged with carrying the news into that county was Engelard de Cigogné. He or his associates had served John so conspicuously that the charter singled him out among those to be removed

from office. There could hardly be a better instance of a new order having to employ the men who knew how to operate the old one.B9M

In the following days smaller interests made their appearance in the orders. A man was to recover land at Begbroke, in Oxfordshire, which had been taken by the king's will. Another man had a claim which required consideration before anybody was put back in possession. Eudo Arsic was to have the use of his market in Norfolk. A rival market nearby could pull the business away even from someone who was entirely secure in the possession of his own ground. Hostages were to be released, including relatives of men who had been in trouble since before the barons' uprising. Officials worked through these cases while John continued to go between Windsor and Runnymede. The grants which he made to his own supporters in the same days show the other business of peacemaking. A king cannot promise every disputed thing to the man who left it and to the man who has held it for him since.B9N

The barons still held London. Under a separate agreement they should yield it by the middle of August if John did what he had promised. Langton had custody of the Tower under the arrangement. By the time the feast of the Assumption came on 15 August, the prospects for the handover were poor. John was asking the archbishop for Rochester, the stronghold on the Medway which watched a principal road from London towards the Channel. Langton had every reason to take his responsibilities as custodian seriously. John wanted control of a castle at the point where he could expect trouble from London or from a force landing in Kent. The August deadline brought the difficulty into plain view. Men who had promised to guarantee the peace now had to decide who would control a fortress if the peace failed.B9P

In August Pope Innocent III annulled the charter. The baronial pressure put upon John and the rights of his papal overlord mattered to that decision. William's son, bound up with the baronial opposition, could remember the charter as an agreement the Crown was bound to keep. His father could remain with John while accepting the counsel to which he had lent his name. A monk in the Low Countries or a clerk interested in men from there could see further difficulties. The contemporary writer known as the Anonymous of Béthune ranked the charter's provisions as he thought they ought to be ranked. Its promise concerning unequal marriage seemed to him relatively easy to accept. He pictured the twenty-five directing the king's business, an expansion of the specific machinery the document describes. In his telling John accepted the demands before consulting his brother and the Flemings who supported him. His attention to the terms which affected their employment makes the charter read differently again.B9Q

At Rochester the garrison went to war. William d'Aubigny and other knights on the baronial side held the castle. After weeks of operations John's miners were working under the keep. On 25 November the king sent to Hubert de Burgh at Dover for forty very fat pigs, the ones least fit to eat. He wanted them to make a fire beneath the keep. Burning fat could help set fire to the timbers supporting the mine. The order tells us what John intended. Rochester guarded the road from London where it crossed the Medway. In the Thames estuary the king's galleys were interfering with London shipping, although an approved merchant could still get through. These were instruments a king could continue to employ after his charter had failed, and quite a number of people who had never sworn to the barons would lose money, their food supply or their safety on account of them.B9R

While John was besieging Rochester, the rebels in London were already looking across the Channel. The Anonymous of Béthune says the earls of Winchester and Hereford went to offer Louis the crown in return for his help. John took Rochester but London remained in his enemies' hands. Philip of France's son had a wife of English royal blood, a name of his own as a commander and men who stood to gain by backing him. His invitation offered more security to the opposition than a promise from John, provided he could get across and provided that the people who wanted his help continued to want him for their ruler. When the Marshal next had to help a king give his word about the liberties of England, he would have to contend with another man already claiming to be that king.B9S



CHAPTER 16

A king in Gloucester

About the illumination

Henry III took the coronation oath at Gloucester on 28 October 1216. He was nine years old.

Historical source B9T

Visual exemplar B9U

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

Two arrivals on the Kent coast in May 1216 changed the possibilities for William Marshal. Prince Louis crossed the narrow sea and landed on the Isle of Thanet. Cardinal Guala Bicchieri, a northern Italian sent by Pope Innocent III, came ashore at Romney. John went to meet the cardinal. A contemporary French-speaking chronicler sets the two arrivals almost against one another. The prince brought as much armed support as would fit aboard his ships. The cardinal had the right to speak for the pope. In the following autumn those two different kinds of reinforcement would decide whether there was to be another king in John's family.B9V

Louis came to England with an invitation from English barons and a claim through his wife. His father was Philip Augustus of France. Blanche of Castile, his wife, was a granddaughter of Henry II of England. The barons already held London. The prince himself had to risk the Channel, and the consequences of defying Rome were his. Many English families had risked their fortunes to bring Louis over. Other Englishmen fought against him alongside men from the Continent. One reason it was so difficult to conclude this war was that a man could cross to the other side without going near the sea.B9W

The arrival of Louis had an immediacy for the people watching the coast which it could never have for anyone reading the political claims. The writer usually known as the Anonymous of Béthune tells us that John at first took the approaching vessels for his own. Once Louis had disembarked, the king rode off. The men whose service in John's army particularly interested the chronicler were angry at having to follow him. They included Robert de Béthune, after whose family the anonymous writer is named. In the story the king makes almost no headway in rallying the men on the beach, although his trumpets sound and he rides up and down. Robert's people, by

contrast, appear eager to distinguish themselves. The account lets us see a retreat which must have been thoroughly dispiriting to John's troops. It also lets us hear the particular people who minded being counted among those who had run away.[B9X]

John left Hubert de Burgh at Dover. He was his justiciar, a minister who could act in the king's absence, and he could hold a fortification. The Dover garrison included men from Flanders and elsewhere across the water. What they defended was the practical possibility of the king receiving some of his supplies and reinforcements across that same water. Dover's great tower and its walls commanded the channel of approach to the port. The walls themselves could be thrown down. At the northern entrance Louis's men mined under one of the gate towers, which collapsed far enough to let some of the attackers through. The garrison drove them out and filled the breach with timbers and heavy stakes. One section of the narrative names dead or dying men from across the water and tells where their bodies were sent for burial. An invading army had merchants, families, burial places and commitments behind it. Every season it stayed in England it had to keep connections with them open.[B9Y]

In London the barons received Louis as king. He went without a coronation. One of the great strengths of John's supporters was the ability to muster senior English churchmen. The papacy had registered its opposition to Louis's project. Prelates had interests in cathedral estates, castles, money and servants throughout disputed territory, and decisions about whether to obey a sentence of excommunication could divide a cathedral as completely as possession of the town and the castle could divide a city. A defender of John's regime might wish to see the prince deprived of the sacraments. A man whose son was in Louis's army would have a compelling reason to want the Church to make peace with it. London gave Louis a base. When Alexander, king of Scots, came south, Louis went to meet him at Canterbury and brought him back to the army before Dover. The next day, according to the Anonymous of Béthune, Alexander did homage. The writer says it was for Lothian.[B9Z]

For William the division extended to his eldest son. The younger William had a substantial future to protect if his father died, which did nothing to remove the pressures of present loyalty. The father had learned that inherited land could be put in jeopardy by the king; the son had lived through John's handling of the family and had been a hostage. Now the father stood by John. The Anonymous of Béthune names the younger William among the men who did homage to Louis at Rochester. Later, finding another man serving as marshal of Louis's army, William went to the prince and claimed the office by inheritance. He also claimed Marlborough Castle. When Louis offered it to Robert of Dreux if he could take it, William left the army

for Wales. The chronicler insists that he still kept faith with Louis. Whatever the father and son may have said to each other in private, it took more than a quarrel over a castle to bring them back to the same side.C2A

King John died at Newark in October. A last testament survives, made on the eighteenth. Among the matters it deals with are burial, the disposal of his possessions, payments and restitution, and the help due his children. The earl Marshal was among those upon whose good offices John relied. John was buried at Worcester, as he had wished. The Anonymous of Béthune, informative about men serving on either side, sends him to Winchester for burial. He makes William responsible at John's request for the elder boy Henry, while the younger, Richard, was committed to another man. The poem made for the Marshal's family also conveys a dying appeal on the son's behalf. Its John acknowledges injuries he had done the Marshal and asks his forgiveness. William was elsewhere. He could only have heard about such an appeal from a person who had been with the king. The two accounts give some reason to believe that John wanted William to protect his son. Their agreements do not make the apology a letter which the king can be shown to have dictated.C2B

The young Henry was at Devizes. In the poem his father's servants called for him and William went to meet him near Malmesbury. The boy was brought up to the earl by Ralph of Saint-Samson. He commended himself to William, who gave him his word. Both wept, and so did the people who heard them. The poet is especially good at placing adult fighting men in the presence of a child. It had been done before with a hostage boy in the hands of King Stephen. Now it was Henry whose future depended on what an older man would do. Ralph of Saint-Samson, whose contribution might otherwise be easily missed, had the child in his arms and brought him safely to the meeting. We need imagine neither what the road looked like nor a precocious king inventing a set speech. Men who had lost their master had to decide into whose keeping to deliver a nine-year-old. Henry's journey out from a defended place into the middle of a civil war is moving enough.C2C

William had helped make a king before. Henry II's eldest surviving son had received a crown while Henry II still exercised government. A great deal of William's early life had been spent in the company of that other Henry, who had looked in vain for the means to be as much of a king as his coronation proclaimed him. The family poet has William give both young men knighthood. In his telling there were people at Gloucester to point out how singular it was that anyone should perform that service twice for a king. The Anonymous assigns the knighting at Gloucester to the legate. What both accounts take seriously is the need to turn a boy under protection into a public person who could command the allegiance of men

old enough to be his grandfather. The last time William had seen a boy and his claim to kingship come apart, no undertaking about the future had been able to hold them together.C2D

Neither Westminster nor Canterbury could conveniently furnish the ordinary setting and personnel. On 28 October Henry was crowned in the abbey church at Gloucester. In relating the service the family poet gives Guala the crowning. Roger of Wendover names Peter des Roches, the bishop of Winchester, as the prelate who did it in the legate's presence. Too much confidence has been expended on saying what the improvised crown looked like and whose possessions it came from. Modern writers have arranged different accounts of the ceremony into a single series of actions in which the legate authorised, the bishops performed the rite, and the result suited established practice as well as it could. The people who wrote the surviving accounts took different reputations home with them. All the witnesses that matter here establish the public crowning. There was a king in Gloucester before there was a great seal to send his name through his kingdom.C2E

The king was expected to promise justice, good laws and the protection of the Church. Even the Church had more than one kind of claim upon him. England and Ireland were held of the pope by an arrangement made in his father's time. Guala could accept a king's fealty to the Roman Church in the same building in which the Church's ministers helped to set the king above his subjects. To some of those present the great advantage of the ceremony must have consisted in what Henry could not yet have done. Whatever wrongs John had committed against the people now with Louis had been done before this king was old enough to command a single castle. It was possible to swear obedience to him without remembering a broken promise which he himself had made. The difficulty came the next morning. A bishop could anoint a child king; he could scarcely charge the child with the decisions that would have to be taken to keep him one.C2F

The family story makes William slow to take that charge. He wanted Ranulf, earl of Chester, to have a say in the matter. He spoke of his years. Alone later with his own trusted men, he compared the responsibility to putting to sea beyond sight of shore or any sounding of the bottom. John of Earley takes an important speaking part in what follows. He observes that if all Henry's strongholds went to Louis and William had to take his ward into exile in Ireland, he might still win great honour by standing by him. Even in defeat, Earley argues in the poem, William could still protect the boy. William was lord of Irish lands and Irish ports; that last suggestion in the mouths of men of his household makes practical as well as moral sense. The words were remembered and written at a time when nobody living needed to be

persuaded that the venture had succeeded. We have no means of knowing precisely which part of that assurance Earley could give his lord on the night.C2G

They were asking William to exercise powers nobody in the company could wield alone. William was described as ruler of the king and the realm. He did not become king, did not take over the justiciar's office from Hubert de Burgh and did not acquire every duty of the adults in whose company Henry lived. Ranulf of Chester commanded men and resources of his own. Peter of Winchester had custody and educational responsibilities. Guala carried authority into dioceses where an earl's family or a royal writ might accomplish very little. Whatever the precise moment at which his colleagues agreed upon William, the Bristol council and charter of November give us a regency in existence. Much of his real work would consist of persuading men who held a castle, a child or a debt to acknowledge the difference between possession and the right to keep it.C2H

At Bristol on 12 November the new government reissued the liberties his father had granted roughly seventeen months before. Henry's government could have sent out a demand for obedience. Instead they gave John's opponents a reason to change sides. Speaking in Henry's name, they renewed concessions that included an heir's rights in land and limits on penalties for certain offences. Prelates, earls and others lent their names. It lacked the security clause which authorised the twenty-five barons to seize the king's property. The ending acknowledged that large and difficult questions remained to be considered. Expelling officers and reassigning contested claims wholesale would have deprived this infant government of men whom it needed for the war. Allowing an armed committee to distrain a child whose lands were already being taken would have left the defence of the Crown in an awkward position.C2J

The document achieved more by indicating what Henry's followers were prepared to concede immediately. People who had joined the opposition over royal wrongdoing were no longer required to identify the restoration of their liberties with the success of Louis. People who had risked their lives for John were allowed to make those concessions as the counsellors of his heir. If the new king had possessed his own great seal, completing the charter would still have required someone to authorise its use. In the actual circumstances William and Guala gave their own seals to authenticate the king's grant. Starting with the regency, instead of starting with John at Runnymede, makes a difference to one's understanding of the charter's survival. The old king's opponents were capable of compelling concessions. His former supporters could preserve important parts of the settlement when compelled by the same civil war to offer terms their fellow subjects might find attractive.C2K

The one original which survives is at Durham, with both seals gone. Two copies preserved in the French royal archives suggest another audience which had cause to take the terms seriously. David Carpenter, studying the two side by side, found that the fuller of them, numbered 11, had left out a necessary word in the provision for widows. There should have been a word for dower. In a printed edition it had been silently put back. In the other Paris copy, number 31, a scribe made the same omission and then supplied the word above the line. Once the two copies had been compared the mistake could be read forward as a little passage of history: a copyist followed a text which had already slipped, caught the difficulty and corrected it. Carpenter thinks it possible that Louis carried copies to France on his return. No note in the document identifies the carrier. One has only to consider what Henry's concessions meant for the coalition in Louis's keeping to understand why they should be preserved in Paris.C2L

If the charter won men over it did not win them all at once. In December Louis gained Hertford and Berkhamsted. In the Anonymous's account he gave the first to Robert fitz Walter and the second to a lord from across the water. Others received Cambridge and Orford; Robert de Vere recovered Hedingham. One promise the rival government could offer its adherents consisted of the use of a place which its troops had just taken. That was apt to speak more forcibly than a parchment to a lord who had lost his tenants' service. Where his enemy failed to take a castle, the same policy faced a limit. Lincoln submitted to Louis. Its castle held out. Its custodian was a woman, Nichola de la Haye, who could claim by inheritance the office which put her there. William now had Henry's right, a promise of liberties and the help of Rome. He would need people like Nichola to turn those things into the means of winning a war.C2M



CHAPTER 17

The fair at Lincoln

About the illumination

In the Marshal family's account, Nicholaa de la Haye receives Peter des Roches inside Lincoln Castle while the besiegers are still at work.

Historical source C2N

Visual exemplar C2P

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

Nichola de la Haye had inherited the office of keeper of Lincoln Castle. A husband, sheriff or earl might have laid claim to her authority. The men who came to besiege her faced a more immediate difficulty. She knew how to defend the place. The author who followed the fortunes of the men of Béthune preserves the difference with admirable economy. Louis received the submission of Lincoln. The lady kept the castle. In picturing the approach of William Marshal's army in May 1217, begin on the inside of those walls. A considerable part of her town was in the hands of the men who were trying to break them.C2Q

Lincoln occupied a steep hillside above a river crossing. Castle and cathedral stood in the upper town. Roads, gates, walls and the bridge below channelled the movement of bodies of men in ways that a tidy plan of two armies drawn up on a plain could never show. The castle had a way to the outside. Its eastern side faced a town where it was possible to lodge troops and bring up engines to throw stones. Nichola's men could reach friendly troops approaching from outside the developed town; reinforcements admitted into the castle could shoot at besiegers who had not yet lost possession of the city gate. Because Nichola had held out, William's men could get inside the walls and attack the besiegers from the castle. It also made the people who lived on the route of a retreat particularly vulnerable.C2R

Before there was a force capable of coming to Nichola's aid, there had been a winter in which an English king in Gloucester and a French prince in London both claimed to dispose of English castles. Men who went over had something to bring. The younger William Marshal came back to Henry's side in the spring. William Longespée, the earl of Salisbury and the boy king's uncle, came back from Louis too. Occasions on which a man lost his estates or offered his allegiance usually occupied far fewer words in an official record than the long business of getting the estates

back. To either William returning must have looked different from what it looked like to a man who had never left. In a list of the commanders who came to Lincoln, the names William Marshal and William his son now stand next to one another. In an account taken a year earlier they might have stood on opposite sides of the page.C2S

The immediate movement towards Lincoln began elsewhere again. The royalists had been besieging Mountsorrel in Leicestershire. A relieving force came up from the south. The earl of Chester withdrew, and the men who had lifted the siege could strengthen the damaged works before deciding where to go next. One of the men at Lincoln, Hugh the castellan of Arras, urged that the French and English troops join in reducing the castle. Its fall, he said in the Anonymous's account, would greatly advance the interests of Louis. Some thought the movement sensible and others were unwilling to go. They went. We can look at what would have been in it for them. Ending a long resistance would give the northern barons relief from the enemy stronghold they had been besieging. It would also mean that a mixed army had marched still farther away from the prince for whom it had taken the field. William's opportunity arose because people in his opponents' camp had a decision of their own to make.C2T

The royalist leaders collected at Newark. Here the Church could put something into the field besides the liege lordship which the pope exercised over England. A large armed force committed itself to fighting for an anointed king against enemies the legate had excommunicated. At St Albans, Roger of Wendover remembered a body of men refreshed, confessed and encouraged for combat, and Guala in the vestments of his office. A man expecting to spend the next day breaking into a town had good reason to think about what the day might cost his soul. The grant of spiritual benefits gave the cause a claim on armed men outside a personal oath to Henry. The language of rebellion against both king and pope made it possible to class a man who remained in his church and celebrated mass in a hostile town as an enemy. That could make a considerable difference to the contents of his church when an army arrived.C2U

Wendover assigns the royalists four hundred knights and close to two hundred and fifty crossbowmen. He admits himself unable to count the other followers. The figures are worth keeping in their original categories. A knight was expensive and identifiable, usually mounted, apt to have someone in the other army who recognised his arms and interested in making himself known if his horse went down. A man shooting a crossbow required a different combination of equipment, skill and protection. A horse wounded in the flank beneath an armoured rider could change the odds on a stretch of narrow street very fast. The great lords could

identify the men who came under their own banners much more easily than they could know what happened to all who came on foot. Other estimates vary. The part of this army that could be counted made a much greater impression on the story than everybody who went to Lincoln that day.[C2V]

On Saturday, 20 May 1217, the royalists came up to Lincoln from the north-west. From that side they could get help into the castle. The old road network and the walls have been studied almost gate by gate. At first sight it should be possible to recover the whole attack from the poet and the monk between them. Kate Norgate, a historian of Henry III's minority, went carefully over their language and over the possible approaches. She thought the old, blocked city gate which one account describes was the west gate, and she arranged a second assault at the north gate alongside it. More recently archaeologists rediscovered a gateway on the southern side of the castle. Erik Grigg points out that Peter des Roches could more easily have worked under cover there than at the upper town's west gate, in front of the besiegers. The excavation gives the bishop another possible route. Even on the south side there is more than one candidate for the door the poet meant.[C2W]

The besiegers, for their part, had to decide how many royal troops were coming. In the accounts some of their leaders wanted to go out to meet the relieving army. Others thought there were more troops outside than appeared at first. One version makes the banners over the baggage look like another body of fighting men. A king's army put a considerable amount of valuable gear in the care of persons who had to be able to find their own company. Those banners were perfectly capable of misleading someone counting the enemy from a distance. It is in this part of the story that the family biographer stops. The people supplying his material did not all agree. If he tried to please each one, he says, he would make his history less trustworthy. That small admission, set in a history which can give polished dialogue to a child, deserves as much attention as a colourful detail of the charge. The facts about whether to come out or stay in were being disputed among people who belonged much closer to the fight than we do.[C2X]

An advance party got word from the castle. The account in the poem has John Marshal, the regent's nephew, meet Geoffrey de Serland, Nichola's man. A little door was available. Peter des Roches, the bishop of Winchester, appears in the same source looking over the ground for himself. He came in and spoke to the lady who had defended the place. Under fire from stone-throwers, people in the castle wanted the bishop out of the open space. He wanted to see what could be done in the town. What he found, in this version, was a gate which had been stopped with stone and mortar. Men could clear the way. The bishop who helped a child king get crowned was a man who could assess an obstructed entrance to a fortified town while an

enemy was using siege engines. A modern division of inspirational work to the priest and the practical work to the soldier would seriously underestimate the contribution he made.C2Y

Wendover remembered a different man at the critical point. Falkes de Bréauté was a fighter of relatively modest origin who had accumulated offices, a great position and personal enemies in John's service. He brought crossbowmen into the castle, where their bolts could reach the horses used by Louis's supporters below. A number of mounted men became men on foot. Falkes himself charged out and was almost lost in the press before his followers recovered him. His family had less lasting influence over the form in which an English audience would come to remember this battle than did the household which employed the poet. The two narrators agree where it matters most. The besiegers could not continue to concentrate on breaking one wall while the wall itself supplied a platform for an attack upon their men and their mounts.C2Z

William was in a hurry. In the poem the bishop wants scouts out, and a little more time to draw the army together. The Marshal calls for his helmet. In his eagerness to go forward he starts without it. A servant calls after him, his son waits and he fetches it. For a moment the old man is recognisable as the young knight too eager for his turn. A servant's shout saves him from his own haste, and his son is there waiting when he returns. The mistake brings him closer to the reader than the comparisons to swift birds which accompany the charge. By the time William reached the gate, Nichola had held the castle, his nephew had sought a way in and the bishop had examined an entrance. Even as William led the charge, troops in the castle were forcing the besiegers to face two ways.C3A

One of the most memorable participants in the family account is an unnamed man working a stone-thrower. As men approached him he took them for friends. In the poet's telling he put another stone in his machine, as if to show them how well he could work it. The men who came up behind killed him. We have no means of checking that little drama with a second engineer who saw it. It makes excellent sense of one of the dangers of the business. A man at a machine cannot stand looking over his shoulder and still perform the movements required to keep it at work; when the enemy is already in a town which his own army holds he may have no occasion to realise it until someone gets to him. The people who could afford helmets marked with identifiable arms had a better chance of being asked to surrender.C3B

Thomas, count of Perche, stood his ground. His death was the conspicuous noble death of the day and attracted the sort of story through which a man could become famous through fighting his friends' enemies. In the various tellings he refuses to

give in. A weapon gets to him through an opening at his eye. He continues long enough to strike William's helmet. The horse, its bridle, the removing of the count's helmet, and the sudden discovery that the young man was dead all figure in one or other account. The combined detail has been used to create the impression of watching a single duel blow by blow. Better to notice what each detail is doing. The Marshal came close enough to try to gain possession of a highly valuable prisoner. To kill such a man would have been both an irreparable loss of ransom and a thing to have to explain among people with ties to his family. In the household version William is concerned about the blame. An account which needs to distinguish the man who took hold of the bridle from the man who drove a weapon home is already talking about the consequences of the death.C3C

The fighting moved downhill. Father and son meet again in the poem and get on with the pursuit once each knows the other is sound. Men who had been climbing to recover the upper town now had to turn and get through the people behind them. A bridge narrowed the way. One of the young Marshal's men, the standard-bearer William Bloet, is said to have gone over with his horse, and to have got out. Farther along the road a cow blocked a gate. A jamming animal makes a delightful ending in a knight's story, but it also gives a sense of the helplessness of anybody at the back of a crowd concentrated upon its own escape. The poet is interested in named men who got away. The list of those taken is much more impressive. Saer de Quincy, the earl of Winchester, and his son Robert were prisoners. So was Robert fitz Walter, one of the principal men behind the baronial challenge to John. So were Gilbert de Clare and other barons who might otherwise have furnished Louis with another army.C3D

The Anonymous of Béthune takes care to commend the younger Quincy and to name the men who reached London. He remembers one captured knight, Hugh de Céret, getting free almost immediately with the help of friends in the other army. Crossing interests could be valuable at the moment when everybody else was trying to decide how great a ransom to set. The king's party required the noble captives to be taken away to secure custody. It made a great difference to the next round of negotiation whether a man who still controlled his partisans was sitting in London or held in a stronghold whose castellan awaited the government's decision. The captives' estates and their relatives provided several means of payment and persuasion. For the soldiers on foot trying to get away from Lincoln there was much less time to discuss the different prices they might fetch. Even Wendover reports people in the localities coming out armed against stragglers. He gives no names for most of the dead.C3E

What happened within Lincoln after the fighting has often been overshadowed by a nickname. The victors called the affair a fair. There was something to carry home. Wendover, who has spent a great part of his account explaining why the royalists had a just cause, describes the opening of chests and storerooms, to which men took axes and hammers. Rings, drinking vessels, clothing, gold and silver passed into the hands of the conquerors. Churches suffered with the private houses. A member of the cathedral staff was said to have lost an extraordinary sum; the number gives a better sense of local outrage than a safe estimate of liquid capital. The royalists understood, Roger says, that the legate regarded the hostile clergy as excommunicated. The expedition had been equipped and blessed to defeat an armed force. In victory its leaders had made the property of their king's subjects available to their followers.C3F

Among the possessions were goods which some inhabitants tried to take with them by water. Roger tells of women putting children, household servants and belongings into boats. People drowned. Rescue was evidently not the only business which took men to search in the water afterwards; the chronicler mentions recovered silver. His explanation of the drowning dwells on the women's supposed want of competence as boat handlers. It is an easy explanation to offer on dry land after a battle. He gives us running women with dependants, boats heavily loaded, their portable wealth and the imminence of an army taking what lay in its way. The weight of the boats' loads and the approach of the army are enough to explain the danger they faced on the water. We do not know their names, the names of the servants, the exact number of children who survived, or the names of men who had emptied those houses before the people who lived in them came back. Nothing tells us William saw the boats. For the families who took to the water, this too was the battle he had won.C3G

The royalist tellings have William taking the news to the king. The Anonymous follows it the other way. When the remnant from Lincoln reached London, news went from there to Louis, still engaged before Dover. There were days between the battle and the moment when the prince could act on it. On Thursday the twenty-fifth he learned what had happened. He discussed the position with his advisers and began to take down the great engine with which he had been attacking the castle. His people wanted him to wait a little longer to see what help might come from overseas. He could not yet calculate what a last ship might bring. For William and his colleagues the victory had secured a castle, put dangerous men in their custody and given the heir of King John a military success capable of changing other men's minds. For Louis, it had turned a siege on Kent's shore into a question about

how much longer he could afford to stay there. He still held London. His wife still had access to ships.C3H



CHAPTER 18

What peace cost

About the illumination

The Forest Charter of 1217 allowed a free man to drive his pigs through the king's own woods to feed them elsewhere.

