The Dark Trophies of The Battle of Evesham, the Northumbrian Cult of Simon de Montfort and the War of the Welsh Marches (1264–1265)[*]

At the Battle of Evesham (4 August 1265) the army of Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, was annihilated and his body dismembered, his head, testicles, a hand and a foot taken as trophies by his enemies. So ended the 'first English revolution', which began in 1258 when a cadre of barons and bishops seized control of government from King Henry III and established a ruling council.[1] In 1263, the kingdom was ruptured by civil war; in May 1264, Simon's army defeated the royal side at Lewes, took Henry prisoner together with Edward, heir to the throne, and established a new constitution to last indefinitely. In May 1265, Edward escaped and joined Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester, and other lords of the Welsh Marches to confront the Montfortians. As the royalist army approached Evesham, Edward charged twelve men, led by the marcher baron Roger Mortimer, with killing Simon.[2] Some forty named noblemen (and perhaps many more unnamed) were killed in the battle, together with the majority of low-status combatants.[3]

This article considers the treatment of Simon's remains, which has not yet been investigated: beyond macabre curiosity, anomalously traumatic acts of violence require explanation. The (deliberate) killing of noblemen subverted centuries of chivalric ransoming

[1] The term 'First English Revolution' was coined by Adrian Jobson in his *The First English Revolution: Simon de Montfort, Henry III and the Barons' War* (London, 2012), whence A. Jobson, ed., *Baronial Reform and Revolution in England, 1258–1267* (Woodbridge, 2016), and S.T. Ambler, *The Song of Simon de Montfort: England's First Revolutionary and the Death of Chivalry* (London, 2019). For the distinction between rebellion and revolution, see Ambler, *Song of Simon de Montfort*, pp. 5, 172–6.
[2] O. de Laborderie, J.R. Maddicott and D.A. Carpenter, 'The Last Hours of Simon de Montfort: A New Account', *English Historical Review*, cxv (2000), pp. 378–412, at 403.
[3] C.H. Knowles, 'The Disinherited, 1265–80: A Political and Social Study of the Supporters of Simon de Montfort and the Resettlement after the Barons' War' (Univ. of Wales Ph.D. thesis, 1959), Appendix I; de Laborderie, Maddicott and Carpenter, 'Last Hours', p. 409.

culture, but can be explained in part by the need to eliminate recalcitrant enemies of the Crown at a time when judicial executions of noblemen were not practised.[4] Meanwhile, the slide to intra-noble lethal violence was beginning across Europe, with the increasing application of crusade vows and benefits to European war causing the geographical and mental boundaries of military ethics to collapse.[5] The treatment of Simon's body was not normal among the Anglo-French aristocracy and so was as shocking to contemporaries as it is to us, if not more so.[6] Indeed, the taking of body parts from enemy dead has never been a normal act in warfare (*contra* the human tendency to call to mind well-known examples and infer trends), and so anthropologists have investigated the making of such 'dark trophies' as a cultural act.[7] The Evesham case thus merits a historical-anthropological approach, which identifies the specifics of the act and locates it within the culture of its agents.

Crucial evidence comes in material produced by Simon's cult. He was never canonised but, in the decades following his death, was considered by many to be a martyr and saint. As his body took on thaumaturgical significance, his body parts became relics, objects of veneration for devotees. The monks of Evesham Abbey, guardians of Simon's torso and one hand, hosted

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[4] D. Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France, 900–1300* (Harlow, 2005), pp. 63–6; M. Strickland, 'Killing or Clemency? Changing Attitudes to Conduct in War in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Britain and France', in H.-H. Kortüm, ed., *Krieg im Mittelalter* (Berlin, 2001), pp. 93–122; M. Strickland, 'Treason, Feud and the Growth of State Violence: Edward I and the "War of the Earl of Carrick", 1306–7', in C. Given-Wilson, A. Kettle and L. Scales, eds, *War, Government and Aristocracy in the British Isles, c.1150–1500: Essays in Honour of Michael Prestwich* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 84–113, at 88–9.

[5] Ambler, *Song of Simon de Montfort*, pp. 334–8.

[6] De Laborderie, Maddicott and Carpenter, 'Last Hours', p. 408; Arnold fitz Thedmar, *De Antiquis Legibus Liber. Cronica Maiorum et Vicecomitum Londoniarum*, ed. Thomas Stapleton, Camden Society, 1st ser., xxxiv (1846), pp. 75–6; D.C. Cox, 'The Battle of Evesham in the Evesham Chronicle', *Historical Research*, lxii (1989), pp. 337–45, at 342; *Chronicon de Lanercost*, ed. Joseph Stevenson, Bannatyne Club and Maitland Club (Edinburgh, 1839), pp. 76–7; *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, ed. William Aldis Wright, Rolls Series, lxxxvi (2 vols, 1885), ii, p. 765; *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. William Stubbs, Rolls Series, lxxvi (2 vols, 1882–3), i, p. 69; *Annales Monastici*, ed. Henry Richard Luard, Rolls Series, xxxvi (5 vols, 1864–9) [hereafter *AM*], ii, p. 365, and iv, pp. 170–71, 174; William Rishanger, *Willelmi Rishanger Chronica et Annales*, ed. Henry Thomas Riley, Rolls Series, xxviii (1865), p. 37; William Rishanger, *The Chronicle of William de Rishanger of the Barons' War*, ed. James Orchard Halliwell, Camden Society, 1st ser., xv (1840), p. 46; 'Fragment d'une chronique rédigée à l'abbaye de Battle, sur la guerre des Barons', ed. Charles Bémont, *Simon de Montfort, comte de Leicester* (Paris, 1884), pp. 373–80, at 380; *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, ed. Richard Howlett, Rolls Series, lxxxii (4 vols, 1884–9), ii, p. 548; *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France* (new edn, 24 vols, Paris, 1869–1904), XX, ed. Pierre Claude François Daunou and Joseph Naudet, pp. 416, 418.

[7] For the term 'dark trophies': S. Harrison, *Dark Trophies: Hunting and the Enemy Body in Modern War* (New York, 2012), which contains references to the extensive literature on this topic.

pilgrims.[8] Meanwhile, a distinct manifestation of Simon's cult emerged in the eastern Anglo-Scottish borders. Its thaumaturgical focus was one of Simon's feet, rescued from the battlefield and presented to Alnwick Abbey by its patron, John de Vescy, one of the few Montfortians to survive Evesham. Simon's cult was nurtured by a small network of religious houses in the region, generating an extraordinary expression of devotion in text: an attempt to trace the biographies of Simon's body parts. This forms the centrepiece of the *Opusculum de nobili Simone de Monte Forti* ('A little work on the noble man Simon de Montfort'), preserved in the chronicle of Melrose Abbey.[9] Its evidence enables investigation of the treatment of Simon's remains. The discovery of how and why this tract was written must come before its use as evidence for the events of 1265. In itself, however, it offers a window onto the shared devotional and intellectual interests of those who produced it.

This