Historical source C3J

Visual exemplar C3K

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

In the little ports around the Channel, people could decide the fate of men who were supposed to decide the fate of kingdoms. Earlier in 1217 Louis had set out to recover Rye. He needed to feed his force. Across the estuary from Rye stood Old Winchelsea, a port built on a shingle bank. Its townspeople broke up the flour mills, took their boats and crossed to Rye. The Winchelsea on the hill today was laid out on higher ground later in the century. The Anonymous of Béthune gives us the trouble this caused. There was grain the French could grind with hand mills, but there was a limit to what men could grind in time to feed an army. A boat could be the means of bringing food, evading an enemy, doing damage to his vessels and going back where he could not get at its occupants. If a lord wished to borrow a boat and the skills required to work it, he needed more from its owners than the recognition of his title.C3L

By the summer a second attempt on Dover had come to nothing. People in the Weald behind the coast harassed the men trying to bring provisions to Louis. His enemies called on this force of local men under William of Cassingham, whose name the French turned into a nickname tied to the Weald. The stories told about these encounters make the people who fought well for one side look like brigands to the other. The men who came with Louis saw boatmen and armed groups cut across their supply lines, then vanish into country they knew. Within the prince's own army a dispute over whether anyone was willing to do guard duty could develop into a contest in which a knight demonstrated the number of comrades willing to spend the night with him. At Winchelsea, it had taken more than the capture of a town to give an army shelter for the night or a meal for the morning. Louis might win the allegiance of a baron and still go hungry if the people who owned the mills and boats refused to help.C3M

After the defeat at Lincoln, Louis fell back on London. Men crossed over with a view to peace. Several Cistercian abbots took part in one attempt. A point at issue, in the Anonymous's account, was the future of four clerks who had stood by the prince. Among them were Simon Langton, the archbishop of Canterbury's brother, and the dean of St Paul's in London. They had preached to Londoners and told them what to believe about the spiritual position of the two parties. The writer has them explicitly challenging the pope's verdict. Their offences were of peculiar interest to Guala, who had committed papal authority to the campaign. The men had a strong claim to the loyalty of their prince. If Louis secured a pardon for the magnates by abandoning the people who had preached for him on public occasions, what would his promises to the next set of adherents be worth? If Guala let them stay in office on the prince's terms, what did that mean for those of the clergy who had obeyed him? There were perfectly good reasons for a summer of talks to fail even after one side had lost an important battle.C3N

The parties could hurt one another in other ways. As royal forces drew near London, Louis's followers made raids of their own. The men in one such expedition did very well in the country round Bury St Edmunds, the abbey which had expended such effort to secure a conclusion to its election dispute at Runnymede. A man such as the earl of Warenne could inform Louis in person that he would no longer serve him. Louis eventually moved from the bishop's house into the Tower. A Londoner with a warehouse and a family had reasons to keep faith with a prince who could protect the city, diminishing reasons to stand indefinitely by one who might cost the city a siege. The government in Henry's name enjoyed the advantage of offering Londoners terms from outside the walls. It did not yet have the means to dictate the answer.C3P

Across the Channel, Blanche of Castile was organising relief for her husband. Through her mother she belonged to the family whose succession the French expedition imperilled; Henry II had been her grandfather. The family connection gave her a claim worth discussing. Raising ships, winning commanders and gathering stores gave her a much more immediate influence. The Anonymous pictures her at Calais recruiting such men as Robert de Courtenay and Michel de Harnes. A force of armed men in transport had to share room with equipment and provisions. The number of sails someone on shore could see would have given a poor indication of the number of men aboard capable of fighting on arrival. The Channel was short enough to make a venture of this sort quite practicable and dangerous enough to return ships to ports they had already spent a fortune in leaving. Some of Blanche's ships had been driven back before the final crossing.

Every such delay gave the men at Sandwich time to get boats, people and information into place.C3Q

The poem made for the Marshal's son puts his father among the seamen, asking them to help, hearing their grievances against King John and undertaking that things will go better with the new king. It is exactly the kind of scene that a family which hoped to show how the father had saved the dynasty might remember. The regent needed men who owned ships and could sail them. Before they agreed to help, the poet gives them a chance to say what they had suffered under John. There is a second twist. He wants to go to sea, an experience the fighting man has not had in this form, and is told he will be needed if the enemy gets ashore. The poem leaves him a soldier without making him the captain in the sea fight to which it next devotes so much attention. The Anonymous has William go down to the coast as he learns that Blanche is preparing to send assistance. Neither account requires us to put his sword on the deck of a captured ship.C3R

The expedition sailed on 24 August, Saint Bartholomew's day. Its intended destination was the Thames, the water road to London. A vessel from the coast needed to round Kent into the estuary. People waiting at Sandwich, a port then much more directly on navigable water than a modern view of the coast might suggest, could intercept a fleet as it passed the Isle of Thanet. The Anonymous counted, or had been given counts of, the different kinds of vessels. He describes ships filled with supplies, ships with foot soldiers and ships with knights, some with raised fighting positions. It interested him that so many individually recognisable men went aboard with Eustace the Monk. The mariner was familiar with English as well as continental service. His experience allowed him to guide men towards England. It also meant that the people waiting for him knew who he was.C3S

Hubert de Burgh sailed. In the Anonymous's account William de Warenne stayed on land, although the ship flying his banner was one of the first to get alongside the vessel carrying Eustace and Robert de Courtenay. A glance up at an ensign from the deck of another ship would have been enough to make a knight present in a later account of an action at which he never ventured out of port. It is a nicely observed warning from a narrator who cared very much about the difference between a knight being there and somebody saying afterwards that he had been. Behind the banner there were sailors who had to bring the sides of two moving vessels together. Other ships managed to surround the one with the leading Frenchmen aboard. Once that had happened numbers of men and the height from which one could throw a stone mattered rather more than a knight's reputation on a horse.C3T

The account includes stones and powdered lime thrown down into men's eyes. What happened next divided the people aboard by something other than their

capacity to resist. Many armed men of standing were captured. Some might be worth money; an important prisoner could also serve as a go-between for his own people. Eustace was identified and beheaded. Béthune's writer attributes the killing to a sailor he names as Stephen Trabe, once an associate of the dead man. Other tellings look for the man who dealt the blow among other seamen. No agreed distribution of individual credit was necessary for the head to become a public object. The Anonymous describes its passage to Canterbury and display in the surrounding country. It could give a town which had only heard rumours of the battle something horribly tangible to recognise. It gave the family account a shore victory to place after the fighting in Lincoln's streets.C3U

Smaller craft were wrecked. The Anonymous reports that men taken in them were killed. In the same passage he places captured knights comfortably in custody ashore. There is no exact reckoning of all the people on the supply vessels. Some of the bigger ships got away. The result was decided by what failed to arrive in London. Whatever men and provisions went home with the surviving vessels, enough of the expedition had been lost, including men of sufficient distinction, to transform the negotiations. Notice reached Louis in London on Saturday evening. On Monday Robert of Dreux was given safe conduct for talks. Robert de Courtenay, a captive who only days before had set out to reinforce Louis, was able to speak to the prince while another man remained as security for his return. A man whom Blanche had sent to prolong the war was now helping both sides talk about ending it.C3V

William could have insisted on attempting to take London. The great aim of his government had been to prevent the establishment of a rival dynasty. There was now a way to get the rival out of the country while his men were still capable of defending the largest city in it. The poet assigns the appetite for another show of force to people who had stayed away from the coast when the work was dangerous. Others urge the Marshal to let the French go, even if it takes money, and offer to help him. That is the way an argument might later be told by an interested participant sure that he had done the right thing. People who had fought for Henry had been promised possessions and had their own claims against men on the losing side. Keeping what they had won would have afforded them excellent reasons for refusing an accommodation even if they had shown all the courage imaginable. If Marshal insisted on peace, there were friends to disappoint as well as enemies to conciliate.C3W

One of the longer meetings took place on an island in the Thames near Kingston. The chronicler who cared about the French side describes Louis consulting his remaining English barons and the people of London before going to it. By the

agreement of September he was to give back what he held in England and leave the country. Men who returned to Henry's allegiance were to recover the rights and estates which the war had cost them. Prisoners and the sums still due on older undertakings presented separate problems. The terms provided a route to reconciliation for most of the lay participants. The Church had its own jurisdiction. Guala still reserved the cases of the churchmen who had preached publicly for Louis. The public act of absolution that followed the agreement required another day and the appropriate ministers. A papal penitentiary, a cleric empowered to give absolution, went to London to attend to those who had not come to the island. Some who had supported Louis still needed the Church's permission to return to their work.C3X

Who paid for peace is one of the points on which the documents can do something chronicles cannot. Henry's government bound itself to make a payment to Louis. Ten thousand marks was the figure recorded in a letter to the pope. A mark was a unit of account worth two-thirds of a pound; it was not necessary to mint a mark for a clerk to add up what the government owed. William had pledged himself for the sum. There were also debts owing to Louis from towns and others under earlier bargains. A Flemish chronicler combines amounts totalling seventeen thousand marks. Other annalists give different figures. One has to distinguish the large payment due the prince as the price of peace from old obligations he was given leave to collect. In his name and on the security of an earl, a king still too young to act for himself had borrowed a substantial part of the means of getting his enemy to go home.C3Y

The brokers have left more to show for themselves than a place in a list of negotiators. Merchants from Saint-Omer helped make money available. Under the arrangements traced in the patent rolls they were to be repaid at named dates. Some payment was to come in wool and skins; default on delivery of the merchandise had its own financial consequence. If a king missed the ultimate deadline, goods could be held against the debt under agreed security. When William stood behind Henry's debt, the merchants gained the word of a man with estates and connections on both sides of the Channel. A nine-year-old king's promise alone could offer them less. For some of the king's subjects the cost would appear much closer to home. The permission to collect old debts for Louis meant that a town which opened its gates to Henry could still have an account to settle with its former lord.C3Z

In one chancery entry made later that month a precise Tuesday was identified as the day on which the peace had been made. Other sources place agreement near Kingston on 12 September and absolution on the thirteenth. Documents traditionally associated with Lambeth have variant dates, and the meetings and ratifications

occupied more than one place. The people setting a deadline in a particular prisoner's affairs had need of precision. When we say that the Treaty of Lambeth ended the war, what we mean is a series of undertakings in September that men subsequently put into effect at a number of places. Louis returned to France. Londoners no longer had to keep themselves safe under his protection, and the two parties now shared the responsibility of seeing that a king could keep the promises of restitution and liberty by which they had persuaded him to leave.[C4A]

In November there were two charters. Some concessions still in suspense after Bristol were given greater precision. The business of possession and inheritance remained in a charter of liberties derived from John's. Royal forests had become business enough to take a separate parchment. The distinction gave people a convenient way to speak of the greater charter. The term Magna Carta, the Great Charter, became a way of telling the main document from its forest companion. One could recite the great clauses about justice and leave out the terms on which people who lived inside a royal forest held and used woods, grazed animals and got goods to market. A king expected to honour both had promised much more than the continuation of a few memorable sentences from his father's reign.[C4B]

The Forest Charter says whose advice the king acted on. It names Guala and William, the earl who guided the king and kingdom, alongside prelates, earls and barons. Its ending explains the authentication by the two great men on a king's behalf. At Durham one can still see Guala's seal. William's seal is gone. It is this Durham Forest Charter that preserves part of the date: on the damaged parchment the letter looks like a Q, where an editor who supplied the sixth of November needed an S. The four surviving originals of the companion Great Charter give no day at all. William's movements appear to put him out of London on the fourteenth or fifteenth, dates which might fit the space. The other copies and records bring the sixth back into consideration. So do references to the chancellor, who in some copies gives what William and Guala seal. A clerk putting down the day he wrote out a grant might explain part of the difficulty. It is sufficient here to know that the charters belong to November, that they were authenticated in Henry's name, and that Guala's wax still hangs at Durham without William's beside it.[C4C]

A royal forest could include privately held woods. To put woodland under forest law was to give the king's officials rights to regulate hunting and the things on which the game depended. To take land out of that jurisdiction did not mean felling trees. The new charter distinguished the woodland a king actually held as his own from woodland over which his grandfather, father or uncle had extended protection for game. Men outside the forest were to be spared some summonses into its courts. Certain officials would still meet on a schedule fixed in relation to the seasons in

which animals fed and bred. The king would still keep woods of his own. Elsewhere, rights to pasture that had previously been enjoyed were to be respected. Before we take a clause as a general declaration of human liberty, it is worth finding out exactly whom the king had asked his forester to leave alone.C4D

A free man with pigs to feed could lead them through the king's own woodland on the way to suitable forage. If they spent one night in the royal forest, that alone should cost him nothing. A man taking venison, on the other hand, could find himself heavily fined, or, if he lacked the means, imprisoned for a year and a day. The charter put an end to the loss of life or limb for that offence; even on the new terms, a poor convicted man unable to obtain the required sureties at the end of imprisonment faced going into exile. An earl or a bishop travelling through the forest had another sort of privilege. He might take a beast or two, under the forester's supervision if the forester were there, otherwise with the sounding of a horn to show he was acting openly. The distance between taking a deer openly and taking one for which one might go to prison was in part the distance between being an earl and having to find a man who would stand surety for you.C4E

Woods supplied timber, bark, charcoal, animals and grazing. Who could exact a fee from someone carrying goods through the bailiwick, the district for which a forest officer was responsible? Specific rules limited what might be collected and from whom; the charter distinguished a cart from a loaded horse, an outside merchant from a local person, and officers entitled to collect from those who were not. It also gave the free man who made a mill or dug a pond on his own protected ground an entitlement subject to the harm it might do to neighbours. These restrictions and liberties had consequences for how much a load cost when it reached a buyer and how a landholder could make his property yield an income. The young king's advisers had framed terms which a sheriff could announce before witnesses in his county court. Whether the terms were observed depended on what happened the next time a forester met a cart on a road and asked for money.C4F



CHAPTER 19

A kingdom in trust

About the illumination

Ailbe, bishop of Ferns, was ordered to suspend his plea over church land claimed by William Marshal. The royal letters were issued in April 1218.

Historical source C4G

Visual exemplar C4H

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

At Newark a man who had fought for the king refused to move out of a castle. The place belonged to Hugh of Wells, bishop of Lincoln, and it had been in royal use during the war. King John had died there. Robert de Gaugy, whom the Anonymous of Béthune places among the royalist commanders when the army went to relieve Lincoln, had charge of Newark. He had a garrison; he also had a claim for money. For a considerable time the money and the men proved of more consequence than the commands issued in the young king's name. In the summer of 1218, less than a year after Louis had left England, William was preparing to besiege one of his own side.C4J

The sequence can be followed in letters and orders. An instruction of June 1217 promised that any proper claim Robert could establish would be satisfied on his delivering the castle. He still held it in July; there was to be a hearing before the king at Oxford in August. In October he agreed in the king's presence to hand it over for the bishop. There was an oath, a deadline of forty days and provision against the damage his men might do to the bishop's people and possessions in the meantime. It followed that the Crown, the bishop and Robert could all leave the meeting with a public agreement to which they could appeal. People trying to get into Newark after the forty days were up would have found that it still contained Robert and his men. In January 1218 custody arrangements were altered. In March the sheriff of Nottingham was ordered to help turn him out. It took until July for miners to be summoned from Gloucestershire and the king's men assembled at Stamford.C4K

The king and William came up to Newark. Supplies for a siege were requisitioned. They moved away again while arrangements were made. According to the account reconstructed by Kate Norgate from the records and the chronicles, Robert's men approached the bishop, and the bishop agreed to pay a hundred

pounds for the contents in provisions of the place he wanted to recover. The formal delivery was made into the king's hand, and custody went through another bishop under the legate's direction. The Anonymous of Béthune reduces this prolonged affair to the bishop's complaint and William's successful armed action. That was how it might look from outside. A substantial part of a castle's history had gone into the difference between being able to say that its keeper had surrendered it and being able to put anybody else in his place. The bishop himself had to pay for provisions before he could possess again a stronghold of his own church.C4L

Even when a former rebel recovered his land, the goods on it might still be disputed. In December 1218 William of Huntingfield came before the justices at Lincoln with a claim against Nicholaa de la Haye, the woman who had held the castle for Henry. During the war she had received custody of his forfeited Lincolnshire estates. Now he claimed she had taken goods worth more than £273 after the peace. They settled for thirty marks of silver.C4M

On the western side of England, the question was who could promise to give land back at all. From the point of view of men who had welcomed Louis, the peace of September 1217 provided a means by which a former enemy might recover what he had possessed before the civil war. From the point of view of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, prince of Gwynedd, news of a bargain on an island in the Thames was an invitation to discuss terms. He already controlled lands which had been in dispute with King John and could call other Welsh rulers to a common enterprise. The offer which went out to the Welsh through the agreement with Louis needed a separate arrangement with the man who had the power to make it good in Wales. Nearly six months passed between the peace in England and the agreements at Worcester in March 1218.C4N

It was perfectly possible to speak about Wales at Runnymede and Lincoln and never really grasp what had happened there. John's opponents in England had found allies in Wales. In 1215 Llywelyn and other princes took important strongholds in the south-west, including the royal castles at Cardigan and Carmarthen. In 1216 at Aberdyfi he presided over a division of Deheubarth among heirs of the Lord Rhys. He displaced Gwenwynwyn in southern Powys when Gwenwynwyn went back to John. Reginald de Braose's accommodation with Henry's party in 1217 had precipitated fresh campaigning. These were events which altered relations among Welsh rulers. Some changes served Llywelyn's claims to leadership better than they served the prospects of another Welsh prince. For the regent the central political fact in 1218 was that someone else was in possession of the two castles. For Llywelyn it mattered who would be entitled to receive the allegiance of the men who had helped him to win them.C4P

The documents preserved on the English rolls are three letters patent issued by Llywelyn. Letters patent were open documents intended to make a grant or undertaking known. We have no reciprocal set issued by the king. Huw Pryce, who edited the acts of the Welsh rulers, has drawn attention to what changes if these are read as instruments made by a prince on a particular occasion rather than as a victory announcement for an English ruler. In one the prince undertakes to secure the return of the castles and other lands and to see that the magnates of Wales give their allegiance to Henry. No one could exact such a promise from Llywelyn without admitting that he had substantial power over other men. The king's side nevertheless intended those men to render their homage to the king. Nothing here recognised a general right in the prince to stand between them and England.C4Q

Another of the documents says that Guala, acting for the king, has entrusted the two castles to Llywelyn until Henry comes of age. It calls the prince the king's bailiff, a man holding office on someone else's behalf. Four pledges are given, and there is an oath upon relics. Under one undertaking Llywelyn promised the return of the castles. Under the other he could stay in possession of them on Henry's behalf. A man who wanted to vindicate the rights of his young king had very good reason to emphasise that an office was being conferred upon him. From the prince's standpoint the same transaction meant keeping two extraordinarily valuable fortresses and their revenues and relinquishing them to nobody on the day. His ambition to obtain the homages of Welsh princes for his own successor would outlive the men who made the agreement. A historian is not obliged to choose between a real gain for the prince and a real limit imposed upon his plans. Both can be seen in the words on the roll.C4R

One Welsh claimant could take rather less satisfaction from Worcester. The Lord of Caerleon, Morgan ap Hywel, wished to recover his place. In the account produced for William's children he has broken the peace, and William's men have taken his land. Llywelyn puts Morgan's case. If other men who had supported Louis could recover what had been theirs, why should this man lose his lordship? William in the poet's account is willing to consult. Those present hold that the breach of peace made a difference and he is entitled to retain what has been taken. The poet credits the prince who intercedes with honourable behaviour. Morgan receives much less consideration. He has no poet here to explain what breach of his own rights lay behind his fighting, or what a general offer of restoration might have led him to expect. As regent William could help conclude peace on the frontier. As a Marcher landholder he had retained an important gain. The versifier's insistence that others considered the merits and found in his favour is one of the most interesting things about the defence.C4S

Across the Irish Sea, William's powers as regent bore directly on a claim against him. Ailbe Ó Máelmuaid, bishop of Ferns, sought the return of land he said belonged to his church. The question for the earl concerned his land, the rights he claimed through it and the consequences of allowing a claim to be heard. Ailbe had already had a hearing from Innocent III in 1215. The archbishops of Dublin and Tuam were to press the earl for the return of the bishop's possessions on pain of excommunication; an interdict would bear on the land. Royal favour could not in itself make the spiritual penalty against an obstinate lord go away. Innocent and John both died. Their successors were a pope who wanted the young Henry established and a king who owed his establishment in great part to William Marshal. Ailbe still had a claim. Its prospects had altered.C4T

On 18 April 1218 a letter in Henry's name forbade the archbishops of Dublin and Tuam and the bishop of Clogher to go ahead with Ailbe's plea over the disputed holdings. Ailbe himself was to refrain from prosecution. Two days later Henry instructed the justiciar of Ireland to order the judges and the bishop to appear before the king if they ignored the prohibition. The letter gave a reason. William held the disputed land from Henry. If another man challenged his right to hold it, William could call on Henry to defend his title. Henry was a child. The government argued that he was too young to answer for a grant that might bind him when he grew up. For William this meant keeping the king's protection. For the time being, the Church's judges could not hear Ailbe's case. A bishop who had got his case before the Church's judges was told in the king's name that both he and they might have to answer at the king's court if they went on with it.C4U

Honorius III urged an accommodation in the summer. His representatives appear from the terms of the papal letters to have taken it that the case was still before judges. The evidence provides no subsequent award for Ailbe. John Marshall, a modern historian who shares the family name, has set the correspondence in the wider policy towards the Irish Church. On 14 January 1217 the government had ordered the justiciar to prevent the election or promotion of an Irishman in a cathedral church in the king's Irish territory. Three days later he was instructed to secure the advancement of royal clerks and suitable Englishmen when sees or dignities fell vacant. The second order expressly records the advice of Henry, archbishop of Dublin. John Marshall judges the regent to have been the driving force. The mandates establish the policy and the archbishop's part in it. Its reach varied. Irish bishops continued to hold sees, and the pope later supported Irish candidates for Cashel and Ardfert.C4V

A promise of inheritance or redress could depend in an unexpected way on the age of the person who made it. Consider the contrast with the Bristol charter sent to

Ireland. In February 1217 Henry's government extended the liberties recently granted in England to faithful men in Ireland. A text preserved in an Irish exchequer book gave Dublin a city's liberties and prescribed its standard measures. Fish weirs were to come out of the Liffey. These adaptations have been disputed, partly because we depend on copies and early printed collations; the great Irish record containing them was destroyed in 1922. David Carpenter thinks the regent's interest in his lands and ports helped move the matter along. The order about Ailbe shows how the minority government protected a holding in which its regent had a personal stake. The letter gives the government's reasons without identifying who first proposed the prohibition. At Newark the bishop regained his castle after paying a hundred pounds for the garrison's remaining stores.C4W At Ferns a bishop seeking land from the regent was still waiting for his case to be heard.C4X

In November 1218 the government began to use a great seal of Henry's own. The man entrusted with making it was a goldsmith called Walter of the Hithe. Accounts record silver for the new seal. The king's party had found it possible to mobilise an army and issue charters with the aid of the seals of his legate and regent. They now possessed a means of sending out authenticated commands which could function after either of those persons left office or died. The change came with a limit. A warning circulated that a perpetual grant was not to be made under the new seal until the king came of age. Just as the holder of a wardship was meant to leave an estate in sound condition for the heir, people who had assumed custody of a kingdom had to be restrained from making its lands and rights over to people who pleased them. Henry could already possess a seal that was unequivocally his while certain things it might be put to remained outside the authority of his government.C4Y

Guala left. Pandulf, another papal legate, succeeded him. When William fell ill in the opening months of 1219 the men attached to the king had to face a succession of their own. There was a king, a seal, a justiciar, a chancellor, a papal legate and a substantial body of ministers and magnates. Henry was still a child. In the family account the illness began round Candlemas, at the start of February. William stayed for a time at the Tower of London and was taken up the Thames to Caversham, his manor near Reading. A fair part of his life had been spent on roads. The arrangements towards the end of it now depended upon who could be brought to a room where he was well enough to speak.C4Z

The scene in the poem is a difficult one. William wants to entrust the king to the pope's representative. Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester, interposes that Henry has been in his keeping. There was something in the bishop's point. Care of the king's person was a practical responsibility which had been distinguished from

command of the realm. If some of the leading men had entertained an expectation of wider authority after the old earl's death, the simplest way to offend all but one was to entrust the whole to a rival. William's proposal to refer the boy to the legate can be understood in the same terms as his earlier cooperation with Guala. The pope was overlord and protector already. He could accept the king's care without being an English earl trying to obtain an inheritance to which the others might equally lay claim. Within the poem we hear the bishop's protest and William's response. The government after his death bore more than one man's share of responsibility; nobody simply took over the old earl's whole position.C5A

Henry needed practical things besides protection during this last meeting. William asked after the terms on which the child might one day rule. The poet gives him a blessing with a reservation which a modern admirer could all too easily soften away. He wanted God to allow this boy to become a good man. If Henry took after a wicked ancestor, William would rather God did not grant him a long life. In a later retelling one could easily turn this into a denunciation of King John duly spoken over his son. The old earl had served more than one member of the family and had been by several at the end. What is striking in the household's version is that the successful preservation of John's dynasty did not require the survivors to wish a king unlimited years in which to do evil. It is part of the family's reckoning of what faithful service permitted a man to say.C5B

A dying earl had a family and household to think about. William asked John of Earley to bring cloths that had been put aside. In the poem he had acquired them overseas for his burial. He gave instructions on their use and on looking after them if they had to be carried through bad weather. The detail tells us nothing about what the weather actually did on the journey to his grave. It tells us a great deal about the care with which his old companion was expected to convey valuable material, and the memory a household kept of the man who could say what he wanted done with it years after he first acquired it. The cloths could cover him and afterwards go to the Temple. Property was going to pass from his earthly household to a different community by the act of being laid upon his body.C5C

He took the habit of the Templars. The Anonymous of Béthune remembers that detail after recording the death, adding it almost as an afterthought. For the household poet it stands near the centre of a long leave-taking. The dying man sends for Aimery de Sainte-Maure, master of the order in England, and a cloak is produced. He has one last kiss from Isabel before giving himself formally to another kind of life. It is one of the few occasions on which we can set a brief independent notice against the elaborate scene. Both give the affiliation with the Templars. The request to his wife and the arrangements round the bed come from people who had

special reasons to remember the distinction between what happened before and what happened after he took the habit. Isabel had responsibilities which neither his sickness nor his vow could dissolve. Their children had received parts of what they would inherit through her.C5D

Clothing was due to the living as well. John of Earley asked what to do with furred robes. The poet remembers a clerk who saw their value and recommended that the money they would fetch be put to the dying man's spiritual account. William wanted his knights to have them. A distribution of robes at Pentecost was an obligation he knew and this would be his last chance to meet it. What was left could go to the poor. There was no shortage of spiritual counsel; a competing suggestion had to be told apart from the ordinary duty one had always expected to discharge. Those hearing the poem had family or household reasons for preferring the earl's answer. It was a remarkably good thing for John of Earley to have survived to tell. Other people, including the bishop of Ferns, might have had their own ideas about the best use of his goods at the close of his life.C5E

William died at Caversham on 14 May 1219. The family's account brings his eldest son, his wife and his knights round him. Before the body could be buried, it had to be taken down the river valley towards London. The affairs of a child king had been apportioned as well as an uncertain future allowed. What happened to the possessions, inheritances and stories of the Marshal family itself would now be decided by people who had long had reasons to think and act on their own.C5F



CHAPTER 20

The children who would hear

About the illumination

William's eldest son commissioned the verse life of his father. The poem names John of Earley among those who supplied its material.

Historical source C5G

Visual exemplar C5H

AI-generated artwork by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios, 2026. This modern illustration is not a historical artifact.

After William's death at Caversham his family accompanied his body on the first part of its journey to London. The poem gives the stages. Mass was celebrated before the body left Caversham. At Reading, Isabel and their eldest son granted an annual income to the abbey so that the family could share in the spiritual benefits of the monks' work. At Staines more of the great men of England came to meet them. In London there was an archbishop and there were sufficient clergy to maintain a vigil with singing and lights. These observances belonged to different places and made different demands upon the survivors. What the monks of Reading undertook to do would continue after the body had gone on. The knights who joined up on the road had ridden there in a display of respect which made the son's new position visible as well as honouring his father.C5J

They buried William in the church of the New Temple in London. The round church built by the military religious order evoked the place of Christ's burial in Jerusalem. The family account has Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, bring those following the body up short. If even this man, whom the archbishop calls the best knight, has come to this, so will the people standing at his grave. They should pray for him. The poet reports gifts to the poor at Westminster, where there was room enough for a large distribution. What the family gave away took different forms. Imported cloth had been laid on the body. Knights in the late earl's service had received their accustomed clothing. The poor could benefit immediately from the end of this great man's life. Priests and monks would have a long claim on the money set aside by the people who inherited his property. Earl, abbot, prince, poor person and parish priest could all find some use for the commemoration, and only a few would need ever to hear the long poem.C5K

Three of the family were in time buried at the Temple, the elder William and his sons William and Gilbert. The stone figures of armed men in the Round have drawn visitors' eyes ever since antiquaries began to describe the church. There is good evidence for the burials and a long tradition of identifying three of the effigies as those of the Marshals. The two things are separable. Writing in 1987, the armour specialist Philip Lankester compared the sculpture and the form of medieval armour. He thought no individual in the group could be identified securely. One figure, numbered nine in the Royal Commission's inventory, carries a lion rampant in relief on its shield. Many families bore such a lion. The heavy folds of that figure's surcoat suggested to Lankester a date scarcely earlier than about 1260. The Temple Church still identifies an effigy with the younger William. The man lying in stone in the company of other armed men offers a fitting way to think of the Marshal. The carver gave him the bearing of an armed man of rank. We have no way to compare his features with the face Isabel knew.C5L

Isabel outlived her husband. In making provision for her, William was obliged to respect a distinction he had lived with for thirty years. Very much of the estate he had ruled had come to him by marriage; it should be hers for her lifetime. His son could take the lands the earl had inherited or acquired on his own account. He should not expect to step straight into everything he had seen his father govern. In Normandy Isabel negotiated with Philip Augustus concerning her lands. The French king had once been in a position to insist on her husband's homage before he would allow him to keep them. Now the widow had to secure her own position. She did so for the interval still open to her. She died in 1220 and was buried at Tintern in Wales. In the next generation the elder son conferred his mother's Norman lands upon his brother Richard. Isabel's title survived William. It gave their sons land in France and a reason of their own to come to terms with the French king.C5M

The younger William, whom we can now call Earl William, had experienced the exercise of a king's will at closer quarters than a great many royal counsellors. John had taken him as a hostage. He had supported Louis, returned to Henry and fought beside his father at Lincoln. In the 1220s he was an important royal officer and lord of Leinster. He granted privileges to towns, including Carlow and Kilkenny, patronised friars and confirmed gifts which his father had made. He married Henry III's younger sister Eleanor. One could have met him in Ireland as the lord of estates derived through his mother, in England as the king's brother-in-law, or across the Channel as a participant in the king's campaign of 1230. When Earl William commissioned his father's life, he had a career of his own to explain.C5N

In the time of his marriage to Eleanor preparations were under way for a long account of William the elder in French. The poem looks forward to its being heard. It

gives special attention to the response of brothers and sisters who would learn that their brother William had caused such a work to be made about their father. They were an audience which could be expected to care about a great deal of it. They had known the old earl at home, seen the gifts brought in and out, watched their mother's relatives and their father's knights come to the house. For his life before he married Isabel they depended on the memories of others. Someone had to collect the materials from which a poet could take a child of King Stephen's wars and bring him through to the grave in London. In the ending the people who paid for that work and those who found and shaped the story are themselves allowed to come forward.C5P

A little uncertainty near the last page matters to almost everything that has gone before. William the son is named; John of Earley provided the matter for the story and put his heart, thought and resources into it. Shortly afterwards a man called John is said to have made the book in verse. The manuscript has no modern title page where one might look up his surname. Paul Meyer, the first complete editor, saw two men in this. He could point to places where the man writing the poem contrasts himself with his informants, and to an earlier passage in which he speaks of somebody living by composing verse. The known landed career and responsibilities of Earley, a knight and the earl's capable agent, seemed a poor fit with the poet as Meyer understood him. If this reading is right, the earl's household engaged a writer who knew how to draw a story out of other people.C5Q

Evelyn Mullally has asked what evidence there is that the second man ever existed. In a short passage one John appears by his full name and very soon a John appears again. On an ordinary reading it is entirely possible for both names to mean the same man. Earley had means, experience and a quite exceptional knowledge of the subject of this commission; there is nothing about earning a living with words that demonstrates what sort of employment the man using that phrase held. Other readers, including the editors of the modern text, retain the distinction between patron, informant and poet. The visible skill in constructing the work provides a reason to consider a professional; it cannot turn an occupation into a personal identifier. If Earley wrote the poem, then in scenes like the council over the boy king or the distribution of clothes at Caversham, the man who acted also chose how to tell the story. If there were two Johns, another man helped shape the account. It would not make him a witness even to one day of William's childhood.C5R

It is possible to date the work somewhat more closely than the manuscript. The father was dead, the son was alive and so was Earley when the closing verses were put together. People still in one situation at an earlier point in the poem are spoken of in different terms at a later stage. Meyer drew attention to one of the earls at

Lincoln, William of Salisbury. As he wrote of his exploits, the poet wished pardon for his sins. Salisbury had died in 1226. The language about other family members and the time needed to compile such a long work agree with a period of writing in the mid-1220s. The physical volume which now survives at the Morgan Library in New York was made in England; its catalogue dates the making of that copy between about 1225 and 1250. We cannot date a report of a childhood conversation by taking the date of the vellum on which somebody later wrote it down.[C5S]

There was another public act of recollection at roughly the same time. In 1225 Henry III issued the liberties of his kingdom again in his own name and under his seal. The king declared his free will in making the grant. It stood in relation to a grant of taxation, a fifteenth of movable goods. Unlike his father, he did not give the charter in a meadow where an armed opposition kept London. Unlike the child of 1216, at seventeen he could claim the decision as personally his, although his minority was still formally in progress. His earl of Pembroke now bore the same name as one of the men who had sealed the charter of the minority, but the William who sealed for him as a child was dead. English political arrangements made by a man while he stood in for a minor had been carried forward towards the king's adult reign, modified and made available to the use of other parties. It makes sense to give Henry and the people who made this later bargain credit for what they did with the work they had received.[C5T]

Some of the disputes which might have made it expedient to remember the father in a particular way were alive in the 1220s. David Crouch compared the assurances the son gave Philip of France about his father with the explanations offered in the poem afterwards. He found family interests behind much of the presentation. The granting of relatively generous peace terms to Louis had come in for criticism. It was useful to have witnesses to the old earl's taking advice, to the willingness of men who had fought to put up money for peace, and to his public responsibility for what he and others had done. The family's own history could also have embarrassed its living head. An earl who had risen against John and served Louis personally had become one of the men directing the government of John's son. No amount of space devoted to excellent fighting at Lincoln could tell his whole story. The writer had succeeded in making his father's fidelity an extraordinarily convincing theme. The more convincing he was, the easier it would be to overlook what the son's earlier conduct cost the argument.[C5U]

One of Crouch's best tests concerns Caerleon. Morgan ap Hywel was still trying to recover his land when the new earl's account of his father was under construction. To show a regent taking advice about a neighbour who broke the peace could therefore protect a continuing claim. Crouch thinks the defence of the

seizure on those grounds spurious. Morgan took his claim to court and continued to press it into the 1230s. Crouch believes the upheaval of 1234 restored the castle to him. Huw Pryce concludes that the loss was permanent and identifies Machen as the castle Morgan retained. The distinction between keeping a castle for the Crown and possessing it by hereditary right mattered here. In 1231, in R. L. Penrose's reconstruction, Morgan held Caerleon for the royal justiciar. The younger William had good reason to want the seizure remembered as lawful. Morgan had just as much at stake in how it was remembered. It is possible to tell the story of a consultation thoroughly, even to put generous words in the mouth of the Welsh prince who attended it, and still leave the man who lost the land without an equal hearing.C5V

The younger William died in 1231. His body joined his father's in the Temple Church. His brother Richard now reunited the Norman inheritance which had been set aside for him with the family lands in the British Isles. To have an English king recognise such an heir was no mere formality. A man holding on both sides of the Channel had to deal once more with two kings. The eventual quarrel with the government of Henry III led him into armed rebellion. In Ireland in April 1234 he was badly wounded on the Curragh of Kildare and soon died. An annalist in the west, naming him as William's son, puts much more of the emphasis on the men who came out against him than an English biography might. He records the justiciar and the forces of the Lacys assembling against Richard for the king. The Lacys' separate histories of fighting John's government did not prevent them from aligning on this occasion with the interest in Henry's name. Four names in an Irish sentence of annals can tell us about collisions the history of an affectionate family had no reason to anticipate.C5W

The heir was Gilbert. He had once been intended for a career in the Church. He was knighted and invested with his offices in 1234. In June 1241 Gilbert fell from his horse at a tournament near Hertford and died of his injuries. Matthew Paris says Henry III had forbidden the gathering. When Walter, the next brother, asked to succeed, the king held his attendance against him. He was invested only in October. He died in 1245. Anselm, the youngest, survived him only briefly, dying in December before his position had been secured by formal investiture. To a man waiting for the next Earl Marshal, the family line might have seemed to end there. Ten children had been born to William and Isabel. Five sons died without legitimate children to take their places. The five daughters had claims, children and complex inheritances of their own. The story of what became of William and Isabel's family had moved out of the place where people expecting a single Earl Marshal were accustomed to look for it.C5X

Maud, Isabel, Sibyl, Eva and Joan were the daughters. Their marriages connected the family to the Bigods, Clares, Ferrers, Briouzes and Munchensis among others. Some of these names already belonged to people who appeared in the history as William's companions or opponents. His daughter Isabel's husband Gilbert de Clare had been one of the captives at Lincoln. After his death she married Richard of Cornwall, brother of Henry III. William and Isabel's daughter Joan had a daughter of her own also named Joan, who married William de Valence, a half-brother of the English king. When someone later appears with the title of Pembroke it cannot be taken for granted that the estate has proceeded in a straight line from son to son. Names reused in families can conceal how much work and marriage and inheritance it took for the land to pass at all.C5Y

In 1247 the division of Leinster assigned portions to the five daughters' lines. This did not mean that five living women were invited to a table to choose five estates. Some of them were already dead. Their descendants and in some cases multiple coheirs had interests to be reckoned with. The divisions which later writers associated with the family include Carlow with Maud, Kilkenny with Isabel, Kildare with Sibyl, estates centred on Dunamase with Eva and Wexford with Joan. The structure of the shares was an enduring fact to the territorial claims of succeeding generations, even when the rules of inheritance, further marriages and the power of local people complicated what anyone on the ground could actually hold. In time men writing histories of Ireland would copy versions of the division and trace their contemporaries through it. John Marshall, who has followed these texts into the early modern period, shows how an old property settlement could be used to make claims about English rule in Ireland which the women, their heirs and the tenants of Leinster in the 1240s cannot have foreseen.C5Z

There is a second story of what happened when Anselm died. Matthew Paris, a monk of St Albans writing in the middle decades of the thirteenth century, had an explanation for the extinction of William's male line. He knew a story in which Ailbe of Ferns stood before the Marshal's tomb and demanded restitution. The sons stood by the title they had inherited. The bishop foretold the destruction of the father's name in a single generation. Other parts of these annals supply regnal dates, deaths, grants, appointments, great events in the life of the Church. A prophetic story recorded after the last son died belongs to a different kind of evidence. It shows a writer seeking a consequence adequate to the harm done to a bishop and his church. His language could carry an old claim for land farther into the future than Ailbe's own suit had gone. The royal prohibition of April 1218 stands even if the curse at the tomb is set entirely to one side.C6A

The modern reader is better placed to see the difference because a single book survived. It was once in the Savile family's collection. In 1861 a lot at Sotheby's passed through the sale which dispersed their manuscripts, and the volume eventually came to Sir Thomas Phillipps, a formidable collector. Today it belongs to the Morgan Library. One of the older notations on its flyleaf names the hero as Sir John Marshall. It is hard to imagine a more ironic label for a family whose eldest son commissioned some nineteen thousand lines to make sure that people knew who William Marshal was. Two columns of French verse on 127 leaves had lain open to identification by people working with quite different assumptions about what counted as English history. Paul Meyer's long labour of transcription, editing and commentary put the book into the hands of people who could not all have gone to look at the manuscript. It also made the character of this editor's own admiration a matter of public record.C6B

Meyer was puzzled at points, painstaking with names, open to the comparison of different authorities and intensely attracted to his hero's character as he understood it. The dying words to young Henry struck him as so true in manner that he felt no doubt about their authenticity. Other readers might grant the words a different kind of truth. An affectionate witness might have wanted Henry and later members of his court to hear that warning in the voice of the man who had defended him. A professional poet might know how to make a disposition of government intelligible by making a reluctant boy king receive a particularly sharp blessing. An earl might really have said something of the kind. The surviving words do not by themselves make us choose among all those possibilities. Material such as the king's seal or the order which stopped Ailbe's case helps to give the question an edge, precisely because those things were made for a purpose other than making William's character known. They show how a government acting for a child exercised its powers. At Ferns its intervention protected the regent's interest in the disputed fee.C6C

At the very end of his story the poet crosses the Channel once more. The news of William's death reaches Philip of France. Men distinguish between the best fighter they had seen, the most loyal and the wisest. The author assigns the testimony of particular people to particular qualities and brings the judgment of William's most formidable royal opponent into the account of his worth. None of us overheard Philip conducting that conversation. There is no need to give up the pleasure of the ending. Its maker knew that warrior, friend, prince, companion and enemy could have seen different virtues in the same knight; he let those virtues speak in different voices. The person watching most closely was the son who had fought for Philip's son against his own father and had afterwards fought alongside him. Of all the

people who might have made sure that an account of this man's life was written, it was that William who did.C6D

Chronology

Dates are expressed in the historical Julian calendar, with years beginning on 1 January for this chronology. Approximate dates mark events whose year cannot be securely established. The chapter notes explain where the dates come from and why some remain disputed.

Date	Place and event
1135	Henry I dies. His nephew Stephen becomes king of England. Henry's daughter, the Empress Matilda, contests the succession.
Mid-1140s	Probable birth of William, son of John the Marshal and Sibyl of Salisbury. The exact year is unknown.
1152	Stephen besieges Newbury. Family tradition remembers young William in Stephen's hands as a hostage.
1154	Matilda's son Henry II succeeds Stephen. In the following years William enters the Norman household of William de Tancarville.
1160s	William is armed as a knight and fights at Drincourt. In Poitou his uncle Patrick of Salisbury is killed; William is captured. Eleanor of Aquitaine helps obtain his release.
1170–74	Henry II's eldest surviving son Henry is crowned in his father's lifetime. William serves the Young King and remains with him during his rebellion (1173–74).
Later 1170s	William travels the tournament circuit with the young royal household; details chiefly come from the family poem.
11 June 1183	The Young King dies at Martel. Roger of Howden records his direction to William to carry his cross to Jerusalem. The journey is poorly documented.
Later 1180s	William serves Henry II in France as the old king struggles with his heir Richard and with Philip II of France.
1189	Henry II dies at Chinon. Richard I succeeds. William marries Isabel de Clare, daughter of Aífe and Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare. At Richard's coronation on 3 September, William carries the sceptre. Jews are attacked in London.
March 1190	The York massacre follows attacks on Jews elsewhere in England. Richard is already across the Channel.
1190–94	Richard goes on crusade, is taken captive on his return and is released in February 1194. Eleanor and royal government organise his ransom. William opposes John's efforts to take control of England.
1194–99	William serves Richard's Norman campaigns, notably in the fighting at Fréteval and on missions to the north. Richard's new castle rises above the Seine at Les Andelys.

Date	Place and event
1199	Richard dies at Châlus on 6 April. His brother John succeeds in England and Normandy. William is recognised as earl of Pembroke; his influence in Leinster develops unevenly.
May 1200	The peace of Le Goulet sets terms between Philip and John and for their followers, including Arthur of Brittany.
3 December, probably 1200	At Hamstead Marshall John approves William's will and his provision for an Irish abbey.
1202–04	John captures Arthur at Mirebeau. Arthur disappears in custody. Château Gaillard falls to Philip in March 1204; Rouen makes terms on 1 June and submits later in the month.
1205	William does homage to Philip for Norman interests he holds through Isabel. His relations with John deteriorate. In the years of their dispute both William's eldest son and his son Richard are given as hostages.
1207–08	William and Isabel face a struggle for authority in Leinster; Isabel and their allies rally the lordship during William's absence. The justiciar Meiler fitz Henry loses his position.
1210–13	John comes to Ireland in 1210. William helps him against former allies. By 1213 he is again close to the king's English government.
15 June 1215	John's first Magna Carta is dated at Runnymede. The elder William is among the king's advisers; the younger William is on the baronial side. The pope annuls the settlement. War resumes.
1215–18	Ailbe Ó Máelmuaid, bishop of Ferns, pursues church land claimed by William. His case reaches Rome and the English royal government.
May–November 1216	Prince Louis lands in England. John dies in October. His son Henry III is crowned at Gloucester aged nine. William takes responsibility for government alongside the legate Guala and the council. Magna Carta is reissued at Bristol on 12 November.
May–September 1217	Royalists relieve Lincoln Castle on 20 May; the city suffers a sack. Louis's reinforcements are defeated at sea on 24 August. A negotiated settlement leads to Louis's departure in September.
November 1217	Henry's government issues Magna Carta and a distinct Charter of the Forest. The precise dating and authentication of the documents deserve separate consideration.
March–April 1218	The settlement at Worcester deals with Llywelyn and other Welsh rulers. On 18 April the king's government orders Ailbe and the judges to stop the Ferns land case. A further order on 20 April provides for enforcement.
May 1219	William the elder dies at Caversham on 14 May. After the procession through Reading and Staines, his funeral takes place at the New Temple in London on 20 May.
1219–20	Isabel pursues the Norman inheritance after William's death. She dies in 1220.

Date	Place and event
1220s	William the younger commissions the verse life. John of Earley supplies material. The identity of the poet called Johans is disputed.
1231–45	William the younger dies in 1231. His brother Richard succeeds him and dies in 1234. The last of the elder William's five sons dies in 1245. The daughters and their descendants inherit.

A few words used in the book

Angevin. From Anjou. Historians use the word for Henry II and his family, and for the collection of lands they governed. Someone living in Normandy answered to a duke and Norman customs. Someone living in England answered to a king and English courts. For decades the duke and the king happened to be the same man.

Appanage. Land or income set aside for a member of a ruling family. How much of the land, money and power would actually pass to an adult son was one of Henry II's most dangerous family questions.

Baron. A great lord. When a chronicle speaks of "the barons" in John's reign, the name can describe the organized opponents of the king. Other barons fought for the king. Some changed sides during the war.

Burgess. A member of a town community with particular rights and obligations. A grant to a town's burgesses might settle which dues they owed or where they could hold a court. Plenty of people lived or worked in towns without enjoying all those rights.

Carucate. A measure of land associated with what a plough team could work. The acreage varied. A charter that promises thirty carucates tells us something about the scale of the grant without giving us its precise boundaries.

Charter. A written grant or formal declaration. Kings issued charters, as did lords, ladies and religious houses. Some survive as the very sheets once sent to the recipients. Others survive through a clerk's copy, sometimes centuries younger than the act it preserves.

Chirograph. Two or more copies of an agreement written on one sheet and cut apart. The edges of the parts could later be matched. The French royal archives preserve one of the pieces of the agreement made outside Rouen in 1204.

Demesne. The part of an estate a lord kept in hand, distinguished from land held by tenants. Tenant obligations and the revenue of the demesne could both support the lord's household.

Dower. Property or income set aside for a wife to enjoy in widowhood. Isabel de Clare's family estates were her inheritance. Calling the whole inheritance her dower would obscure how William came to possess it.

Engrossment. A formal copy of a document, written out for issue. A royal charter could have several authentic engrossments sent to different places. A clerk's later transcript has a different history even when it preserves the same words.

Fee, or fief. A holding with obligations attached. A lord might owe service for one fee to one superior and for another fee to somebody else. A change of ruler could leave him owing things to men at war with each other.

Forest. Territory subject to special royal rules governing animals, timber and their use. A medieval royal forest could include settlements and cultivated land. The location of a boundary mattered greatly to someone keeping animals or clearing ground.

Homage. A formal acknowledgment that a person was a lord's man. The question was often quite specific. For which land, on what terms, with what service, and subject to what earlier obligations? Two men could agree that homage had taken place and still quarrel over its consequences.

Hostage. A person placed in another's power as security for someone else's performance. An agreement might specify a son, a nephew, or a relative whom the receiving side could choose. It turned a political promise into a risk borne by a particular family member.

Justiciar. A leading royal officer exercising delegated powers. Meiler fitz Henry, the king's justiciar in Ireland, also held land for which he owed obligations to a local lord. Both positions matter to his quarrel with the Marshals.

Legate. The pope's representative, sent with authority to act on his behalf. The legate Guala had his own office and a seal with which he could authenticate documents drawn up for the young Henry III.

March. A frontier region. In the Welsh March, neighbouring rulers and lords could exercise very different powers. A line drawn between modern England and Wales gives a misleading impression of where a prince could enforce his rights in 1215.

Mark. A unit in which money was reckoned. In English sterling a mark was thirteen shillings and fourpence, or two-thirds of a pound. A sum stated in marks could be paid in coins of smaller denominations.

Marshal. An office connected with horses, the household and military service. It became the name by which William's family was known. William belonged to the family long before he succeeded to the hereditary office.

Regent. A convenient modern term for someone entrusted with government on behalf of a ruler unable to govern personally. Henry III was king even as a child.

William helped govern in his name, alongside officers and churchmen with powers of their own.

Scutage. A payment calculated by reference to knight service. Royal accounts recording an exemption or payment are valuable evidence of how a campaign was organized. A single entry seldom tells us where an individual fought.

Seisin. Recognized possession. Someone could claim an estate as heir while another person held its castles and collected its dues. Obtaining possession could take years after a title was acknowledged.

Seneschal. A steward entrusted with a lord's administration. The office could bring substantial power. When William made provision for a monastery in Ireland, he named his seneschal alongside his wife to see to the site.

Surety. Someone who promised to act or pay if another person failed to keep an agreement. The peace of Le Goulet even specified what William and his fellow guarantors were to do if their own king broke its terms.

Wardship. Custody of an underage heir and, in some cases, of the lands and revenues until the heir came of age. The right to arrange a ward's marriage could make wardship enormously valuable. The lands themselves could have come to the ward through several lines of descent.

Illustration credits

The modern illuminations

The cover and twenty-one chapter paintings were created in 2026 by the AI personification of Sir William Marshal for Oathkeeper AI Studios. The historical William Marshal is the subject of the biography. The pictures are modern interpretations, and a single scene can bring together events or people that a medieval witness records separately. Each painting is followed by an explanation, its maker credit, and pointers to the historical source and visual exemplar. The photographs, map and family diagram retain their own attribution.

Manuscript exemplars

Hunterian Psalter. C6E

Winchester Bible. C6F, C6G

Oathkeeper AI Studios commissioned this edition. Research, writing, production and illustration were undertaken with AI assistance.

Across the Channel and the Irish Sea

Original editorial reconstruction. Modern coastline generalised from Natural Earth at 1:50,000,000, public domain. Selected town coordinates from GeoNames, CC BY 4.0. The dates and historical interpretation are editorial.

Natural Earth land data C6H · Reuse terms C6J · GeoNames geographical database C6K · Philip’s grant to Falaise, May 1204 C6L · Rouen agreement, June 1204 C6M · Norman interests and homage C6N

Three Henrys and two Williams

Original editorial diagram. Genealogy from David Crouch, The Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family (2015), introductory family history; Dictionary of Irish Biography, “Marshal, William”; Westminster Abbey, “Henry II.”

Genealogical source C6P

A rider’s spur

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Prick Spur, gift of Thomas E. Kirby, 1921, accession 21.183.5. Public domain (CC0). Full frame, resized.

Object or image record C6Q · Reuse terms C6R

Château-Gaillard above the Seine

Roman Geber, Chateau Gaillard, 28 February 2018. Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0. Full frame, resized. This photograph remains under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Object or image record C6S · Reuse terms C6T

Tintern in County Wexford

Zairon, County Wexford Tintern Abbey Exteriors 02, 31 May 2022. Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 4.0. Full frame, resized.

Object or image record C6U · Reuse terms C6V

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The family and its poet

History of William Marshal. C6W

L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal, comte de Striguil et de Pembroke. C6X, C6Y, C6Z

Morgan Library & Museum. C7A, C7B

The Court Reconvenes. C7C

Crouch, David. C7D, C7E

Narratives beyond the household

Chronica. C7F, C7G, C7H, C7J

Historia rerum Anglicarum. C7K, C7L, C7M, C7N

Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre. C7P

Flowers of History. C7Q

Acts, towns, churches and regions

The Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family, Marshals of England and Earls of Pembroke, 1145–1248. C7R

Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste, roi de France. C7S, C7T

King John, notification approving William's will, 3 December, probably 1200. C7U

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The Acts of Welsh Rulers, 1120–1283. C7X

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Patent Rolls of the Reign of Henry III, 1216–1225. C8A, C8B

English Historical Documents. C8C, C8D, C8E, C8F

Studies to read beside the narrative

William Marshal: Knight-Errant, Baron, and Regent of England. C8G, C8H, C8J

Thirteenth Century England II. C8K, C8L

Anglo-Norman Studies. C8M, C8N

Les fortifications dans les domaines Plantagenêt. C8P, C8Q

Leinster, its neighbours and the Irish expeditions

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The Origins of the Lordship of Leinster and the Role of William Marshal: Perceptions and Reality. C8T, C8U

Irish Historical Studies. C8V, C8W, C8X, C8Y

The castle and its keeper at Lincoln

Lincolnshire Past and Present. C8Z, C9A

Broadcast and podcast references

These are programme listings for readers interested in modern retellings. The research team identified the editions below. No historical claim in the book rests on a purported quotation or scene from unexamined footage or audio.

The Greatest Knight: William the Marshal. C9B

History Hit. C9C

This is History. C9D

David Starkey’s Magna Carta. C9E

Citations and sources

Select a short code to follow its evidence. Back returns to that occurrence. You can also search for a code in either upper- or lowercase.

William Marshal

A2A Scene source · John's approval of William's will, BL Add MS 4783, f. 31 Back

A2B Visual exemplar · Hunterian Psalter, c. 1170 Back

Orientation map

A2C **Across the Channel and the Irish Sea.** Squares mark Falaise, which gained privileges in 1204, and the two Norman strongholds named in the panel. The coastline is modern. The region names locate the reader without assigning fixed frontiers to the lordships.
Map: editorial reconstruction. Coastline: Natural Earth. Towns: GeoNames, CC BY 4.0. Back

Family connections

A2D **Three Henrys and two Williams.** Selected lines of descent. Young Henry wore a crown while his father still ruled. Thirty-three years after his death, his brother John's son became Henry III.
Original editorial diagram based on Crouch, the Dictionary of Irish Biography and Westminster Abbey. Back

A2E William's family in the Dictionary of Irish Biography; Isabel's descent and property. Back

A2F William's family in the Dictionary of Irish Biography; Isabel's descent and property. Back

A suitable place

A2G Scene source · John's approval of William's will, 3 December [?1200] Back

A2H Visual exemplar · Hunterian Psalter, c. 1170 Back

A2J John, approval of the will of William Marshal, dated at Hamstead Marshall, 3 December [?1200], operative clause, "in loco competenti"; our translation. The verb governing Isabel and Geoffrey is plural. BL Add MS 4783, f.31, according to the *Magna Carta Project*, original-charter record, Latin and description. The date in the text supplies the day and month. The catalogue heading and B67 assign the year 1200, queried in the calendar. The project's preliminary B67 entry calls Ware's original lost. *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, 1136, and J.H. Bernard, 'The Foundation of Tintern Abbey, co. Wexford' (1917), 527, differed over the status of the witness. Back

A2K David Beresford, 'Marshal, Isabella', and Ronan Mackay and David Beresford, 'Marshal, William', *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, first paragraphs of each; separate the royal permission to marry and John's reluctance to release Leinster. Isabel; elder William. Back

A2L Heritage Ireland, *Tintern Cistercian Abbey*, institutional and architectural history, “a daughter-house of Tintern Major in Wales”. The conservators distinguish the surviving buildings from centuries of residential alterations. Site history. Back

A2M **Tintern in County Wexford.** Photographed in 2022. Monks from Tintern on the Wye established this daughter house around 1200 on land held through Isabel de Clare. The Colclough family later adapted part of the church as a home.
Photograph by Zairon, 2022. CC BY 4.0. Back

A2N Office of Public Works, *Kells Priory*, discussion of Geoffrey fitz Robert; the Kells house was distinct from Tintern. Charles McNeill, ed., *Liber Primus Kilkenniensis* (1931), 13–15, confirmation of the Kilkenny rent. Kells Priory; manuscript and catalogue. The clause survives in the fourteenth-century exemplification. Kilkenny town book, manuscript p. 68. Back

A2P John, notification in the source note, opening style “rex Anglie dominus Hibernie dux Normannie Aquitannie et comes Andegauie”. Daniel Power, ‘The French Interests of the Marshal Earls of Striguil and Pembroke’, *Anglo-Norman Studies* XXV (2003), 199–226, opening paragraphs on lands held through Isabel. Charter; Power. Back

A2Q Paul Meyer, ed., *L’Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* (Paris, 1891–1901), I, sequence of Tancarville training, first battle and tournament; III, chronological introduction §§1–2. Old French; editorial analysis. Back

A2R Philip II, act of Le Goulet, [22] May 1200, *Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste*, II, no.633, §§9, 13, 20–23, “Guillelmo Marescallo” in §21. The condition attaches to John’s failure to keep the terms. Edition and witnesses. Back

A2S Philip II, act of Le Goulet, [22] May 1200, *Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste*, II, no.633, §§9, 13, 20–23, “Guillelmo Marescallo” in §21. The condition attaches to John’s failure to keep the terms. Edition and witnesses. Back

A2T Power, ‘French Interests’, opening p.199 on the 1205 homage. The inference from the pre-1204 treaty is about what obligations could be envisaged. Published article. Back

A2U *Histoire*, Meyer I, vv.3083–3116, especially p.113, v.3103, “Qu’il out sor l’anclume sa teste”. Old French text. Back

A2V *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv.19185–19206; see S. Gregory’s translation and A.J. Holden’s edition, *History of William Marshal*, III, for commentary. Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.888, former Phillipps 25155; English manuscript dated c.1225–50. Epilogue; catalogue. Back

A2W Roger of Howden, trans. H.T. Riley, annal 1183, death and bequest; *Histoire*, near end of Holy Land account, Meyer I, vv.7296–98. For disagreement over the battle, Meyer III, section on the author’s materials, “l’auteur n’hésite pas à nous faire part de son embarras”. Riley; Meyer. Back

A2X John Marshall, ‘The pope, a knight and a bishop on the edge of Christendom’, *Irish Historical Studies* 47 (2023), 175–91, especially discussion of Ailbe’s petition and 1218 writs; *Patent Rolls … 1216–1225*, 148–49. Article; roll edition. Back

A2Y Henry III, Forest Charter (1217), closing authentication formula, in H. Rothwell, ed., *English Historical Documents*, III (1975), no.24, 337–40. Durham Cathedral identifies the surviving seal. Charter translation; custodian. Back

The child given in pledge

A2Z Scene source · Histoire, I, vv. 595–650 Back

A3A Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

A3B Household poet, *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. Paul Meyer, I (Paris, 1891), pp. 17–20, vv. 455–516. The negotiations and John's breaches of trust are the poet's account. Passage. Back

A3C Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford, 1996), p. 759, annal for 1152, reproduced and evaluated in *Castles, Siegeworks and Settlements*, ch. 8, printed pp. 85–86. Archaeological text and identification of the passage. Back

A3D Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.888, England, c.1225–50, 127 vellum leaves. The date of the copy differs from the date of composition. David Crouch, ed., *The Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family* (2015), p. 8, places commissioning in 1224 and completion in 1226. Manuscript · Edition introduction. Back

A3E Royal Household, "Stephen and Matilda (r. 1135–1154)," first three paragraphs, on Henry I's succession, the oath and Stephen's coronation. Historical account. Back

A3F Royal Household, "Stephen and Matilda (r. 1135–1154)," first three paragraphs, on Henry I's succession, the oath and Stephen's coronation. Historical account. Back

A3G Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, pp. 1–3, especially nn. 6–12, citing the royal household constitution, charters, the Winchester annals and John of Worcester. His dates qualify the household poem's presentation of John as the empress's man. Introduction. Back

A3H Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, pp. 1–3, especially nn. 6–12, citing the royal household constitution, charters, the Winchester annals and John of Worcester. His dates qualify the household poem's presentation of John as the empress's man. Introduction. Back

A3J S. D. Church, "Succession and Interregnum in the English Polity: The Case of 1141," opening and discussion of Winchester; Katherine Weikert, "The Queen, the Countess and the Conflict: Winchester 1141," opening account. Church · Weikert. Back

A3K *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 6–12, vv. 146–288, especially vv. 157–66 for the aftermath. These are the poet's categories of suffering, not a count of casualties. Poem. Back

A3L *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 13–15, vv. 337–98. Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, pp. 3–4 and nn. 11–12, supplies Adelina's name and the evidence of property. Poem · Documentary context. Back

A3M Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, pp. 4–6 and act 5, sale to Hugh de Ralegh; *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 3–5, vv. 63–114, and pp. 14–15, vv. 378–398. Family evidence · Brothers in the poem. Back

A3N Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, pp. 4–6 and act 5, sale to Hugh de Ralegh; *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 3–5, vv. 63–114, and pp. 14–15, vv. 378–398. Family evidence · Brothers in the poem. Back

A3P *Castles, Siegeworks and Settlements*, ch. 8, printed pp. 85–86, 96–97, on the Hamstead Marshall proposal. West Berkshire Historic Environment Record MWB3425 lists uncertain locations. Site record · Survey. Back

A3Q *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 15–20, vv. 399–516, especially 463–502, 513–16. The anvils and hammers are plural in the French. Exchange. Back

A3R *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 15–20, vv. 399–516, especially 463–502, 513–16. The anvils and hammers are plural in the French. Exchange. Back

A3S *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 19–22, vv. 509–594. The third danger involves a screen and a millstone hung above the attackers. Siege scenes. Back

A3T *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 19–22, vv. 509–594. The third danger involves a screen and a millstone hung above the attackers. Siege scenes. Back

A3U *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 22–24, vv. 595–650, especially 623–48 for the man from Sibyl's chamber. Tent scene. Back

A3V *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 24–26, vv. 651–714. See Meyer III (1901), opening historical discussion, distinguishing Newbury from Lincoln and Gloucester's exchange. Poem · Meyer's discussion. Back

A3W Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, pp. 3–4, including John's later position and the royal rights he had held. Introduction. Back

A3X *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 27–28, vv. 741–67. For William's Norman connection, Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, p. 8. Departure. Back

A horse to ride

A3Y Scene source · Histoire, I, vv. 1253–1302 Back

A3Z Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

A4A *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. P. Meyer, I (1891), pp. 27–30, vv. 741–805, especially vv. 772–99. Tancarville. Back

A4B *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 30–32, vv. 815–71; David Crouch, ed., *Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family* (2015), p. 8, on Tancarville's household. Poem · Crouch. Back

A4C *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 54–58, vv. 1513–1565. The places named in the praise of William's reputation do not give a day-by-day itinerary. Homeward journey. Back

A4D *Histoire*, Meyer I, p. 29, vv. 769–75, with Meyer's erratum on v. 772 in the preface; compare his historical discussion and nn. 30–34 in III (1901). Printed verse and variants · Analysis. Back

A4E **A rider's spur.** A fixed goad projects from this copper-alloy spur. The holes at the ends took the straps that held it to the rider's foot. Possibly British, eleventh or twelfth century, 14.9 centimetres long. Its rider is unknown.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Thomas E. Kirby, 1921 (21.183.5). Public domain, CC0. Back

A4F *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 30–33, vv. 805–900; Mandeville is identified as the future earl. Defence of the town. Back

A4G John Gillingham, "War and Chivalry in the History of William the Marshal," originally *Thirteenth Century England* II (1988); reprint, *Anglo-Norman Warfare*, printed pp. 251–53, particularly p. 252 and nn. 6–9; Georges Duby, *Guillaume le Maréchal ou le meilleur chevalier du monde* (Paris, 1984), pp. 86–88 as discussed by Gillingham; Meyer III, historical introduction, §2; Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, p. 8 (1163). The chamberlain's men would have fought on the wrong side in 1173. Gillingham's reconstruction of 1167 is an argument from the campaign and alignments, not an independent notice of this skirmish. Gillingham, scan p. 2 · Crouch · Meyer. Back

A4H *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 30–33, vv. 805–900; Mandeville is identified as the future earl. Defence of the town. Back

A4J *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 40–43, vv. 1078–1166, identifies the townswomen and the giver of the joke. Aftermath in town. Back

A4K *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 40–43, vv. 1078–1166, identifies the townswomen and the giver of the joke. Aftermath in town. Back

A4L *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 43–44, vv. 1167–1200. The poem gives twenty-two Angevin shillings for the cloak; the animal bought with them became a carrier of arms. Sale and purchase. Back

A4M *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 43–44, vv. 1167–1200. The poem gives twenty-two Angevin shillings for the cloak; the animal bought with them became a carrier of arms. Sale and purchase. Back

A4N *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 44–46, vv. 1201–1256. Arms being readied. Back

A4P *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 44–46, vv. 1201–1256. Arms being readied. Back

A4Q *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 46–48, vv. 1253–1302. Bridle and difficult mount. Back

A4R *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 48–50, vv. 1303–1368, and pp. 54–55, vv. 1490–1515. Valognes · Horse handed to the squire. Back

A4S *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 119–21, vv. 3256–3307. After the tournament. Back

A4T Georges Duby, *Guillaume le Maréchal ou le meilleur chevalier du monde* (Fayard, 1984), ch. 1, closing sequence of the publisher's French digital sample, eISBN 9782213675404, on Ansel, the shoeing of his horse and provision of a rent. This is Duby's retrospective reading of a family narrative, not independent evidence for the boyhood incidents. Publisher's chapter extract. Back

A4U *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 55–58, vv. 1527–1565. Tancarville and Salisbury. Back

The woman who got him out

A4V Scene source · Histoire, I, vv. 1755–92 Back

A4W Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

A4X Family *Histoire*, P. Meyer, ed., I, pp. 62–67, vv. 1700–1796, especially 1755–92. The dressing and the loaf. In the epilogue the eldest son commissions the work. John of Earley supplies material and contributes resources. Meyer II, pp. 329–30, vv. 19169–19205. Back

A4Y *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 58–62, vv. 1561–1706; Meyer III, documentary n. 449 to the attack. Narrative · Comparison. Back

A4Z *Epistolae: Medieval Women's Latin Letters*, Eleanor of Aquitaine, biographical introduction and regnal titles; Nicholas Vincent, "King Henry II and the Poitevins," in *La cour Plantagenêt* (2000), discussion of the queen's government after Patrick's death, nn. 81–82. Eleanor and her acts · Poitevin evidence. Back

A5A *Epistolae: Medieval Women's Latin Letters*, Eleanor of Aquitaine, biographical introduction and regnal titles; Nicholas Vincent, "King Henry II and the Poitevins," in *La cour Plantagenêt* (2000), discussion of the queen's government after Patrick's death, nn. 81–82. Eleanor and her acts · Poitevin evidence. Back

A5B Robert of Torigni, *Chronique*, ed. L. Delisle, II, pp. 4–5; Gervase of Canterbury, ed. W. Stubbs, I, p. 205; Ralph of Diceto, ed. W. Stubbs, I, p. 331; Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, ed. W. Stubbs, I, p. 273. The Latin notices are compared in Meyer III, n. 449. Apparatus and text. Back

A5C Robert of Torigni, *Chronique*, ed. L. Delisle, II, pp. 4–5; Gervase of Canterbury, ed. W. Stubbs, I, p. 205; Ralph of Diceto, ed. W. Stubbs, I, p. 331; Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, ed. W. Stubbs, I, p. 273. The Latin notices are compared in Meyer III, n. 449. Apparatus and text. Back

A5D *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 59–63, vv. 1615–1715, especially 1623–51 and 1684–1707. Patrick and William. Back

A5E *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 59–63, vv. 1615–1715, especially 1623–51 and 1684–1707. Patrick and William. Back

A5F *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 59–63, vv. 1615–1715, especially 1623–51 and 1684–1707. Patrick and William. Back

A5G *Histoire*, Meyer I, p. 60, vv. 1629–42, particularly v. 1634; the earl sends the queen to the castle. Verse in sequence. Back

A5H Family *Histoire*, P. Meyer, ed., I, pp. 62–67, vv. 1700–1796, especially 1755–92. The dressing and the loaf. In the epilogue the eldest son commissions the work. John of Earley supplies material and contributes resources. Meyer II, pp. 329–30, vv. 19169–19205. Back

A5J *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 66–69, vv. 1793–1862. The stone and the reopened wound. Back

A5K *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 68–69, vv. 1861–84, especially 1874–82; Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, p. 8, treats Eleanor's intervention as a ransom. Poem · Crouch. Back

A5L Vincent, "Henry II and the Poitevins," discussion and n. 81 on Saint-Hilaire; *Epistolae*, Eleanor, letter c.1179, complete short text, Latin and English, on Peter of Ruffec. Patrick's commemoration · Peter's exemption. Back

A5M Vincent, "Henry II and the Poitevins," discussion and n. 81 on Saint-Hilaire; *Epistolae*, Eleanor, letter c.1179, complete short text, Latin and English, on Peter of Ruffec. Patrick's commemoration · Peter's exemption. Back

A5N Emily Joan Ward, *Child Kingship in England, Scotland, France, and Germany, c.1050–c.1250* (Cambridge PhD, 2017), pp. 143–44, on Henry's age, dates and Gervase. Matthew Strickland, *Henry the Young King* (Yale, 2016), pp. 82–84, discussed there. William of Newburgh, II.25, identifies the officiant and describes the appeal to the pope. Anne Heslin, 'The Coronation of the Young King in 1170', *Studies in Church History* 2 (1965), pp. 165–78, examines the competing claims. Ward · Newburgh · Heslin. Back

A5P Emily Joan Ward, *Child Kingship in England, Scotland, France, and Germany, c.1050–c.1250* (Cambridge PhD, 2017), pp. 143–44, on Henry's age, dates and Gervase. Matthew Strickland, *Henry the Young King* (Yale, 2016), pp. 82–84, discussed there. William of Newburgh, II.25, identifies the officiant and describes the appeal to the pope. Anne Heslin, 'The Coronation of the Young King in 1170', *Studies in Church History* 2 (1965), pp. 165–78, examines the competing claims. Ward · Newburgh · Heslin. Back

A5Q Elizabeth Thomas, St Andrews PhD thesis, discussion of Margaret's marriage and Vexin settlement, chapter 6, "Dowry, Inheritance and Dower," printed pp. 137–39 (PDF pp. 141–43), nn. 3–11; the confirming coronation of husband and wife was held at Winchester. Thesis and cited chronicles. Back

A5R *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 70–74, vv. 1915–2009. Appointment and costs. Back

A5S *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 76–79, vv. 2069–2117; Gervase of Canterbury, *Historical Works*, ed. W. Stubbs, I, p. 219. Ward, *Child Kingship*, pp. 143–44 nn. 76–78, reproduces the relevant Latin and compares Strickland, Crouch and Weiler. Poem · Gervase and modern dispute. Back

A5T *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 76–79, vv. 2069–2117; Gervase of Canterbury, *Historical Works*, ed. W. Stubbs, I, p. 219. Ward, *Child Kingship*, pp. 143–44 nn. 76–78, reproduces the relevant Latin and compares Strickland, Crouch and Weiler. Poem · Gervase and modern dispute. Back

A5U Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, pp. 8–9; Roger of Howden, trans. H. T. Riley, account of the rebellion ad 1173–74. Household · Rebellion. Back

A king at the tournament

A5V Scene source · Histoire, I, vv. 3088–3116 Back

A5W Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

A5X Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, annals for 1173–74, trans. H. T. Riley; Elizabeth Thomas, St Andrews PhD, chapter 6, printed p. 153 (PDF p. 157), on the intended Maurienne marriage. Howden · Thomas on Humbert's proposal, p. 153. Back

A5Y *Histoire*, ed. P. Meyer I, pp. 71–75, vv. 1935–2036, on household expenditure and advice to the two kings. Poem. Back

A5Z Howden, *Chronica*, trans. Riley, 1173, passage on the Young King and his allies and his promised gifts. Annal. Back

A6A Howden, *Chronica*, trans. Riley, 1173, passage on the Young King and his allies and his promised gifts. Annal. Back

A6B Howden, *Chronica*, trans. Riley, 1173, passage on the Young King and his allies and his promised gifts. Annal. Back

A6C *Epistolae*, Eleanor of Aquitaine, historical introduction to princely revolt and captivity, with distinctions between the successive phases of restraint. Introduction. Back

A6D Howden, *Chronica*, trans. Riley, 1174, capture of the Scottish king, Michaelmas truce, formal reconciliation and terms, paragraphs beginning "And, in like manner, the king, his son" and "Also, upon these conditions". Agreement. Back

A6E Howden, *Chronica*, trans. Riley, 1174, capture of the Scottish king, Michaelmas truce, formal reconciliation and terms, paragraphs beginning "And, in like manner, the king, his son" and "Also, upon these conditions". Agreement. Back

A6F *Histoire*, Meyer I, vv. 2380–2520, 2580–2708. First phase of the circuit. Back

A6G *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 98–101, vv. 2710–2765. The Flemish count's tactics. Back

A6H *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 106–14, vv. 2911–3125, particularly vv. 3088–3116. The gift and the forge. Back

A6J *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 106–14, vv. 2911–3125, particularly vv. 3088–3116. The gift and the forge. Back

A6K *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 123–125, vv. 3385–3424; names of the partner and clerk at 3385 and 3417, total v. 3421. Account. Back

A6L *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 123–125, vv. 3385–3424; names of the partner and clerk at 3385 and 3417, total v. 3421. Account. Back

A6M *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 118–122, vv. 3240–3350. Walincourt and the aftermath. Back

A6N *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 148–155, vv. 4075–4277, especially 4090–4165, 4210–4274. The narrator gives slightly different estimates of true value in different lines. First horse · Second valuation. Back

A6P *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 148–155, vv. 4075–4277, especially 4090–4165, 4210–4274. The narrator gives slightly different estimates of true value in different lines. First horse · Second valuation. Back

A6Q *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 125–128, vv. 3430–3524. Dancing, singing and the horse at Joigny. Back

A6R *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 96–100, vv. 2650–2720, and pp. 155–156, vv. 4285–4318. The poet on generosity and young men. Back

A6S *Histoire*, Meyer I, vv. 4620–4650, 4780–4950, especially Ansel at v. 4637. Crouch, ed., *Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family*, p. 5 n. 17, points to Archives départementales de l'Orne, H 2621, for Ansel at Lagny. The item itself has not been inspected for this book. Poem · Documentary lead. Back

A6T Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, pp. 8–9, on the strains within Henry's household, the acquisition of banneret status and the pursuit of profit; *Histoire* Meyer I, vv. 5290–5450. Crouch · The accusation. Back

A cross on a cloak

A6U Scene source · Geoffroi de Breuil, RHGF XVIII, p. 217 Back

A6V Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

A6W *Histoire*, P. Meyer, ed., I, pp. 206–211, vv. 5750–5850, especially 5760–5815. Offer of combat. Back

A6X *Histoire*, Meyer I, vv. 5130–5255, 5360–5460; Meyer III, historical introduction on William's relations with the young queen and household critics; David Crouch, ed., *Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family*, pp. 8–9. Poem and accused household · Meyer's interpretation · Crouch. Back

A6Y *Histoire*, Meyer I, vv. 5130–5255, 5360–5460; Meyer III, historical introduction on William's relations with the young queen and household critics; David Crouch, ed., *Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family*, pp. 8–9. Poem and accused household · Meyer's interpretation · Crouch. Back

A6Z *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 195–204, vv. 5420–5655. Gournay and the breach. Back

A7A *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 208–211, vv. 5765–5850, on combat, safe conduct and departure; Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, p. 9, on service in Flanders. Caen. Back

A7B Margaret, queen of England, charter, c.1185 (1184 in the old transcript), Rouen cathedral cartulary, f. 141; J. H. Round, ed., *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France*, I (London, 1899), no. 41, printed pp. 10–11. English calendar; the provision is conditional on receiving the funds. Scan, p. 10 and following. Back

A7C Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, ad 1183, trans. H. T. Riley (1853), beginning at the Christmas gathering at Caen, then Clairvaux, oaths, and the meeting at Mirabel. Compare *Histoire*, Meyer I, vv. 6280–6410. Chronicle · Household poem. Back

A7D Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, ad 1183, trans. H. T. Riley (1853), beginning at the Christmas gathering at Caen, then Clairvaux, oaths, and the meeting at Mirabel. Compare *Histoire*, Meyer I, vv. 6280–6410. Chronicle · Household poem. Back

A7E Howden, *Chronica*, 1183, tr. Riley, catalogue of ecclesiastical grievances, Saint-Martial theft and payment of the Brabanters, followed by the Young King's taking of treasures. The chronicler's condemnation accompanies the account. Annal. Back

A7F *Histoire*, Meyer I, vv. 6400–6520 and 6610–6664. The narrator changes his authority for the more remarkable concession and calls it something he has heard. Geoffrey's declaration · Letters. Back

A7G *Histoire*, Meyer I, vv. 6400–6520 and 6610–6664. The narrator changes his authority for the more remarkable concession and calls it something he has heard. Geoffrey's declaration · Letters. Back

A7H *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 241–248, vv. 6676–6864; Meyer III, introduction §2, on the moral difficulty of the taking. Roadside meeting · Meyer's account. Back

A7J *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 241–248, vv. 6676–6864; Meyer III, introduction §2, on the moral difficulty of the taking. Roadside meeting · Meyer's account. Back

A7K Bertram, bishop of Agen, letter to Pope Lucius III, written at the instance of the clerks of Rouen, [1183?], formerly reported as a sealed original in G.3569, Round, *Calendar*, I no. 37, printed p. 9; Howden, 1183, illness and father's refusal. Letter, scan p. 71 · Howden. Back

A7L *Histoire*, Meyer I, p. 249, vv. 6891–6909; Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, trans. Riley (1853), 1183 deathbed paragraph beginning "The king, the son, having"; Geoffroi de Breuil, prior of Vigeois, chronicle, in *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, XVIII, p. 217, passage reproduced in Meyer III, n. 652. The cloak is explicit in Geoffroi. Poem · Howden · Geoffroi's Latin. Back

A7M *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France*, ed. J. H. Round, I, nos. 35–38, printed pp. 9–10, on the basis of sealed letters to Lucius III in the Rouen archives G.3569 as recorded by the editor. No. 37 identifies the alternative Grandmont, no. 38 his uncle's tomb. Pages 9–10, scan pp. 71–72. Back

A7N *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 252–256, vv. 7003–7096; Howden, 1183, preparations for the journey to Rouen. The creditor and guarantee · Howden. Back

A7P Howden, *Chronica*, ad 1183, first burial and removal to Rouen, followed by Limoges and Margaret's inheritance. Annal. Back

A7Q Margaret, queen of England, charter, c.1185 (1184 in the old transcript), Rouen cathedral cartulary, f. 141; J. H. Round, ed., *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France*, I (London, 1899), no. 41, printed pp. 10–11. English calendar; the provision is conditional on receiving the funds. Scan, p. 10 and following. Back

A7R Geoffrey, Duke of Brittany, notification, 1184, and Constance of Brittany, confirmation, [1184], Round, *Calendar*, I nos. 39–40, p. 10; G.3569 and G.4483 in the editor's Rouen sequence. Scan, p. 72. Back

A7S *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 261–263, vv. 7233–7276, including England, the sister and the girls, vv. 7259–74. Leave-taking. Back

A7T *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 262–264, vv. 7275–7318; Meyer III, historical chronology and analysis; Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, p. 9, prefers spring 1186 for the return. Poem · Chronology · Crouch. Back

A7U *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 262–264, vv. 7275–7318; Meyer III, historical chronology and analysis; Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, p. 9, prefers spring 1186 for the return. Poem · Chronology · Crouch. Back

What the king had promised

A7V Scene source · Histoire, I, vv. 8733–90 Back

A7W Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

A7X William Marshal, confirmation to Gervase concerning Sizergh [1186 × June 1188]; Crouch, ed., *Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family* (2015), act 9, Sizergh Castle, Hornyold-Strickland Deeds, Book of Charters 1, fol. 1v (no. 5); also Farrer and Curwen, *Records relating to the Barony of Kendale*, I, p. 383, no. 11. Editorial extract and physical description. Back

A7Y *Histoire*, ed. P. Meyer I, p. 264, vv. 7301–7318; Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, pp. 9–10. Custody in the poem · Custody, Cartmel, and Sizergh in the charter edition. Back

A7Z William Marshal, confirmation to Gervase concerning Sizergh [1186 × June 1188]; Crouch, ed., *Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family* (2015), act 9, Sizergh Castle, Hornyold-Strickland Deeds, Book of Charters 1, fol. 1v (no. 5); also Farrer and Curwen, *Records relating to the Barony of Kendale*, I, p. 383, no. 11. Editorial extract and physical description. Back

A8A *Histoire*, ed. P. Meyer I, p. 264, vv. 7301–7318; Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, pp. 9–10. Custody in the poem · Custody, Cartmel, and Sizergh in the charter edition. Back

A8B Nicholas Vincent, "William Marshal, King Henry II and the Honour of Châteauroux," *Archives* 25 (2000), pp. 1–15; the summons, reward and dating are described from this study in Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, p. 9 n. 32. Crouch's discussion. Back

A8C William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, III, chs. 17–18, 22–25, trans. Joseph Stevenson; *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 264–268, vv. 7319–7436. Newburgh's moral interpretation of Hattin should be distinguished from the basic sequence. Newburgh, Book III · Household poem. Back

A8D William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, III, chs. 17–18, 22–25, trans. Joseph Stevenson; *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 264–268, vv. 7319–7436. Newburgh's moral interpretation of Hattin should be distinguished from the basic sequence. Newburgh, Book III · Household poem. Back

A8E *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 280–284, vv. 7750–7875, especially 7782–7840. John Gillingham, "War and Chivalry in the History of William the Marshal," reprinted in *Anglo-Norman Warfare*, pp. 255–56, cites separate Capetian evidence of the dispersal, William the Breton, ed. Delaborde, I, p. 189. Marshal's proposal · Gillingham, scan pp. 5–6. Back

A8F *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 280–284, vv. 7750–7875, especially 7782–7840. John Gillingham, "War and Chivalry in the History of William the Marshal," reprinted in *Anglo-Norman Warfare*, pp. 255–56, cites separate Capetian evidence of the dispersal, William the Breton, ed. Delaborde, I, p. 189. Marshal's proposal · Gillingham, scan pp. 5–6. Back

A8G *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 24–25, vv. 655–671; Gillingham, "War and Chivalry," reprint pp. 255–257, on rent, surprise and the function of raids. Poem on vanished rents · Gillingham. Back

A8H *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 285–290, vv. 7890–8048, especially 8007–8026 and 8033–44. Companions, groomed horse and wounds. Back

A8J *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 285–290, vv. 7890–8048, especially 8007–8026 and 8033–44. Companions, groomed horse and wounds. Back

A8K William of Newburgh, *Historia*, III.25 §§1–3, trans. Stevenson; *Histoire*, Meyer I, vv. 8050–8310, especially 8255–87. Newburgh · Household account. Back

A8L William of Newburgh, *Historia*, III.25 §§1–3, trans. Stevenson; *Histoire*, Meyer I, vv. 8050–8310, especially 8255–87. Newburgh · Household account. Back

A8M *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 313–315, vv. 8670–8740. Cautions at the gate. Back

A8N *Gesta regis Henrici secundi*, traditionally associated with Benedict of Peterborough, entry for 1189; William of Newburgh, *Historia*, III.25 §3; *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 315–317, vv. 8733–8790, particularly the woman and smoking quilt at 8753–72. Gesta · Newburgh · Poem. Back

A8P *Gesta regis Henrici secundi*, traditionally associated with Benedict of Peterborough, entry for 1189; William of Newburgh, *Historia*, III.25 §3; *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 315–317, vv. 8733–8790, particularly the woman and smoking quilt at 8753–72. Gesta · Newburgh · Poem. Back

A8Q *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 317–320, vv. 8791–8875, and pp. 336–337, vv. 9319–9345. The first conversation and the later rival versions are both products of the same commissioned narrative. Horse · Later conversation. Back

A8R *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 317–320, vv. 8791–8875, and pp. 336–337, vv. 9319–9345. The first conversation and the later rival versions are both products of the same commissioned narrative. Horse · Later conversation. Back

A8S *Histoire*, Meyer I, vv. 8910–9164; *Gesta*, 1189; William of Newburgh, *Historia*, III.25 §§3–4. The day of death was 6 July. Poem · Gesta · Newburgh. Back

A8T *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 326–342, vv. 9084–9290 and 9410–9450, on the chamber, Fontevraud and the ring. Death at Chinon · Ring and burial. Back

A8U *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 337–340, vv. 9344–9412, particularly the chancellor's account and Richard's distinction between what Henry gave and promised. Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, pp. 9–10, on the earlier succession of marriage expectations. Recipients of lands and marriages · Introduction. Back

A8V *Histoire*, Meyer I, pp. 337–340, vv. 9344–9412, particularly the chancellor's account and Richard's distinction between what Henry gave and promised. Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, pp. 9–10, on the earlier succession of marriage expectations. Recipients of lands and marriages · Introduction. Back

The men who carried the gold

A8W Scene source · Howden, trans. Riley, II, pp. 117–19 Back

A8X Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

A8Y Roger of Howden, *Annals*, trans. H.T. Riley, II, 117–19, Westminster service, 3 September 1189; "two great and massive spurs of gold" precede the sceptre. Howden calls William earl of Striguil retrospectively. Procession, oaths and anointing. Back

A8Z Roger of Howden, *Annals*, trans. H.T. Riley, II, 117–19, Westminster service, 3 September 1189; "two great and massive spurs of gold" precede the sceptre. Howden calls William earl of Striguil retrospectively. Procession, oaths and anointing. Back

A9A *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. Paul Meyer, I, vv.9084–9168 for Henry II's death and vv.9248–9513 for the news reaching Richard, his pardon and the marriage arrangements; III, chronological introduction §4. Meyer's analysis; original verse. Back

A9B Howden, *Annals*, trans. H.T. Riley, II, pp. 117–19, annal 1189, attack and Benedict before Richard; William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, IV.1, trans. Joseph Stevenson, coronation and royal reaction. Reading Christian chroniclers does not provide an independent Jewish report of that interview. Back

A9C Howden, *Annals*, trans. H.T. Riley, II, pp. 117–19, annal 1189, attack and Benedict before Richard; William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, IV.1, trans. Joseph Stevenson, coronation and royal reaction. Reading Christian chroniclers does not provide an independent Jewish report of that interview. Back

A9D Howden, *Annals*, trans. H.T. Riley, II, pp. 117–19, annal 1189, attack and Benedict before Richard; William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, IV.1, trans. Joseph Stevenson, coronation and royal reaction. Reading Christian chroniclers does not provide an independent Jewish report of that interview. Back

A9E Newburgh, IV.7–11, especially IV.9–10 on York, the people sheltering in the castle, the deaths and the records burned. Chapters and translation; University of Edinburgh source commentary and passages. Newburgh, IV.9, separates the castle keeper's complaint from the sheriff's order and attempted recall. York narrative. Back

A9F Newburgh, IV.7–11, especially IV.9–10 on York, the people sheltering in the castle, the deaths and the records burned. Chapters and translation; University of Edinburgh source commentary and passages. Newburgh, IV.9, separates the castle keeper's complaint from the sheriff's order and attempted recall. York narrative. Back

A9G Ephraim of Bonn, Hebrew remembrance of York, text in Neubauer and Stern (1898), excerpt in Cecil Roth, trans., *A History of the Jews in England*, ch.2, including "the splendid books which they had written". The name of the rabbi, Passover calendar and dispersal of the books are from this tradition. Excerpt; alternative critical discussion of the Hebrew and Christian transmission. Back

A9H Newburgh, IV.7–11, especially IV.9–10 on York, the people sheltering in the castle, the deaths and the records burned. Chapters and translation; University of Edinburgh source commentary and passages. Newburgh, IV.9, separates the castle keeper's complaint from the sheriff's order and attempted recall. York narrative. Back

A9J Ephraim of Bonn, Hebrew remembrance of York, text in Neubauer and Stern (1898), excerpt in Cecil Roth, trans., *A History of the Jews in England*, ch.2, including "the splendid books which they had written". The name of the rabbi, Passover calendar and dispersal of the books are from this tradition. Excerpt; alternative critical discussion of the Hebrew and Christian transmission. Back

A9K Newburgh, IV.11, on the inquiry, sheriff and results, text; custodian on the massacre and its aftermath. David Crouch identifies the sheriff and his successor in *The Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family*, introduction, pp. 6–7, nn. 25–27. Published introduction. Back

A9L Newburgh, IV.4–5, 11, 14–18, royal appointments, Longchamp as bishop/chancellor, his following, reception in York, and the breakdown of his government. His social and political prejudices colour the portrait. Book IV. Back

A9M Newburgh, IV.4–5, 11, 14–18, royal appointments, Longchamp as bishop/chancellor, his following, reception in York, and the breakdown of his government. His social and political prejudices colour the portrait. Book IV. Back

A9N Newburgh, IV.3, 15–18 on provision for John, the succession and castles; Béthune, ed. F. Michel, trans. Ian Short, pp.1–2 of translation, on John's claims and Arthur's relationship. Newburgh; Béthune. Howden records Philip of Cognac as Richard's illegitimate son. *Chronica*, ed. William Stubbs, IV, p. 97. Back

A9P *Histoire*, Meyer I, from vv.9688ff.; Meyer III, Richard section §4, for William's appointment, the messenger, and limits of his biographer's English governmental account. Meyer I; Meyer III. Back

A9Q *Histoire*, Meyer I, from vv.9688ff.; Meyer III, Richard section §4, for William's appointment, the messenger, and limits of his biographer's English governmental account. Meyer I; Meyer III. Back

A9R Newburgh, IV.19–20 on Eleanor, the Navarrese marriage and the expedition; IV.21–23 on the kings at Acre and Philip's departure. Book IV. Back

A9S Newburgh, IV.15–18, seizure of Archbishop Geoffrey, flight to London, surrender of the Tower; see especially IV.17. Contemporary account. Back

A9T Newburgh, IV.28–30 and subsequent account of Richard's detention. John Gillingham's comparison of Howden, German accounts and diplomatic evidence, in 'The Kidnapped King', treats the stages of transfer and bargaining separately. Chronicle; study, discussion marked 'Ansbert'. Back

A9U *Histoire*, Meyer I, Windsor and the oath, especially vv.9900–9960; Meyer III, prose abridgement at vv.9914ff.; Eleanor and the Marcher following appear in the poem. French text; abridgement. Back

A9V Newburgh, IV.36–39, and *Histoire*, vv.9960–10008, on the levy and church treasure. Gillingham compares the accounts and the changing terms under Henry VI and Leopold, including the division in their earlier agreement. Newburgh; poem via Meyer III. Back

A9W *Histoire*, Meyer I, vv.9984–10018; Meyer III at v.10008 on Henry's election and the cause the household attributed to it. Meyer's abridgement and notes. Back

A9X Eleanor of Aquitaine (attributed), letter to Celestine III, 1193, Columbia *Epistolae* no.139; editorial note discusses Peter of Blois's collection. Gillingham compares Henry VI's December 1193 letter, letters of John and Philip, and Walter of Coutances's account. Letter, text, translation and discussion; royal captivity study. Back

A9Y *Histoire*, Meyer I–II, vv.10018–10091; Meyer III at v.10076, distinguishing service at Cirencester and interment at Bradenstoke. Newburgh IV, concluding account of Nottingham. Family account; Newburgh. Crouch, "Biography as Propaganda," pp. 506–07, sets the poet's account beside John Marshal's service as Count John's seneschal and Marlborough's allegiance. Article. Back

The carts at Arras

A9Z Scene source · Histoire, II, vv. 10827–32 Back

B2A Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

B2B *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. Paul Meyer, II, Nottingham, around vv.10234–55; III, prose analysis and note on Foucher de Grendon, citing Howden, *Chronica*, III, 240, two otherwise unnamed men. Passage and note. Back

B2C *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv.10305–40, on the contrast between Walter de Lacy and William; Meyer III, prose and notes. The approval of Richard and the exchanges are attributed to the household. Meyer II; prose version. Back

B2D Daniel Power, 'The French Interests of the Marshal Earls of Striguil and Pembroke, 1189–1234', *Anglo-Norman Studies* XXV, 199–226, opening paragraphs. Publisher text. Back

B2E *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv.10340ff., crossing and relief of Verneuil; William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, V.2–3, trans. Joseph Stevenson, on campaigning and truce. Narrative by places; Newburgh. Back

B2F *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv.10340ff., crossing and relief of Verneuil; William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, V.2–3, trans. Joseph Stevenson, on campaigning and truce. Narrative by places; Newburgh. Back

B2G Newburgh V.5, on John's reconciliation and Eleanor; *Histoire*, Meyer II, around v.10525, and III, corresponding passage on Évreux. Newburgh; Meyer. Back

B2H Newburgh V.2, on the French king's baggage and household goods. Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, ed. William Stubbs, III (London, 1870), pp. 255–56, especially p. 256 on the treasure, royal chapel and charters of Richard's men. Howden, printed p. 256. Yann Potin, 'L'État et son trésor', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 133 (2000), 48–52, especially 49 on the doubtful 'foundational' loss and effect of Normandy's annexation. Chronicle; archival argument. Back

B2J *Histoire*, Meyer II, pursuit and rearguard, vv.10546–10676, and III, at vv.10662, 10676. The account of the evening conversation is the family's. Poem; Meyer's abridgement with notes. Back

B2K *Histoire*, Meyer II, pursuit and rearguard, vv.10546–10676, and III, at vv.10662, 10676. The account of the evening conversation is the family's. Poem; Meyer's abridgement with notes. Back

B2L Philip II, conditions of peace with Richard, January 1196, *Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste* II, no.517, esp. §§1, 17 and following. The quoted concepts in §17 are "feodum seu dominium". Latin and source description. Back

B2M Philip II, conditions of peace with Richard, January 1196, *Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste* II, no.517, esp. §§1, 17 and following. The quoted concepts in §17 are "feodum seu dominium". Latin and source description. Back

B2N Christian Corvisier, 'Château-Gaillard et son donjon', in *Les fortifications dans les domaines Plantagenêt* (Poitiers, 2000), 41–54, esp. 42–43, and Richard's patent of 16 October 1197, identified in BnF cb33809917j together with John's of 7 June 1200. Corvisier; BnF's account of the instruments. Do not confuse later exchanges printed alongside Richard's with his own transaction. Back

B2P Château-Gaillard above the Seine. Photographed from the east in 2018. The surviving walls rise in succession along the ridge at Les Andelys. Richard I built here to guard the Seine valley. The fortress fell to Philip II in March 1204.
Photograph by Roman Geber, 2018. CC BY-SA 4.0. Back

B2Q Christian Corvisier, 'Château-Gaillard et son donjon', in *Les fortifications dans les domaines Plantagenêt* (Poitiers, 2000), 41–54, esp. 42–43, and Richard's patent of 16 October 1197, identified in BnF cb33809917j together with John's of 7 June 1200. Corvisier; BnF's account of the instruments. Do not confuse later exchanges printed alongside Richard's with his own transaction. Back

B2R Walter's English mission, Newburgh IV.15–18; Corvisier, 42–43 as above, for Walter's position in Normandy. Newburgh. Back

B2S *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv.10688–10763; III, chronological introduction §4, comparing the treaty at Rouen of 8 September 1197 and the otherwise named envoys. Meyer's disagreement with the sequence. Back

B2T *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv.10688–10763; III, chronological introduction §4, comparing the treaty at Rouen of 8 September 1197 and the otherwise named envoys. Meyer's disagreement with the sequence. Back

B2U Philip II to the provost, dean and chapter of Reims, *Recueil des actes* II, no.566, opening on the extraordinary demand and following terms. Latin. Back

B2V *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 10780–10923, especially 10827–32 on the carts, 10867–90 on the scouts and Philip's decision, and 10891–10923 on the Flemish response and John Marshal's mission. John Gillingham, 'War and Chivalry in the History of William the Marshal', reprinted in Matthew Strickland, ed., *Anglo-Norman Warfare*, pp. 256–57 (PDF pp. 6–7), nn. 32–35. Gillingham cites and contests Georges Duby, *Guillaume le Maréchal* (1984), p. 107. The identification with Arras is conventional. The poet leaves the besieged place unnamed. Poem, pp. 25–27 · Gillingham's discussion. Back

B2W *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 10780–10923, especially 10827–32 on the carts, 10867–90 on the scouts and Philip's decision, and 10891–10923 on the Flemish response and John Marshal's mission. John Gillingham, 'War and Chivalry in the History of William the Marshal', reprinted in Matthew Strickland, ed., *Anglo-Norman Warfare*, pp. 256–57 (PDF pp. 6–7), nn. 32–35. Gillingham cites and contests Georges Duby, *Guillaume le Maréchal* (1984), p. 107. The identification with Arras is conventional. The poet leaves the besieged place unnamed. Poem, pp. 25–27 · Gillingham's discussion. Back

B2X *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 10780–10923, especially 10827–32 on the carts, 10867–90 on the scouts and Philip's decision, and 10891–10923 on the Flemish response and John Marshal's mission. John Gillingham, 'War and Chivalry in the History of William the Marshal', reprinted in Matthew Strickland, ed., *Anglo-Norman Warfare*, pp. 256–57 (PDF pp. 6–7), nn. 32–35. Gillingham cites and contests Georges Duby, *Guillaume le Maréchal* (1984), p. 107. The identification with Arras is conventional. The poet leaves the besieged place unnamed. Poem, pp. 25–27 · Gillingham's discussion. Back

B2Y Meyer II, vv.11200–11565, and III, chronological introduction §4, on the captive bishop and the legate's interview; distinguish what even Meyer believed an arranged dialogue. Narrative and note. Back

B2Z Anonymous of Béthune, *Histoire des ducs de Normandie*, ed. Francisque Michel, p.90, trans. Ian Short, p.1. *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv.11830–11906, and III §4, dates 26 March, 6 April and reception of news at Rouen. Béthune; Meyer's analysis. Back

B3A Anonymous of Béthune, *Histoire des ducs de Normandie*, ed. Francisque Michel, p.90, trans. Ian Short, p.1. *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv.11830–11906, and III §4, dates 26 March, 6 April and reception of news at Rouen. Béthune; Meyer's analysis. Back

B3B Béthune, Michel pp.90–92, Short pp.1–2, John, Constance's son and Philip; Philip's act of Le Goulet, no.633, esp. §§13, 20, for continuing need to settle Arthur's rights. Béthune; treaty. Back

B3C Béthune, Michel pp.90–92, Short pp.1–2, John, Constance's son and Philip; Philip's act of Le Goulet, no.633, esp. §§13, 20, for continuing need to settle Arthur's rights. Béthune; treaty. Back

The men who kept the bridge

B3D Scene source · Treaty of Rouen, June 1204, act 803 Back

B3E Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

B3F Philip II, act 633, [22] May 1200, *Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste*, II, §§20–23, naming nine guarantors on each side and the continental scope in §21. The editors supply the day of the month. The text is transmitted in copies. Latin and transmission. Back

B3G Philip II, act 633, [22] May 1200, *Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste*, II, §§20–23, naming nine guarantors on each side and the continental scope in §21. The editors supply the day of the month. The text is transmitted in copies. Latin and transmission. Back

B3H Philip II no.633, §§9–13, 20 on the marriage portion, 20,000 marks, receipt of Arthur as John's man and protection of Brittany. Anonymous of Béthune, *Histoire des ducs de Normandie*, ed. F. Michel, trans. Ian Short, pp.1–2, on the marriage and renewal of war. Treaty; narrative. Back

B3J Philip II no.633, §§9–13, 20 on the marriage portion, 20,000 marks, receipt of Arthur as John's man and protection of Brittany. Anonymous of Béthune, *Histoire des ducs de Normandie*, ed. F. Michel, trans. Ian Short, pp.1–2, on the marriage and renewal of war. Treaty; narrative. Back

B3K Same instrument §§2–8, 12, including the limits around forest and the rate per sterling mark in §12. Treaty. Back

B3L Philip II, act 633, [22] May 1200, *Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste*, II, §§20–23, naming nine guarantors on each side and the continental scope in §21. The editors supply the day of the month. The text is transmitted in copies. Latin and transmission. Back

B3M Anonymous of Béthune, Michel pp.91ff., Short pp.1–2, marriage to Isabel of Angoulême, the Lusignans, Arthur at the French court. His characterisation of the marriage reflects his politics. Connected episode. Back

B3N Béthune, Michel pp.93–96, Short pp.2–4, Eleanor at Mirebeau, Guillaume des Roches, conditions of his help and the surprise. *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. Paul Meyer, III, chronological introduction §5, citing II around v.12136 on William's location at Anglesqueville in the Pays de Caux and the authors' versions of the agreement. Béthune; Meyer. Back

B3P Béthune, Michel pp.93–96, Short pp.2–4, Eleanor at Mirebeau, Guillaume des Roches, conditions of his help and the surprise. *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. Paul Meyer, III, chronological introduction §5, citing II around v.12136 on William's location at Anglesqueville in the Pays de Caux and the authors' versions of the agreement. Béthune; Meyer. Back

B3Q Béthune, Michel pp.93–96, Short pp.2–4, Eleanor at Mirebeau, Guillaume des Roches, conditions of his help and the surprise. *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. Paul Meyer, III, chronological introduction §5, citing II around v.12136 on William's location at Anglesqueville in the Pays de Caux and the authors' versions of the agreement. Béthune; Meyer. Back

B3R Béthune, Michel pp.95–96, Short pp.3–4, Arthur in the keep at Rouen and the limits of his report. *Annales de Margan*, in H.R. Luard, ed., *Annales Monastici*, I, annal 1203; the allegation first-hand from neither John nor victim. The modern summary in the old DNB should be compared, not substituted for the annals. Béthune; comparison and edition references. Back

B3S Meyer III, chronological introduction §5, distinguishes the prose *Gesta* and *Philippide* of William the Breton and asks whether the latter is dependable on Marshal's command. The French Ministry of Culture's regional site study discusses blockade, civilians and conquest. Meyer; monument and siege. Back

B3T Meyer III, chronological introduction §5, distinguishes the prose *Gesta* and *Philippide* of William the Breton and asks whether the latter is dependable on Marshal's command. The French Ministry of Culture's regional site study discusses blockade, civilians and conquest. Meyer; monument and siege. Back

B3U Nick Hopkinson, 'Ultra mare in servicio domini regis: English barons and the defence of Normandy, 1194–1204', *Historical Research* 94 (2021), 213ff.; section on final campaigns, esp. 229–31

and nn.112–21. Campaign sample, important limits of nonattendance, muster at Portsmouth/Winchester and difference between 1204 and 1205. Article. Back

B3V Nick Hopkinson, 'Ultra mare in servicio domini regis: English barons and the defence of Normandy, 1194–1204', *Historical Research* 94 (2021), 213ff.; section on final campaigns, esp. 229–31 and nn.112–21. Campaign sample, important limits of nonattendance, muster at Portsmouth/Winchester and difference between 1204 and 1205. Article. Back

B3W Meyer III §5, discussion of William's earlier agreement, dating and Lisieux, and the account of Bec; Hopkinson, 230 and nn.117–19, on Falaise and time granted until Easter. Some place-names refer to different stages. Do not assume that the witness records a speech John later made. Meyer; Hopkinson. Back

B3X Philip II, acts 789–90 and 792, May 1204, *Recueil des actes*, II. No.789 §1 gives the hundred peers, shortlist and royal choice. No.790 refers to the roll read in the king's presence. It exempts the townspeople from the specified tolls on their own merchandise except at Mantes and imposes a ten-pound penalty for interference. No.792 assigns André up to one hundred Angevin pounds in annual revenue and reserves the surplus. Town constitution; Falaise liberties; mayor's grant. Back

B3Y Philip II, acts 789–90 and 792, May 1204, *Recueil des actes*, II. No.789 §1 gives the hundred peers, shortlist and royal choice. No.790 refers to the roll read in the king's presence. It exempts the townspeople from the specified tolls on their own merchandise except at Mantes and imposes a ten-pound penalty for interference. No.792 assigns André up to one hundred Angevin pounds in annual revenue and reserves the surplus. Town constitution; Falaise liberties; mayor's grant. Back

B3Z Philip II, act 803, before Rouen, 1 June 1204, especially opening agreement, hostages ("XL ostachios"), bridge, merchants and later terms. Archives nationales AE II 199 (formerly J 213/8), counterpart A2. Latin text and description. Back

B4A Philip II, act 803, before Rouen, 1 June 1204, especially opening agreement, hostages ("XL ostachios"), bridge, merchants and later terms. Archives nationales AE II 199 (formerly J 213/8), counterpart A2. Latin text and description. Back

B4B Philip II, act 803, before Rouen, 1 June 1204, especially opening agreement, hostages ("XL ostachios"), bridge, merchants and later terms. Archives nationales AE II 199 (formerly J 213/8), counterpart A2. Latin text and description. Back

B4C Philip II, act 804, before Rouen, 1 June 1204, returning as a measure for Bec to the time of Henry II, "filii imperatricis", son of the empress. Latin and subsequent copies. Back

B4D Philip II, act 633, [22] May 1200, *Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste*, II, §§20–23, naming nine guarantors on each side and the continental scope in §21. The editors supply the day of the month. The text is transmitted in copies. Latin and transmission. Back

B4E Philip II, act 803, before Rouen, 1 June 1204, especially opening agreement, hostages ("XL ostachios"), bridge, merchants and later terms. Archives nationales AE II 199 (formerly J 213/8), counterpart A2. Latin text and description. Back

B4F Meyer III §5, discussion of William's earlier agreement, dating and Lisieux, and the account of Bec; Hopkinson, 230 and nn.117–19, on Falaise and time granted until Easter. Some place-names refer to different stages. Do not assume that the witness records a speech John later made. Meyer; Hopkinson. Back

B4G Daniel Power, 'The French Interests of the Marshal Earls of Striguil and Pembroke, 1189–1234', *Anglo-Norman Studies* XXV, 199–226, opening paragraphs on Isabel, William's tenure, 1205 homage,

1219–20 negotiations and the younger generation. David Crouch, ed., *Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family*, Camden 5th series 47, p.185, first notice of Isabel concerning St Mary of Orbec, dated 1199 × 1220; BnF latin 13905, p.168. Power; Isabel's notice. Back

B4H Daniel Power, 'The French Interests of the Marshal Earls of Striguil and Pembroke, 1189–1234', *Anglo-Norman Studies* XXV, 199–226, opening paragraphs on Isabel, William's tenure, 1205 homage, 1219–20 negotiations and the younger generation. David Crouch, ed., *Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family*, Camden 5th series 47, p.185, first notice of Isabel concerning St Mary of Orbec, dated 1199 × 1220; BnF latin 13905, p.168. Power; Isabel's notice. Back

B4J *Histoire*, Meyer II from vv.12948ff. and III §5, the account of John's permission and subsequent rift; Hopkinson 230–31 and nn.119–21 on the refusal to cross; DIB, William (II) on delivery as hostage. Meyer; Hopkinson; son and family. Back

B4K *Histoire*, Meyer II from vv.12948ff. and III §5, the account of John's permission and subsequent rift; Hopkinson 230–31 and nn.119–21 on the refusal to cross; DIB, William (II) on delivery as hostage. Meyer; Hopkinson; son and family. Back

The Irish countess

B4L Scene source · Aífe's Ickleton grant, discussed by M. T. Flanagan Back

B4M Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

B4N Marie Therese Flanagan, "Aífe (Aoife, Eva)", *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (2009), paragraphs on widowhood and the 1185 survey, including the estates and Gilbert's age. Biography and source references and Flanagan's later study, pp. 120–21, n. 68; the inquest enters both counties and omits the son's name. J. H. Round, ed., *Rotuli de dominabus et pueris et puellis*, Pipe Roll Society 35 (1913), pp. 66, 76, as cited by Flanagan. Back

B4P Flanagan, "Aífe", on her charter for Ickleton and confirmation for Archbishop John Cumin, with the identification "heir of King Diarmait" in the author's rendering. A late thirteenth-century register, *Crede mihi*, preserves the confirmation without a witness list. Flanagan dates the act 1189 × 1199 from its reference to Count John, and gives the Latin in her later study, pp. 116–17. Biography Back

B4Q David Collins, *The Origins of the Lordship of Leinster and the Role of William Marshal* (Maynooth PhD, 2018), pp. 53–57, 73–79, and map p. 288. Chronicles usually give individual campaigns and submissions rather than the continuous boundary on a modern map. Thesis, chapter two Back

B4R Flanagan, "Aífe", opening paragraph, on Mór and Lorcán. Royal Irish Academy Back

B4S Collins, *Origins*, pp. 73–83, for the changing alliances, the removal of Diarmait's protector Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn and the evidence behind rival accounts of the expulsion. Thesis Back

B4T *Song of Dermot and the Earl*, ed. and trans. G. H. Orpen (Oxford, 1892), vv. 260–369, on the petition, licence and recruitment. Compare Collins, *Origins*, pp. 79–86. Verse text in Orpen's translation Back

B4U *Song*, vv. 327–365, esp. 340–45 and 350–61; Flanagan, "Aífe", paragraph on Gerald's account and the evidentiary limits. Both tellings come from the colonising side. Verse account and Flanagan Back

B4V *Annals of Ulster*, ed. and trans. W. M. Hennessy, U1167.6; Collins, *Origins*, pp. 84–94, for the sequence, staffing and landings; archaeological report for Cadw, *Cilgerran Castle Wall Collapse*, AD098 (2021), §3.2.3, on Robert's capture. Annal and castle report Back

B4W *Annals of Tigernach*, trans. Whitley Stokes, T1169.4–6 and T1170.10–13, pp. 277–80. CELT, section 24 Back

B4X Flanagan, "Aífe", paragraphs on her marriage and Maclise's much later depiction. National Gallery of Ireland, *The Marriage of Strongbow and Aoife*, NGI.205, oil on canvas, c.1854. Museum record. Biography Back

B4Y *Song*, vv. 1655–77, for the choice and request for time; *Annals of Ulster*, U1171.2, for Ascall, son of Torcall, and his allies. Poem and annal Back

B4Z *Annals of Tigernach*, T1170.10–12, printed p. 279, fol. 25b1, for Ruaidrí at Dublin and the expedition in Meath. Text and numbering T1170.14, p. 280, identifies a son of Domnall Cáemánach and a son of Murchad Ua Cellaig among the executed hostages. T1170.16 separately notes that Diarmait's son Conchobar died, without giving the circumstances. The specific identifications are those of this recension. Back

B5A *Annals of Ulster*, U1171.1–4, Hennessy's translation. The entry characterises the death as reparation to named saints. The annalist's moral setting governs the use made here of the deathbed. CELT text Back

B5B Collins, *Origins*, pp. 93–99, on the claim to succeed, the resources of Domnall Cáemánach, Dublin and the military crisis. Chapter two Back

B5C Collins, *Origins*, pp. 97–99, 103–08, discusses the differing accounts of the submissions and reservations of port towns. Dublin's royal status is secure. Text Back

B5D Marie Therese Flanagan, "Defining Lordships in Angevin Ireland: William Marshal and the King's Justiciar", in M. Aurell and F. Boutoulle, eds., *Les seigneuries dans l'espace Plantagenêt* (2009), pp. 41–45, 52–56, on grants, royal reservations and the difference between land promised and effective possession. Author's text Back

B5E Flanagan, "Aífe", paragraphs on Chepstow and the two charters. Chepstow's later custodian's allowance supplies a comparison; the accounts do not narrate a siege commanded by her. Biography Flanagan, 'Negotiating across Legal and Cultural Borders', pp. 113–17 in the linked copy, nn. 47–57. The Ickleton charter's eleven witnesses do not date it securely to either marriage or widowhood. The Count John reference dates the Dublin confirmation to 1189 × 1199. Full study. Back

B5F Flanagan, "Aífe", on her charter for Ickleton and confirmation for Archbishop John Cumin, with the identification "heir of King Diarmait" in the author's rendering. A late thirteenth-century register, *Crede mihi*, preserves the confirmation without a witness list. Flanagan dates the act 1189 × 1199 from its reference to Count John, and gives the Latin in her later study, pp. 116–17. Biography Back

B5G David Beresford, "Marshal, Isabella", *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (2009), first paragraph, editorial range 1185 × 1189; compare Flanagan, "Aífe", on Gilbert's age in 1185. Isabel Back

B5H Beresford, "Marshal, Isabella", opening paragraphs, on marriage, custody and the contested Irish inheritance; David Crouch, ed., *Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family*, Camden Fifth Series 47 (2015), p. 185, first calendar in Isabel's section. Isabel's life and Orbec calendar Back

B5J In the family poem William addresses the tenants directly. Paul Meyer, ed., *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, II, p. 123, vv. 13535–38, prints 'Vos fefa tuz'. It is the poem's account of enfeoffment. Edited text, p. 123. Back

The place they shall choose

B5K Scene source · Collins, Origins of the Lordship of Leinster, pp. 254–55 Back

B5L Visual exemplar · Hunterian Psalter, c. 1170 Back

B5M David Collins, *The Origins of the Lordship of Leinster* (2018), pp. 103–09, 143–45, 218–20, on Osraige, the early castle and the campaigns. Maynooth thesis Emmett O'Byrne, 'Mac Gilla Pátraic, Domnall' and 'Mac Gilla Pátraic, Máel Sechlainn', distinguishes the two kings called Domnall and dates the northern king's death to 1185 and his son's to 1193/94. The suggested royal authorisation of the forfeiture remains tentative. Father · Son. Back

B5N John Bradley, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, no. 10, *Kilkenny*, opening historical essay, pp. 1–3, on the Breagagh, St Patrick's and St Canice's, church holdings and the lord's town. Royal Irish Academy, atlas text Back

B5P Collins, *Origins*, pp. 143–45, 219–21, contrasts the abandonment in 1173 with entries for 1192, comparing annals and archaeological evidence. He presents the idea of an organised regional policy as a possibility. Thesis Back

B5Q Collins, pp. 220–23, particularly p. 222 n. 24, on the alterations and the description in the 1307 extent. Discussion and sources Back

B5R Collins, pp. 143–45, comparing accounts of the 1192 expedition, with Uí Briain–Mac Carthaig rivalry and its changing alliances. Text Back

B5S William Marshal the elder's charter to Kilkenny, c.1207, rent fixed by Geoffrey; John Bradley, *Kilkenny*, historical essay and "Municipal boundary"; Charles McNeill, ed., *Liber Primus Kilkenniensis* (1931), pp. 13–15. Custodian's account of charter transmission, manuscript rent clause, p. 68 and edition Back

B5T Collins, pp. 155–58, on royal grants of September 1199 and the Chinon grant of 25 June 1200, citing the charter rolls and H. S. Sweetman's *Calendar of Documents Relating to Ireland*, I. Discussion and act references Back

B5U Marie Therese Flanagan, "Defining Lordships in Angevin Ireland", pp. 41–46, 52–55, especially the reservations in grants compared at pp. 53–54 and the accounts, p. 55. Text Back

B5V King John, B67, Hamstead Marshall, 3 December, probably 1200. The original-charters calendar supplies the year with a query. The newly discovered charters catalogue calls the Ware original lost, while the original-charters catalogue photographs BL Add MS 4783, fol. 31 and records disagreement as to whether it is original or an early copy; *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, p. 1136. The two decision-makers follow "in loco competenti", "in a suitable place" (our translation). Latin and calendar Back

B5W B67 as above; Collins, pp. 30–31, 156–57, 250–51, separates the gap in the itinerary from the tradition told by Ware and others. Thesis, on the visit Back

B5X Collins, pp. 250–53, reviewing Ann Lynch's excavations, incl. pp. 251–52 on the missing evidence for timber structures, medieval fabric and changes to the west doorway. Thesis Back

B5Y Collins, p. 250, on the monks as possible practical selectors. Compare John's allocation of responsibility to Isabel and Geoffrey in B67. Neither source identifies the person who first suggested the exact footprint of the building. Collins ↩

B5Z Collins, pp. 254–55, on the Stanley community's moves, with the consecration of the cemetery, and the possible concern about Jerpoint. Duiske section ↩

B6A William Marshal's grant to Duiske, in David Crouch, ed., *Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family*, p. 89, discussed and compared with family confirmations by Collins, pp. 255–56 n. 205. The initial charter dates no earlier than 1207. National Library of Ireland, Duiske foundation charter record and terms and later confirmations ↩

B6B Collins, pp. 255, 260–61; John Marshall, "The Pope, a Knight and a Bishop on the Edge of Christendom", *Irish Historical Studies* 47 (2023), pp. 175–80. Article ↩

B6C Irish Walled Towns Network, "New Ross", *Walled Town Crier* (June 2025), account of river commerce and the Waterford route. Compare the chronology in Collins, pp. 172–76, 188–92. New Ross study ↩

B6D *History of William Marshal*, raid on New Ross, and King John's letter issued at the new bridge, 1210, compared in the Irish Walled Towns Network study and Collins, pp. 173–76, 189–91. Town evidence ↩

B6E Isabel, countess of Pembroke, notification for Bec concerning St Mary of Orbec, in Crouch, *Acts and Letters*, p. 185, dated 1199 × 1220. Calendar and transmission inspected; Paris, BnF, ms. latin 13905, *Chronicon Beccense*, p. 168, late seventeenth-century copy. The printed calendar gives "for herself or her heirs". Cambridge edition extract ↩

The keys of the Teifi

B6F Scene source · Brut y Tywysogion, trans. ab Ithel, pp. 228–29 ↩

B6G Visual exemplar · Hunterian Psalter, c. 1170 ↩

B6H *Brut y Tywysogion*, ed. and trans. John Williams ab Ithel, Rolls Series (1860), pp. 228–29, feast at Aberteifi, the two chairs and winners. The surviving Welsh versions derive from an earlier annalistic tradition. Open edition, p. 229 ↩

B6J *Brut*, pp. 202–05, capture of Robert; *Cilgerran Castle Wall Collapse: Archaeological Record*, AD098 (2021), §§3.2.2–4. Edition, p. 203 and archaeological report ↩

B6K *Brut*, pp. 202–05, distinguishes Pembroke's French and the Flemings. The report dates Rhys's capture to 1165 and the counterattack to 1166; ab Ithel prints an earlier annal heading, hence the cautious date. Text ↩

B6L Marie Therese Flanagan, "Defining Lordships in Angevin Ireland", pp. 42–44, especially the evidence distinguishing Meiler's ancestry and landed interests from William's. Author's text ↩

B6M AD098, §3.2.5 for the 1172 settlement; compare the dossier of Rhys's campaigns and acts in "Rhys ap Gruffydd", *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. Archaeological report ↩

B6N Flanagan, "Aífe", on the recorded allowance for Chepstow and her suggested interpretation; Beresford, "Marshal, Isabella", on the 1199 recognition. Aífe and Isabel ↩

B6P *Brut*, pp. 251–57, on Rhys's death and his competing heirs. Edition ↩

B6Q *Brut*, pp. 254–55, Gruffudd, Maelgwn, the relics and the unreturned hostages; the writer attributes their later release to divine action. Page 255 Back

B6R *Brut*, pp. 254–55, entries for 1199–1200, distinguishes the capture of Cilgerran and sale of Aberteifi. The sale is dated differently in modern accounts. Compare AD098, §3.2.7, where the close grouping risks confusion. Printed edition and modern report Back

B6S *Brut*, pp. 260–61, entry 1204, including Dinefwr, Llandovery and William's arrival with "a vast army" in ab Ithel's rendering. Page 261 Back

B6T National Trust, Heritage Records MNA132326, "Castle, Cilgerran Castle"; AD098, §§3.2.8–11 and the appended listed-building description (Cadw ID 14491). Site record and building analysis Back

B6U AD098, §3.2.2, alternative candidates for Cenarth Bychan, and official listing, appendix I. Archaeological record Back

B6V Cadw, *Pembroke: Understanding Urban Character*, "The Early Town", with distinctions between the keep, inner ward and possible later stages of the outer defences. Full study Back

B6W Matthew Siôn Lampitt, "Conclusion: Caerleon" (Oxford, 2025), pp. 175–90, "Networking Caerleon", historical sequence of Morgan ab Owain, Iorwerth ab Owain, Hywel ab Iorwerth and Morgan ap Hywel; *Brut*, pp. 218–27, on the recoveries of the 1170s. Modern study and edition R. T. Jenkins, 'Morgan ap Hywel', traces the succession from Morgan to his brother Iorwerth. Dictionary of Welsh Biography. Back

B6X Fanny Madeline, *Les Plantagenêts et leur empire* (2014), chapter on territorial construction, "L'offensive royale dans les marches", nn. 154–59, on western sheriffdoms, fortification and the connection with the Irish expedition. Open chapter PDF Back

B6Y *Brut*, pp. 286–89, entry for 1215. The surrender on the feast is the chronicle's specific claim. Some modern summaries use the broader conquest to describe a battle at the site. Full page 287 Back

B6Z *Brut*, pp. 288–91 (1216), distribution before Llywelyn, and pp. 312–15 (1223), younger Marshal. For the distinctions between Welsh versions, see the National Library's introduction to Peniarth 20. Page 289 and manuscript history Back

The lady at Kilkenny

B7A Scene source · Histoire, II, vv. 13532–46 Back

B7B Visual exemplar · Hunterian Psalter, c. 1170 Back

B7C Marie Therese Flanagan, "Defining Lordships in Angevin Ireland", pp. 42–46, 49–52, and David Collins, *Origins*, pp. 168–70, on Meiler's two capacities and the summons. Flanagan Back

B7D Flanagan, pp. 43–44, especially nn. 9–14 for the attestation of three out of twenty-one acts in 1185, appointment and grant of three cantreds on 28 October 1200. Text Back

B7E T. D. Hardy, ed., *Rotuli litterarum clausarum*, I, p. 78b, and H. S. Sweetman, *Calendar of Documents Relating to Ireland*, I, p. 47, no. 317, Rockingham, 21 February 1207, Close Roll 8 John, m. 3. Hardy's Latin, in the last writ before the heading for membrane 2, records five originally ordered, three and a half assigned, Adam's acceptance of four and the instruction for an additional half-carucate. Flanagan, pp. 46–47 n. 25, calls the last half a cantred. The roll and Sweetman's calendar both give a carucate. Printed roll, p. 78b · Printed calendar, p. 47 · Flanagan, n. 25. Back

B7F John Marshall, "A Community in Competition: The Barons of Leinster in Thirteenth-Century Ireland", *History* 108 (2023), pp. 421–45, §§II and IV, nn. 22, 77, for witnesses and Adam's holdings. Full article Back

B7G Collins, *Origins*, pp. 165–68, contrasting the household narrative and the date of royal licence, 19 February; Flanagan, pp. 48–49. Thesis The protection for William's lands and tenants, dated 19 February, is Sweetman I, pp. 46–47, no. 313. The narrative of the second hostage comes from the family poem, as discussed by Collins. Calendar, p. 46. Back

B7H John to barons of Meath and Leinster, 23 May 1207, Sweetman, *Calendar*, I, no. 329, p. 49. Collins, pp. 169–70 compares what the response attests with the missing petition, including William's absence from the address. Transcription and analysis of its contents The surviving royal reply names its addressees. Sweetman's calendar of the reply, p. 49. Back

B7J *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. Paul Meyer, II (Paris, 1894), vv. 13532–46, especially 13544 on printed p. 123. Meyer prints *rien*; his apparatus records *rein*. Personal rendering of the edited French. Scanned p. 123. Old French, search 13544 Back

B7K *Histoire*, II, vv. 13500–12, 13532–56 and 13742–78; Collins, pp. 171–74, on the distribution of responsibilities and Sauqueville's Ulster interests. Verse edition Back

B7L T. D. Hardy, ed., *Rotuli Chartarum* (1837), pp. 171–74, November 1207, as analysed by John Marshall, "Community", §II, nn. 26–29; Collins, pp. 170–71, on the nephew's office and holdings. Competition for the tenants Back

B7M Compare John Marshall, "Community", §II, discussion following n. 27, and Collins, pp. 167–72, 268–69, especially the alternate reading of omissions and the different kinds of tenants. Marshall and Collins Back

B7N Collins, pp. 173–76, 269, on the raid and chronology; the *Histoire*'s new town is identified with New Ross by Irish town historians. Thesis Back

B7P *Histoire*, II, vv. 13720–36, printed p. 130, gives Earley's reckoning, including "l'amor de nostre seignor". The apparatus notes an addition of *de* and calls the sentence apparently unfinished. Scanned p. 130. Collins, pp. 174–75, for the seizure of the knights' lands. Poem Back

B7Q *Annals of the Four Masters*, ed. and trans. John O'Donovan, M1207.12, a seventeenth-century compilation, for the five weeks, surrender of castle and territory, and expulsion. Compare Collins, pp. 174–77. Named entry Back

B7R *Histoire*, II, vv. 13806–48, especially the shift to royal direct speech. Compare Beresford, "Marshal, Isabella", and John Marshall, "The Pope, a Knight and a Bishop", §I n. 19, with Collins, p. 175, on the king's false particulars. Poem and Irish account Back

B7S Collins, pp. 176–77 and n. 241, for the security given to the countess and the hostages' relationships. Discussion and primary references Back

B7T March royal acts, Sweetman, *Calendar*, I, as cited and distinguished by Collins, pp. 177–79; Flanagan, pp. 52–56, compares the legal terms with John's other Irish grants. Flanagan and royal letters and grants Back

B7U Flanagan, p. 55, citing revenue accounts and Thomas fitz Anthony's reckoning; Collins, pp. 177–78, royal direction of 23 March for the people described as Irish robbers and those who harboured them. Account evidence Back

B7V *Histoire*, II, vv. 13957–14016, particularly the reconciliation at 14005–16. Text Back

The king at the New Bridge

B7W Scene source · Annals of Loch Cé, LC1210.9–12 Back

B7X Visual exemplar · Hunterian Psalter, c. 1170 Back

B7Y H. S. Sweetman, ed., *Calendar of Documents Relating to Ireland*, I (1875), no. 401, pp. 59–60, daily entries of 20–22 June 1210. Sweetman's English calendar retains the Latin place name in "at Pontem Novum". The precise dates in square brackets are the editor's resolution of liturgical days. Edition, p. 60 Back

B7Z Sweetman, no. 401; David Collins, *Origins*, pp. 187–89, identifies the bridge and compares the itinerary with the household narrative of two days' hospitality. Royal itinerary and poem Back

B8A Collins, pp. 181–85, on debts, earlier patronage and the de Braose account. The arrears are documented; the motive for choosing that moment to enforce them is an interpretation. Discussion Back

B8B *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. Paul Meyer, II, Irish sequence following the 1208 accord; Collins, pp. 184–87, contrasting the Marshal and royal narratives. Old French edition and comparison Back

B8C Sweetman, no. 401, pp. 59–63, including advances for mariners, galleys and Irish troops; Collins, p. 186, on the men and trades in the expedition. Account Back

B8D Collins, pp. 188–91, King's progress, approaches on Walter de Lacy's behalf and the distinct John Marshal of 5 July. For the family poem's restricted information about northern Ireland, see Seán Duffy, "King John's expedition to Ireland, 1210: the evidence reconsidered", *Irish Historical Studies* 30 (1996), pp. 1–21. Duffy's article Back

B8E *Annals of Loch Cé*, ed. and trans. W. M. Hennessy, I (1871), pp. 241–43, LC1210.4–6, "king of the Saxons" on the last line of printed p. 241; Duffy, opening comparison, nn. 13–19. Annal and source comparison Back

B8F *Mac Carthaigh's Book*, trans. Séamus Ó hInnse, MCB1210.1 and following account of the expedition; contrast its opening titulature and southern focus with Loch Cé. English text MCB1210.1 specifies an annual rent and stipulates Muirchertach's liberation. It gives no date of release. Back

B8G *Annals of Loch Cé*, I, pp. 243–45, LC1210.9–12, especially the attribution of counsel and the names of those arrested. Text at CELT Back

B8H *Annals of the Four Masters*, campaign entered under M1209.4–5, compared by Duffy, nn. 13–19, with the Clonmacnoise recension, Loch Cé and the notably southern perspective of *Mac Carthaigh's Book*. Four Masters and Duffy Back

B8J Duffy, "King John's expedition", section on the Anonymous of Béthune, nn. 39–53, comparing the horse and Irish gift-giving practice; the scope of the obligation is his interpretation. Article Back

B8K Collins, pp. 183–87, 190–93, reviews de Braose flight, capture and later accounts; distinguish death in custody from exact manner, location or speech. Study Back

B8L Collins, pp. 190–94, including the changing timing and identities of hostages and the fate of Geoffrey fitz Robert. Thesis Back

B8M William Marshal's Kilkenny charter, c.1207, McNeill, ed., *Liber Primus Kilkenniensis*, pp. 13–15, mill toll and rent. On manuscript p. 68 the line "in molendinis meis" specifies "in my mills"; the next provision supplies Easter and Michaelmas. See manuscript page 68. John Bradley and Ben Murtagh,

"William Marshal's charter to Kilkenny", in *William Marshal and Ireland* (2017), include an English translation; compare Bradley's *Irish Historic Towns Atlas* and the Kilkenny Archaeological Society's summary of charter terms. Charter study catalogue and local account Back

B8N John Bradley, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas* 10, *Kilkenny*, discussion of burgage widths, narrow plots along High Street and Parliament Street and changes in boundaries. Atlas text Back

B8P The 1383 exemplification in the *Liber Primus*, manuscript p. 64, first line, and pp. 64–68. See Isabel's assent on manuscript page 64. McNeill, pp. 13–15; Kilkenny Archaeological Society, account of the charter's scope and Isabel's assent; Bradley, *Kilkenny*, on the division between lordly and ecclesiastical settlements. Charter terms and atlas Back

B8Q McNeill, introduction to *Liber Primus*, reproduced by Irish Script on Screen, paragraphs on the insertion after fol. 33, exemplification of 1383, and cases in the lord's court. Manuscript catalogue and images Back

B8R Declaration of William Marshal and other magnates of Ireland, Sweetman, I, no. 448, pp. 73–74, quoted or paraphrased here from his English calendar. The editor dates it approximately; John Marshall supplies a close reading of the names, "Community", §II. Edition, p. 73 Back

B8S John to William Marshal, Sweetman, I, no. 444, pp. 72–73 (editor's date October? 1212), asks that barons give similar letters to those of the English magnates and asks advice about peace with the church. Edition, pp. 72–73 Back

B8T Ibid., no. 444, p. 73, on the horses and apparel, John of Earley, William's concerns over Poitou and who must pay; Collins, pp. 195–97, on the return of the sons. Writ Back

B8U John Marshall, "The Pope, a Knight and a Bishop", *Irish Historical Studies* 47 (2023), pp. 177–81, particularly nn. 16–24, for the hearing about St John, the change in the gift, the evidence for Ailbe's plea and rival dates for the onset of hostility; Collins, pp. 195–97, 260–61. Article Back

The meadow between Windsor and Staines

B8V Scene source · Magna Carta (1215), cl. 7 Back

B8W Visual exemplar · Hunterian Psalter, c. 1170 Back

B8X Nicholas Vincent, "The Articles of the Barons and Runnymede," 7–13 June 1215, especially note 15, citing the Bury chronicler on the journey to Staines. Magna Carta Project. Back

B8Y R. M. Thomson, ed., *The Chronicle of the Election of Hugh, Abbot of Bury St Edmunds*, pp. 168–73, and the royal order of 11 June, discussed by Nicholas Vincent, notes 10–13. Samson died on 30 December 1211. Hugh was elected on 7 August 1213. Bury chronicle and royal order · Antonia Gransden, history of the abbey, ch. 5. Back

B8Z John, Magna Carta (1215), preamble and clauses 2–8, 12, 14–16. These concern succession, wardship, marriage, dower, aids and service. On the younger Marshal's allegiance see Ronan Mackay and David Beresford, "Marshal, William," second life. Charter · Dictionary of Irish Biography. Back

B9A Anonymous of Béthune, *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre*, ed. Francisque Michel (Paris, 1840), pp. 143–53, trans. Ian Short, *King John: a Flemish Perspective*, pp. 25–30, for a military household's view of how John raised help and of his opponents' complaints. Nicholas Vincent examines the king's own explanation of the retreat and his allies' defeat. John's letter of 9 July 1214 · Bouvines, 27 July · National Archives on the demand for scutage. Translation. Back

B9B John to Roger Bigod and, separately in the same terms, William Marshal, New Temple, 14 January 1215. TNA C 66/12 m. 7 and C 66/13 m. 7. Nicholas Vincent corrects the printed roll's *nostras* to the manuscript's *vestras*, their own letters patent. The order records the security promised to petitioners and requires the two earls to make letters. Image, text and translation, document 1 · guarantors and their allegiances. Back

B9C Vincent, "The Articles of the Barons," notes 1, 7–13, compares C. R. Cheney and J. C. Holt on the dating of the undated Articles; surviving instrument British Library Add MS 4838. Sources and dating argument. Back

B9D John, Magna Carta, 15 June 1215, preamble and final dating clause. One of the named advisers is *Willelmi Mariscalli comitis Penbrociae*. Latin and English. Back

B9E Ibid., clauses 7–8. A widow's entitlements and the condition on remarriage occur in adjacent clauses. Charter. Back

B9F Ibid., clauses 4–5 and 20. The last provision distinguishes statuses and the things protected. Charter. Back

B9G Ibid., clauses 13, 17–19, 41, 45, 60. Charter. Back

B9H Magna Carta of 1215, cls. 39–40, 52 and 61. In cl. 39 *vel* appears in the contemporary French rendering as *o*, 'or'. Clause 52 assigned disputes over restitution to the twenty-five. Under cl. 61 the forty days ran from notification. Clause 39 and academic commentary · charter, Latin and English. Back

B9J Ibid., clause 61, on distraint, protection of royal persons, renewal of obedience, oaths and powers of the twenty-five. The castellan's predicament is an illustration of the practical issue. Charter. Back

B9K Ibid., clauses 56–58, especially the geographical allocation of law in 56 and the exceptions to the respite in 57. Huw Pryce, ed., *The Acts of Welsh Rulers 1120–1283* (Cardiff, 2005), pp. 26–27, places them within Llywelyn's diplomacy. Charter · Pryce. Back

B9L John, Magna Carta, clauses 1, 52–53, 57, 61; Nicholas Vincent, "The Articles of the Barons," for Bury. Charter. Back

B9M Vincent, "Magna Carta and Peace," 14–20 June 1215, notes 9–21, using Patent and Close Rolls and Hereford's original mandate; compare clause 50 of Magna Carta. Orders and surviving letter. Back

B9N Vincent, "John restores the land of former rebels," 21–27 June 1215, notes 24–41. Distinguish a royal command to restore from confirmed physical delivery. Orders and references. Back

B9P Vincent, "The Terms of the London Treaty," 9–15 August 1215, particularly the conditions on London and the letter of 9 August about Rochester. Treaty and orders. Back

B9Q Anonymous of Béthune, ed. Michel, pp. 149–52, trans. Short pp. 28–29. The anonymous writer's selection and explanation should be compared with the actual charter, especially clause 61. French-speaking household's account in translation. Back

B9R John, Close Roll I, pp. 238–39; Vincent, "John and the siege of Rochester: week seven," 22–28 November, notes 1–7. The order gives the intended use of the fuel. For the Medway crossing and the bridge, see Vincent, first week of the siege. Writ and surrounding orders. Back

B9S Anonymous of Béthune, ed. Michel, pp. 157–70, trans. Short, pp. 31–37, especially Michel pp. 159–62, Short pp. 32–34, for the mission during the siege. Kate Norgate, *John Lackland*, pp. 254–55

nn. 1133–35, finds indications that approaches began earlier. English Heritage discusses the ensuing invasion. Norgate. Béthune · Dover. Back

A king in Gloucester

B9T Scene source · Wendover, Flores historiarum, IV, pp. 1–2 Back

B9U Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

B9V Anonymous of Béthune, *Histoire des ducs de Normandie*, ed. Michel, pp. 167–70, trans. Ian Short, *King John: a Flemish Perspective*, pp. 35–37, on the landing, Guala and the king's movements. Short, p. 36. Back

B9W Béthune, ed. Michel, pp. 90–91, 161–69, for the marriage of Blanche and Louis and the approach to Louis. English Heritage, "The Sieges of Dover," distinguishes London's proclamation from a coronation. Béthune · Dover. Back

B9X Béthune, ed. Michel, pp. 168–70, trans. Short, pp. 36–37. The point of view belongs to a household, and the description of John's feelings to the writer. Short. Back

B9Y Béthune, ed. Michel, pp. 170, 178–80, trans. Short, pp. 36–37, 41–42, on the garrison, mine, timbers and dead; English Heritage's reconstruction identifies the attacked entrance. Narrative · Castle. Back

B9Z Anonymous of Béthune, ed. Michel, pp. 169–71, 179–80, trans. Short, pp. 37–38, 41. The barons receive Louis in London; at Canterbury he meets Alexander, who accompanies him to the army outside Dover. Lothian is the chronicler's identification of the land concerned. Short, p. 41. Back

C2A Anonymous of Béthune, ed. Michel, pp. 170–71, 174–75, trans. Ian Short, pp. 37–39, on Rochester, the claim to the marshal's office and the offer to Robert of Dreux. Ronan Mackay and David Beresford, "Marshal, William," second life, on the younger man's hostage years and change of allegiance. Meyer II, vv. 19169–19208, for his commission. French household's account · younger William · poem. Back

C2B John, last will, 18 October 1216, Worcester Cathedral; Anonymous of Béthune, ed. Michel, pp. 180–81, Short p. 42; *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. Paul Meyer, II, vv. 15170–15206. Kate Norgate, *The Minority of Henry the Third* (1912), pp. 1–3, notes 1–3. Will and Worcester burial · Béthune · Norgate. Back

C2C *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 15207–15284, especially 15261–84; Norgate, *Minority*, pp. 2–3 nn. 3–6, on Ralph's status. The poem is our authority for the conversation. Meyer · Norgate. Back

C2D *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 15287–15324, with the attribution of knighting to the Marshal; Béthune, ed. Michel, pp. 180–81, Short pp. 42–43, assigns knighting to the legate. Meyer · Béthune. Back

C2E Roger of Wendover, *Flores historiarum*, ed. H. O. Coxe, IV, pp. 1–2 (Giles translation, II, pp. 379–80); *Histoire*, Meyer II, continuation after v. 15324. Sophie Ambler, *Bishops in the Political Community of England, 1213–1272*, compares the two narrations. Norgate, *Minority*, pp. 3–5 nn. 10–20, offers a reconstruction. Wendover in English, ch. I · Ambler · Norgate. Back

C2F Wendover, *Flores*, ed. Coxe, IV, pp. 1–2, for Henry's oath and homage and their different objects. The judgments about the new king's comparative appeal are inferences. Account in English. Back

C2G *Histoire*, Meyer II, deliberations from vv. 15325–15600 and further counsel thereafter (especially the concern about age at 15510); Norgate, *Minority*, pp. 5–9 and associated verse locators, quotes the decision as narrated. Meyer · Norgate. Back

C2H Henry III, 1216 reissue of Magna Carta, advisers and authentication; Norgate, *Minority*, pp. 9–14; the details of Gloucester's deliberations are the household poet's. 1216 charter and surviving witnesses · Norgate. Back

C2J Henry III, 1216 reissue, preamble and final reservation; Norgate, *Minority*, pp. 11–13; the comparison is with John's grants in 1215, particularly clause 61. Norgate · 1215 charter. Back

C2K Durham Cathedral, holdings of the 1216 and 1217 charters, and David Carpenter, "Magna Carta 1216," first section. Durham · Carpenter. Back

C2L Carpenter, "Magna Carta 1216," Archives Nationales, J 655 Angleterre, nos. 11 and 31, discussing chapter 7 and his examination with Elisabeth Lalou. Textual comparison. Back

C2M Béthune, ed. Michel, pp. 181–83, trans. Short, pp. 42–43, including a distinction between the city of Lincoln and its castle. Translation. Back

The fair at Lincoln

C2N Scene source · Histoire, II, vv. 16467–16575 Back

C2P Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

C2Q Anonymous of Béthune, *Histoire des ducs de Normandie*, ed. Michel, pp. 181–83, trans. Short, *King John: A Flemish Perspective*, p. 43. Louise J. Wilkinson, "The Charters, Letters, and Seal of Lady Nicholaa de la Haye (d. 1230), Lord, Castellan, and Sheriff," in *Lincoln Readings of Texts, Materials, and Contexts*, pp. 107–52, especially pp. 108–12 on the hereditary constableship and its working. Wilkinson · contemporary narrative. Back

C2R Kate Norgate, *The Minority of Henry the Third*, pp. 34–38, app. II, "The Blocked Gate at Lincoln," pp. 272–75; compare the *Histoire*, ed. Meyer, II, vv. 16460–16565. Local identifications in Norgate are expressly argued. Terrain and sources · Old French. Back

C2S Roger of Wendover, *Flowers of History*, trans. J. A. Giles, II (1849), pp. 391–98, especially 391–92, "How the king of England assembled an army"; Anonymous of Béthune, Michel pp. 187–89, trans. Short pp. 44–45. Wendover · Béthune. Back

C2T Béthune, ed. Michel, pp. 193–95, trans. Short p. 48; Wendover, Giles, II, p. 391, on the raising of the siege of Mountsorrel. Their interpretations of the armies' behaviour differ. Béthune · Wendover. Back

C2U Wendover, Giles, II, pp. 391–93 (the assembly at Newark and the legate's address), under 1217. The implied advantage and danger are interpretations; the chronicler actually returns to the status of the cathedral clergy. Account. Back

C2V Wendover, 1217, "How the king of England assembled an army," and battle narrative on the crossbowmen. Use figures as his reckoning only. Giles translation. Back

C2W Norgate, *Minority*, pp. 35–40 and app. II–IV. Erik Grigg, "The Mysterious Blocked Gateway of 1217," *Lincolnshire Past and Present* 128 (2022), sections on the western identification and rediscovered southern gateway, compares Meyer II, vv. 16499–16507, with the excavation. The postern the bishop used and the gate he tried to open are distinct in the poem. For the battle's date compare Béthune,

Michel p. 194, Short p. 48, and Wendover, Giles II, p. 397, who gives Saturday but numbers it the nineteenth. Norgate · Grigg, article and plan. Back

C2X *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 16401–09, p. 227, vv. 16402–03: "Car cil qui me donent matire / Ne s'acordent pas tot a un" (the people who give me material do not all agree; our translation). Printed page. On banners and the alternative accounts, Norgate, pp. 36–37. Meyer III actually prints the key verses in his introduction. Meyer III, introduction · Norgate. Back

C2Y *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 16467–16575, pp. 230–33; Meyer III, introduction, note 177, notes explicit acknowledgment of the bishop's counsel at vv. 16997–99. Meyer II · Meyer III. Back

C2Z Wendover, 1217, battle narrative, on Falkes's entry into the castle, sorties, and targeting horses. Béthune, Michel pp. 180–82, for the offices clustered in his hands when John died. Wendover · Béthune. Back

C3A *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 16575–16617; Norgate, pp. 39–40. Old French · Norgate. Back

C3B *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 16630–42, engineer episode following the royalist entry, pp. 235–36, summarised with reference to the verses by Norgate, pp. 40–41, nn. 198–99. Meyer · Norgate. Back

C3C *Histoire*, Meyer II, death of the count, ca. vv. 16670–16757; Wendover, 1217, death of Perche; Béthune, Michel p. 194, records the death without the duel narrative. Meyer · Wendover · Béthune. Back

C3D *Histoire*, Meyer II, continuation through vv. 16968–70; Norgate, pp. 42–45 and notes 209–23, separates the obstacles met by the fugitives; Béthune, Michel pp. 194–95, names captives. Meyer · Norgate · Béthune. Back

C3E Béthune, Michel pp. 194–95, Short p. 48, including Hugue de Céret; Wendover, closing section of his account, on attacks on the fugitive foot. Béthune · Wendover. Back

C3F Wendover, 1217, Giles, II, pp. 396–97, section on the sack, sentences beginning "Having then plundered the whole city" and "Nor did the cathedral church escape this destruction", including the reference to the precentor. The sum is the chronicler's. On the event's name see also Norgate's different gloss, *Minority*, p. 41 n. 197. Wendover · Norgate. Back

C3G Wendover, 1217, Giles, II, p. 397, sentence beginning "This battle", immediately before his account of the Marshal's orders about the captives. The presentation above distinguishes his report of drownings from his explanation. Giles translation. Back

C3H Béthune, Michel pp. 194–96, Short pp. 48–49. Compare Wendover, who moves directly to news being told to Louis in London. Béthune · Wendover. Back

What peace cost

C3J Scene source · Forest Charter (1217), cl. 9 Back

C3K Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

C3L Anonymous of Béthune, ed. Michel, pp. 183–87, trans. Short, pp. 43–45, on the narrow estuary, boats, mills and provisions. In 1280 Edward I ordered a relocation to the hill at Iham. Historic England, Grey Friars, Winchelsea, listed monument 1002301, history. Short · Historic England. Back

C3M Béthune, pp. 181–87, 193–96; English Heritage, "The Sieges of Dover," sections on the second siege and the Weald. Béthune · Dover. Back

C3N Béthune, pp. 196–98, Short pp. 49–50, identifies the four clerks and attributes the failure of these talks to the dispute about them. Account. Back

C3P Béthune, pp. 198–200, Short pp. 49–50; Norgate, *The Minority of Henry the Third*, pp. 46–55. Béthune · Norgate. Back

C3Q Béthune, pp. 198–201, Short pp. 50–51, explicitly places Blanche at Calais. The queen's identification in subsequent passages should be treated separately. Account. Back

C3R *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 17200–17301, on the mariners and proposed embarkation; Béthune, pp. 200–01. Meyer · Béthune. Back

C3S Béthune, Michel pp. 200–02, Short p. 51, on the intended course and types of vessels. Source. Back

C3T Béthune, pp. 201–02, distinguishes Warenne's standard from his person and specifically names Hubert among those embarking. Short, p. 51. Back

C3U Béthune, pp. 201–02, on powder, capture, decapitation and display; Norgate, pp. 52–54 and notes 286–94, compares versions of the killing and division of the prize. Béthune · Norgate. Back

C3V Béthune, pp. 202–03, Short pp. 51–52; Norgate, *Minority*, p. 55 nn. 297–99, sets out the interchange of envoys and hostages. Narrative · Norgate. Back

C3W *Histoire*, Meyer II, peace deliberations following the sea fight; Norgate, pp. 55–56 nn. 299–303, with precise verse references. Meyer · Norgate. Back

C3X Béthune, Michel pp. 203–06, Short pp. 52–53; J. Beverley Smith, "The Treaty of Lambeth, 1217," *English Historical Review* 94 (1979), 562–79. Narrative · Modern study and edition. Back

C3Y Henry III to Honorius III, ed. W. W. Shirley, *Royal and Other Historical Letters*, I, pp. 7–8. Norgate, *Minority*, pp. 83–84 nn. 411–12, redates the letter to November 1218 because it refers to the new seal. Michel, p. 204, reads "et toz ses prisons devoit r'avoir" (and he was to recover all his prisoners; our translation), before adding the payments that he was to receive. Short's p. 52 reverses the direction. French page. Norgate and French readings · Shirley, pp. 7–8. Back

C3Z Norgate, *Minority*, pp. 83–85 nn. 413–17, examining the patent rolls and the earl's own letter. The wool and skins belong to the undertakings to finance Louis's departure. Documentary reconstruction. Back

C4A Norgate, pp. 58–60 and app. V pp. 278–81, quoting the Merton chronicle and a patent of 25 September. Different dates given for the peace refer to different acts or witnesses. Appendix on the dates. Back

C4B David Carpenter, "Magna Carta 1217"; *Charter of the Forest*, ed. Harry Rothwell, *English Historical Documents* III, no. 24, pp. 337–40. Charter relationship · Carpenter. Back

C4C Durham Cathedral, 1217 Forest Charter; Carpenter, "Magna Carta 1217," "Its Date and Authority," distinguishes giving, engrossing and sealing. Custodian · Textual and itinerary dispute. Back

C4D *Charter of the Forest*, Rothwell, no. 24, clauses 1–4, 8, on previously forested lands, pasture and summonses. The site provides the Latin transcription reference and an English translation. Charter. Back

C4E Charter of the Forest, clauses 9–11. Clause 9 allows a free man to drive his pigs through demesne wood and protects him from loss solely because they spend one night in the forest. Clause 10 gives the different rules for conviction for venison. Text. Back

C4F Ibid., clauses 12 and 14, especially the distinctions between kinds of forester and outside buyers. For public reading, Henry III, writ to the sheriff of Worcestershire, TNA C 54/16. Charter · Writ transcript and image. Back

A kingdom in trust

C4G Scene source · Patent Rolls, 18 April 1218, pp. 148–49 Back

C4H Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

C4J Anonymous of Béthune, *Histoire*, ed. Michel, pp. 194, 206–07, trans. Short pp. 48 and 53–54. Norgate uses the forms “de Gouy” and “De Gouy” for de Gaugy. Béthune · Norgate, *Minority*, pp. 99–102. Back

C4K Norgate, *Minority*, pp. 99–101 nn. 493–499, royal mandates of 23 June and 23 July 1217, undertaking of 26 October and orders of 27 January, 14 March and 4 July 1218. Records and discussion. Back

C4L Ibid., pp. 101–02 nn. 499–503, distinguishing the bishop’s payment for stores from the legal stages of surrender; Béthune, ed. Michel, pp. 206–07. Norgate · Béthune. Back

C4M Louise J. Wilkinson, “The Charters, Letters, and Seal of Lady Nicholaa de la Haye,” in *Lincoln Readings of Texts, Materials, and Contexts*, p. 108 nn. 1–2, citing *Rolls of the Justices in Eyre*, ed. D. M. Stenton, p. 233 no. 495, and the royal grants. The larger figure is Huntingfield’s claim; the smaller is the sum obtained in settlement. Study and references. Back

C4N Huw Pryce, ed., *The Acts of Welsh Rulers 1120–1283*, pp. 26–28 and nos. 240–42, especially p. 27 nn. 223–24, with reference to the Welsh provision in the treaty. Introduction. Back

C4P Pryce, *Acts*, pp. 26–27 nn. 219–23, referring also to the Peniarth 20 text of *Brut y Tywysogyon*, trans., pp. 88–96. Scholarly evidence · NLW on the manuscript. Back

C4Q Huw Pryce, “Anglo-Welsh Agreements, 1201–77,” in *Wales and the Welsh in the Middle Ages*, pp. 4, 8–9, especially notes 43–45, on the form of Llywelyn’s documents and the relationship between military power and the language of homage. Chapter preview. Back

C4R Pryce, “Anglo-Welsh Agreements,” p. 9 nn. 43–45; *Acts*, p. 27, nos. 240–42. Custody extended to the majority of the king; the prince’s own undertakings supply the main surviving evidence. Pryce’s comparison. Back

C4S *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. Paul Meyer, II, disposition of Caerleon through vv. 17815–17872, and III, analysis; compare the Welsh material cited by Norgate, *Minority*, pp. 92–94 nn. 454–59. Meyer II · Norgate. Back

C4T John Marshall, “The pope, a knight and a bishop on the edge of Christendom,” *Irish Historical Studies* 47 (2023), pp. 175–91, especially pp. 178–81 nn. 20–33. The household poem omits this contest. Open article. Back

C4U Henry III, Patent Rolls, 1216–25, pp. 148–49, 18 April 1218; compare Marshall, “Pope, a knight and a bishop,” pp. 181–82 n. 33. H. S. Sweetman, *Calendar of Documents Relating to Ireland*, I, nos. 823 and 825, pp. 122–23, distinguishes the prohibition on 18 April from the conditional enforcement order of 20 April at Gloucester; see the volume’s correction of Clogher to Ferns in no. 825. Calendar. Printed roll · Article. Back

C4V *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers*, ed. W. H. Bliss, I, p. 56, 7 Kalends July and related mandates; Marshall, “Pope, a knight and a bishop,” pp. 181–85, 188–91. For the writs of 14 and 17

January 1217 and the archbishop's counsel, *Patent Rolls*, pp. 22–23; for the later appointments see Marshall, nn. 48–50. January writs. Papal calendar · Article. Back

C4W Ibid., pp. 101–02 nn. 499–503, distinguishing the bishop's payment for stores from the legal stages of surrender; Béthune, ed. Michel, pp. 206–07. Norgate · Béthune. Back

C4X David Carpenter, "Magna Carta 1216," section on the Irish adaptation and comparison with H. G. Richardson's alternative explanation; chapters 1, 10, 26, 28 and 34, plus the discussion of the 2 December 1216 instruction on the port. Reconstruction. Back

C4Y Norgate, *Minority*, pp. 102–03 nn. 505–07, for Walter of the Hithe, the seal and restriction on perpetual grants. The landholder analogy is explanatory. Account and acts. Back

C4Z *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 17873 ff., III, analysis of the last illness; Norgate, *Minority*, on the illness and Caversham. Meyer II · Norgate. Back

C5A *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 17900–18125, debate about the king's future; Béthune, Michel p. 207, trans. Short p. 54, assigns subsequent personal custody to Peter of Winchester and Philip d'Aubigny. Poem · Chronicle. Back

C5B *Histoire*, Meyer II, address to Henry within the scene of surrendering responsibility; Meyer III, introduction and analysis of the address. The sentiment is paraphrased from the poem. Poem · Meyer III. Back

C5C *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 18185–18265, including the instructions for the textiles; III, analysis of these verses. Poem. Back

C5D *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 18314–18420, and Anon. of Béthune, Michel p. 207, where the Templar affiliation is supplied immediately after the death notice. Poem · Notice. Back

C5E *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 18683–18746, distribution of furred robes, and Meyer III, p. 263, analysis of vv. 18724–46, paragraph beginning "Les robes furent distribuées". The poet distinguishes the household distribution from the disposal of what remains. Text · Analysis. Back

C5F *Histoire*, Meyer II, death and funeral procession, ca. vv. 18800–19120; Ronan Mackay and David Beresford, "Marshal, William," *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, for the place and date; compare the briefer Béthune notice, Michel p. 207. Meyer · Beresford. Back

The children who would hear

C5G Scene source · Histoire, II, vv. 19169–19208 Back

C5H Visual exemplar · Winchester Bible, c. 1160–80 Back

C5J *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, ed. Paul Meyer, II, vv. 18979–19046, including the joint Reading gift and Staines; III, analysis of these verses. Poem · Analysis. Back

C5K Ibid., vv. 19047–19116, archbishop and alms, and Temple Church, "To the End of the Templars," on the Round and subsequent family burials. Poem · Temple Church. Back

C5L P. J. Lankester, "A Military Effigy in Dorchester Abbey," *Oxoniensia* 52 (1987), pp. 170–71 nn. 222–26, distinguishes documented burials from traditional identifications. The drapery and shield discussed here are those of RCHM no. 9. Lankester, p. 171 · Temple Church, younger William. Back

C5M David Beresford, "Marshal, Isabella," *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, closing paragraph; Daniel Power, "The French Interests of the Marshal Earls of Striguil and Pembroke, 1189–1234," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 25 (2003), pp. 199–226, opening passage. Beresford · Power. Back

C5N Ronan Mackay and David Beresford, “Marshal, William,” *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, second entry, especially 1223–31. Younger William. Back

C5P *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 19165–19214, especially the attribution to the son and appeal to the siblings; compare Crouch on the likely date and audience. Poem · Crouch, p. 505. Back

C5Q Meyer II, vv. 19185–19196; Meyer III, introduction, pp. v–vii, citing the writer’s language about making a living in vv. 11401–04. Meyer, p. 330, prints “Qui cest livre a fèt & trové” (who made and composed this book; our translation) at v. 19196. Printed page. Epilogue · Meyer’s argument. Back

C5R Evelyn Mullally, “Did John of Earley Write the Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal?”, in *The Court Reconvenes* (2002), pp. 255–64, especially the opening and the quoted epilogue; Walter D. Scott, *Author, Text, and Audience* (Wisconsin–Madison, 2014), p. 4, compares Mullally, Meyer and Holden. Mullally · Scott. Back

C5S Meyer III, introduction, dating from relations, temporal allusions and vv. 16678–80, among other places; Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.888, 127 leaves, England, c. 1225–50. Meyer · Repository record. Back

C5T Henry III, charter of liberties, Westminster, 11 February 1225, preamble and closing provision; The National Archives’ 1225 tax assessment, source 15. The monetary grant was a fifteenth of movable property. Charter · Tax assessment and proclamation. Back

C5U David Crouch, “Biography as Propaganda in the ‘History of William Marshal’,” *Civilisation médiévale* 18 (2007), pp. 503–12, especially pp. 505–06, 510. The connection with the son’s correspondence and defence of the Louis settlement are the historian’s argument. P. 506 · P. 510. Back

C5V Crouch, “Biography as Propaganda,” pp. 510–11, esp. p. 511 n. 19; Huw Pryce with Charles Insley, *The Acts of Welsh Rulers*, pp. 36–37 nn. 291–92, nos. 477–78; R. L. Penrose, *Urban Development in the Lordships of Glamorgan, Gwynllwg, Caerleon and Usk under the Clare Family, 1217–1314* (1997), pp. 25–26 nn. 197–201, distinguishing the 1231 custody from the family’s claim. The post-mortem inquest records the two commotes and what service Morgan owed for them; it does not describe his possession of either castle in 1234. For the family case see Meyer II, vv. 17706–17872. Crouch · Pryce · Penrose · inquest, no. 150 · family account. Back

C5W Power, “French Interests,” pp. 199–200; *Annála Connacht*, ed. and trans. A. Martin Freeman, under 1234.2, and *Annales Hiberniae*, ed. and trans. Richard Butler, under 1234. The latter distinguishes wound and later death. Annals of Connacht · Annales Hiberniae · Power. Back

C5X Matthew Paris, *English History*, trans. J. A. Giles, I, 1241, pp. 360–61 and 378–79, on Gilbert falling and being dragged near Hertford, then on Henry’s reported objection to Walter’s attendance and the eventual investiture. Kingsford gives Ware as the tournament locality, and October for the investiture. Compare John Marshall, “The pope, a knight and a bishop,” pp. 189–90 n. 75, on the brothers’ succession. Matthew Paris · *Kingsford, Dictionary of National Biography* · Marshall. Back

C5Y *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 14860–14960, on the children and marriages; *Annales Hiberniae*, ed. Butler, 1247 family notice and nn. 85–92, distinguishing errors in later pedigrees. Poem · Annals and critical notes. Back

C5Z John Marshall, “The Marshal partition of 1247: a medieval text’s journey through early modern Ireland,” *Historical Research* 98 (2025), pp. 188 ff.; *Annales Hiberniae*, ed. Butler, nn. 85–92, including the

text reported by Hanmer and variant genealogies. These are shares of family lines, rather than five personal allotments to daughters all living. Marshall · Edited text and notes. Back

C6A Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. H. R. Luard, IV, entry following Anselm's death in 1245; John Marshall, "The pope, a knight and a bishop," pp. 189–90 nn. 74–76, contrasts the later story with the contemporary correspondence. Analysis and primary source reference. Back

C6B Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.888, formerly Phillipps MS 25155, provenance, binding and flyleaf inscription; Savile sale, 6 February 1861, lot 51. The catalogue reports the inscription, leaf count and dimensions. Repository record. Back

C6C Meyer III, introduction, on William's final speech and the author's general reliability; compare the specific tests in Crouch, "Biography as Propaganda," pp. 506–12, with its concluding acknowledgment of the poet's integrity as a researcher. Meyer · Crouch, p. 512. Back

C6D *Histoire*, Meyer II, vv. 19117–19164, with the French king and two of his men voicing different judgments; vv. 19165–19214 for the son's commission. Closing conversation · Epilogue. Back

Illustration credits

C6E *Hunterian Psalter*. England, about 1170. University of Glasgow Library, MS Hunter 229 (U.3.2). Its narrative pictures, coloured bands and gilded fields are among the visual exemplars. Glasgow's illustrated folio sequence. Back

C6F *Winchester Bible*, Morgan Leaf. Winchester, late twelfth century. Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.619. Its narrative registers, architectural compartments and opaque colours on parchment supply a second visual reference. Manuscript record · Curator's account. Back

C6G *Winchester Bible*, Morgan Leaf. Winchester, late twelfth century. Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.619. Its narrative registers, architectural compartments and opaque colours on parchment supply a second visual reference. Manuscript record · Curator's account. Back

C6H Natural Earth land data · Reuse terms · GeoNames geographical database · Philip's grant to Falaise, May 1204 · Rouen agreement, June 1204 · Norman interests and homage Back

C6J Natural Earth land data · Reuse terms · GeoNames geographical database · Philip's grant to Falaise, May 1204 · Rouen agreement, June 1204 · Norman interests and homage Back

C6K Natural Earth land data · Reuse terms · GeoNames geographical database · Philip's grant to Falaise, May 1204 · Rouen agreement, June 1204 · Norman interests and homage Back

C6L Natural Earth land data · Reuse terms · GeoNames geographical database · Philip's grant to Falaise, May 1204 · Rouen agreement, June 1204 · Norman interests and homage Back

C6M Natural Earth land data · Reuse terms · GeoNames geographical database · Philip's grant to Falaise, May 1204 · Rouen agreement, June 1204 · Norman interests and homage Back

C6N Natural Earth land data · Reuse terms · GeoNames geographical database · Philip's grant to Falaise, May 1204 · Rouen agreement, June 1204 · Norman interests and homage Back

C6P Genealogical source Back

C6Q Object or image record · Reuse terms Back

C6R Object or image record · Reuse terms Back

C6S Object or image record · Reuse terms Back

C6T Object or image record · Reuse terms Back

C6U Object or image record · Reuse terms Back

C6V Object or image record · Reuse terms Back

A guide to the sources

C6W *History of William Marshal*. Edited by A. J. Holden, English translation by S. Gregory, historical commentary by David Crouch. 3 vols. Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2002–06. The critical edition and apparatus; use the verse numbers of the edition a writer names. Catalogue. Back

C6X *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal, comte de Striguil et de Pembroke*. Edited by Paul Meyer. 3 vols. Paris, 1891, 1894, 1901. The first two volumes print the Old French poem. The third gives historical and textual discussions, an annotated modern French abridgement and indices. Meyer's analysis should not be mistaken for a second medieval account. Volume I; Volume II; Volume III. Back

C6Y *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal, comte de Striguil et de Pembroke*. Edited by Paul Meyer. 3 vols. Paris, 1891, 1894, 1901. The first two volumes print the Old French poem. The third gives historical and textual discussions, an annotated modern French abridgement and indices. Meyer's analysis should not be mistaken for a second medieval account. Volume I; Volume II; Volume III. Back

C6Z *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal, comte de Striguil et de Pembroke*. Edited by Paul Meyer. 3 vols. Paris, 1891, 1894, 1901. The first two volumes print the Old French poem. The third gives historical and textual discussions, an annotated modern French abridgement and indices. Meyer's analysis should not be mistaken for a second medieval account. Volume I; Volume II; Volume III. Back

C7A Morgan Library & Museum. MS M.888 (formerly Phillipps MS 25155). The only known medieval copy of the poem, produced in England; catalogue date c.1225–50. Catalogue; French manuscript authority. Back

C7B Morgan Library & Museum. MS M.888 (formerly Phillipps MS 25155). The only known medieval copy of the poem, produced in England; catalogue date c.1225–50. Catalogue; French manuscript authority. Back

C7C Mullally, Evelyn. 'Did John of Earley Write the Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal?' In *The Court Reconvenes*, ed. Barbara K. Altmann and Carleton W. Carroll (2002), 255–64. Discusses a dispute that depends on some twenty lines in the epilogue of one manuscript. Chapter record and opening. Back

C7D Crouch, David. 'Loyalty, Career and Self-Justification at the Plantagenet Court' (2003), 229–40; 'Biography as Propaganda in the "History of William Marshal"' (2007), 503–12. Ask how the poem addressed the problems of its family audience. Court and career; family advocacy. Back

C7E Crouch, David. 'Loyalty, Career and Self-Justification at the Plantagenet Court' (2003), 229–40; 'Biography as Propaganda in the "History of William Marshal"' (2007), 503–12. Ask how the poem addressed the problems of its family audience. Court and career; family advocacy. Back

C7F Roger of Howden (Hoveden). *Chronica*, ed. William Stubbs, 4 vols. (1868–71); *Annals*, trans. Henry T. Riley, 2 vols. (1853). A royal clerk with a gift for the distinctions between people in a procession, and for the political uses of written instruments. Howden reworked an earlier account, the *Gesta regis Henrici secundi*, traditionally attributed to Benedict of Peterborough. Its agreement with his *Chronica* can reflect his own rewriting. John Gillingham on the two works. The Young King's death; coronation; attack on London's Jews. Back

C7G Roger of Howden (Hoveden). *Chronica*, ed. William Stubbs, 4 vols. (1868–71); *Annals*, trans. Henry T. Riley, 2 vols. (1853). A royal clerk with a gift for the distinctions between people in a procession, and for the political uses of written instruments. Howden reworked an earlier account, the *Gesta regis Henrici secundi*, traditionally attributed to Benedict of Peterborough. Its agreement with his *Chronica* can reflect his own rewriting. John Gillingham on the two works. The Young King's death; coronation; attack on London's Jews. Back

C7H Roger of Howden (Hoveden). *Chronica*, ed. William Stubbs, 4 vols. (1868–71); *Annals*, trans. Henry T. Riley, 2 vols. (1853). A royal clerk with a gift for the distinctions between people in a procession, and for the political uses of written instruments. Howden reworked an earlier account, the *Gesta regis Henrici secundi*, traditionally attributed to Benedict of Peterborough. Its agreement with his *Chronica* can reflect his own rewriting. John Gillingham on the two works. The Young King's death; coronation; attack on London's Jews. Back

C7J Roger of Howden (Hoveden). *Chronica*, ed. William Stubbs, 4 vols. (1868–71); *Annals*, trans. Henry T. Riley, 2 vols. (1853). A royal clerk with a gift for the distinctions between people in a procession, and for the political uses of written instruments. Howden reworked an earlier account, the *Gesta regis Henrici secundi*, traditionally attributed to Benedict of Peterborough. Its agreement with his *Chronica* can reflect his own rewriting. John Gillingham on the two works. The Young King's death; coronation; attack on London's Jews. Back

C7K William of Newburgh. *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, trans. Joseph Stevenson, especially books IV–V. A Christian historian in Yorkshire. For York in 1190, read beside the Hebrew remembrance associated with Ephraim of Bonn and its transmission. Book IV; Book V; Ephraim of Bonn; University of Edinburgh commentary. Back

C7L William of Newburgh. *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, trans. Joseph Stevenson, especially books IV–V. A Christian historian in Yorkshire. For York in 1190, read beside the Hebrew remembrance associated with Ephraim of Bonn and its transmission. Book IV; Book V; Ephraim of Bonn; University of Edinburgh commentary. Back

C7M William of Newburgh. *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, trans. Joseph Stevenson, especially books IV–V. A Christian historian in Yorkshire. For York in 1190, read beside the Hebrew remembrance associated with Ephraim of Bonn and its transmission. Book IV; Book V; Ephraim of Bonn; University of Edinburgh commentary. Back

C7N William of Newburgh. *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, trans. Joseph Stevenson, especially books IV–V. A Christian historian in Yorkshire. For York in 1190, read beside the Hebrew remembrance associated with Ephraim of Bonn and its transmission. Book IV; Book V; Ephraim of Bonn; University of Edinburgh commentary. Back

C7P Anonymous of Béthune. *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre*, ed. Francisque Michel (1840), selection trans. Ian Short as *King John: A Flemish Perspective*. Covers Richard's death, Arthur, John, Louis, Lincoln, the naval campaign and aftermath. Short prints Michel's original page numbers in square brackets. Translation. Back

C7Q Roger of Wendover. *Flowers of History*, trans. J. A. Giles, II, 391–98 on Lincoln. The victors' sack of the city appears in a writer sympathetic to the royalist success. Edition, p.396. Back

C7R Crouch, David, ed. *The Acts and Letters of the Marshal Family, Marshals of England and Earls of Pembroke, 1145–1248*. Camden Fifth Series 47, 2015. Essential for the acts of the wider family, including Isabel. Check which William is named. Father and son often bore the same title. The shelfmark, the witnesses and the dating of the copy can help distinguish documents. Collection. Back

C7S Delaborde, Henri-François, et al., eds. *Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste, roi de France*, vol. II. 1943. Act 517 on the Norman frontier and Andely; 566 to the chapter at Reims; 633, the peace of Le Goulet; 789–90 and 792 on Falaise; 803–04 on Rouen and Bec. The CARo edition makes full texts and transmission descriptions available by act. Le Goulet; Rouen. Back

C7T Delaborde, Henri-François, et al., eds. *Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste, roi de France*, vol. II. 1943. Act 517 on the Norman frontier and Andely; 566 to the chapter at Reims; 633, the peace of Le Goulet; 789–90 and 792 on Falaise; 803–04 on Rouen and Bec. The CARo edition makes full texts and transmission descriptions available by act. Le Goulet; Rouen. Back

C7U King John, notification approving William's will, 3 December, probably 1200. Two descriptions in the Magna Carta Project differ concerning the original: one calls Ware's original lost; the catalogue of original charters identifies a surviving witness as BL Add MS 4783, f.31, whose authenticity as an original or early copy has been differently assessed. Both allow the site clause to be checked. Description and Latin. Back

C7V McNeill, Charles, ed. *Liber Primus Kilkenniensis* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1931). The town's records preserve the obligations of householders and the interests of the people who chose to keep a charter. Commission; digital manuscript. Back

C7W McNeill, Charles, ed. *Liber Primus Kilkenniensis* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1931). The town's records preserve the obligations of householders and the interests of the people who chose to keep a charter. Commission; digital manuscript. Back

C7X Pryce, Huw, with Charles Insley, ed. *The Acts of Welsh Rulers, 1120–1283* (2005), especially nos.240–42 for Worcester. Read alongside *Brut y Tywysogion* and sources for the native rulers of the March. National Library of Wales, Peniarth 20. Back

C7Y Mackay, Ronan, and David Beresford. 'Marshal, William'; Beresford, David. 'Marshal, Isabella'. *Dictionary of Irish Biography*. Irish relationships, political context, the bishop's dispute, and successors. William; Isabel. Back

C7Z Mackay, Ronan, and David Beresford. 'Marshal, William'; Beresford, David. 'Marshal, Isabella'. *Dictionary of Irish Biography*. Irish relationships, political context, the bishop's dispute, and successors. William; Isabel. Back

C8A *Patent Rolls of the Reign of Henry III, 1216–1225* (1901), 148–49. The legal reason asserted for suspending Bishop Ailbe's proceedings can be read in the royal mandate. John Marshall, 'The pope, a knight and a bishop on the edge of Christendom', *Irish Historical Studies* 47 (2023), 175–91, places the mandate beside papal material. Roll; article. Back

C8B *Patent Rolls of the Reign of Henry III, 1216–1225* (1901), 148–49. The legal reason asserted for suspending Bishop Ailbe's proceedings can be read in the royal mandate. John Marshall, 'The pope, a knight and a bishop on the edge of Christendom', *Irish Historical Studies* 47 (2023), 175–91, places the mandate beside papal material. Roll; article. Back

C8C David Carpenter, Magna Carta Project, studies of the 1216 and 1217 reissues. The articles explain what one word omitted in a copy or a damaged dating clause can change. Compare Henry III's Charter of the Forest, trans. in Harry Rothwell, ed., *English Historical Documents*, III, no.24 (1975), 337–40, and the catalogue description of the Durham document. 1216; 1217; Forest Charter; Durham. Back

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C8G Sidney Painter, *William Marshal: Knight-Errant, Baron, and Regent of England* (1933); Georges Duby, *Guillaume le Maréchal ou Le meilleur chevalier du monde* (1984); David Crouch, *William Marshal*, 3rd ed. (2016); and Thomas Asbridge, *The Greatest Knight* (2014). These four biographers ask different questions of the same man. For much of his early life they all rely on the same family poem. Painter, free edition linked by publisher; Duby; Crouch. Back

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C8K Gillingham, John. 'War and Chivalry in the History of William the Marshal', *Thirteenth Century England II* (1988), 1–13. Read the opposed interpretations of the carts at Arras against Meyer's vv.10780–10954. 'The Kidnapped King: Richard I in Germany, 1192–1194', *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 30.1 (2008). Arras, article scan; captivity study. Back

C8L Gillingham, John. 'War and Chivalry in the History of William the Marshal', *Thirteenth Century England II* (1988), 1–13. Read the opposed interpretations of the carts at Arras against Meyer's vv.10780–10954. 'The Kidnapped King: Richard I in Germany, 1192–1194', *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 30.1 (2008). Arras, article scan; captivity study. Back

C8M Power, Daniel. 'The French Interests of the Marshal Earls of Striguil and Pembroke, 1189–1234'. *Anglo-Norman Studies* XXV (2003), 199–226. Nick Hopkinson, 'Ultra mare in servicio domini regis: English barons and the defence of Normandy, 1194–1204', *Historical Research* 94 (2021), 213ff. The former follows property into a second generation. The latter follows service over years, testing the idea that barons collectively refused to defend Normandy. Power; Hopkinson. Back

C8N Power, Daniel. 'The French Interests of the Marshal Earls of Striguil and Pembroke, 1189–1234'. *Anglo-Norman Studies* XXV (2003), 199–226. Nick Hopkinson, 'Ultra mare in servicio domini regis: English barons and the defence of Normandy, 1194–1204', *Historical Research* 94 (2021), 213ff. The

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C8P Christian Corvisier, 'Château-Gaillard et son donjon', in *Les fortifications dans les domaines Plantagenêt* (2000), 41–54. Yann Potin, 'L'État et son trésor', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 133 (2000), 48–52. Studies of the castle in its landscape and of the stories told about the origins of the French royal archives. Corvisier; Potin. Back

C8Q Christian Corvisier, 'Château-Gaillard et son donjon', in *Les fortifications dans les domaines Plantagenêt* (2000), 41–54. Yann Potin, 'L'État et son trésor', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 133 (2000), 48–52. Studies of the castle in its landscape and of the stories told about the origins of the French royal archives. Corvisier; Potin. Back

C8R Flanagan, Marie Therese. 'Defining Lordships in Angevin Ireland: William Marshal and the King's Justiciar'. In *Les seigneuries dans l'espace Plantagenêt* (2009). Flanagan follows royal and seigneurial grants into disputes about the land actually assigned. Her study of Aífe examines the English and Irish records for an heiress acting in her own name. Lordship and the justiciar and Aífe and her charters. Back

C8S Flanagan, Marie Therese. 'Defining Lordships in Angevin Ireland: William Marshal and the King's Justiciar'. In *Les seigneuries dans l'espace Plantagenêt* (2009). Flanagan follows royal and seigneurial grants into disputes about the land actually assigned. Her study of Aífe examines the English and Irish records for an heiress acting in her own name. Lordship and the justiciar and Aífe and her charters. Back

C8T Collins, David. *The Origins of the Lordship of Leinster and the Role of William Marshal: Perceptions and Reality*. PhD thesis, Maynooth University, 2018. Read alongside John Bradley's *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, no. 10, *Kilkenny*, for the churches, crossings and settlements in which the lordship took shape. Thesis and atlas text. Back

C8U Collins, David. *The Origins of the Lordship of Leinster and the Role of William Marshal: Perceptions and Reality*. PhD thesis, Maynooth University, 2018. Read alongside John Bradley's *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, no. 10, *Kilkenny*, for the churches, crossings and settlements in which the lordship took shape. Thesis and atlas text. Back

C8V Duffy, Seán. 'King John's Expedition to Ireland, 1210: The Evidence Reconsidered'. *Irish Historical Studies* 30 (1996), 1–24. Compare the *Annals of Loch Cé*, ed. and trans. W. M. Hennessy, I (1871), LC1210.4–6, with the southern account in *Mac Carthaigh's Book*, trans. Séamus Ó hInnse, MCB1210.1. For the earlier conquest, the *Annals of Tigernach*, trans. Whitley Stokes, include the fates of hostages and religious houses alongside those of warriors. Duffy, Loch Cé, Mac Carthaigh and Tigernach. Back

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C8Z Grigg, Erik. 'The Mysterious Blocked Gateway of 1217'. *Lincolnshire Past and Present* 128 (2022). A modern excavation changes the possibilities for the royalist army's entry at Lincoln. Louise J. Wilkinson, 'The Charters, Letters, and Seal of Lady Nicholaa de la Haye (d. 1230), Lord, Castellan, and Sheriff', in *Lincoln Readings of Texts, Materials, and Contexts*, 107–52, locates the castellan in the court records after the peace. Grigg and Wilkinson. Back

C9A Grigg, Erik. 'The Mysterious Blocked Gateway of 1217'. *Lincolnshire Past and Present* 128 (2022). A modern excavation changes the possibilities for the royalist army's entry at Lincoln. Louise J. Wilkinson, 'The Charters, Letters, and Seal of Lady Nicholaa de la Haye (d. 1230), Lord, Castellan, and Sheriff', in *Lincoln Readings of Texts, Materials, and Contexts*, 107–52, locates the castellan in the court records after the peace. Grigg and Wilkinson. Back

C9B *The Greatest Knight: William the Marshal*, BBC Two, presented by Thomas Asbridge (2014). Presenter's university announcement. Back

C9C Dan Snow's *History Hit*, episode 1694, 'The Greatest Knight That Ever Lived: William the Marshal', 14 September 2025. Episode listing. Back

C9D *This is History*, series 3, episode 10, 'Magna Carta', written and presented by Dan Jones. Episode credits. Back

C9E *David Starkey's Magna Carta* (BBC, 2015). Distributor's programme entry. Back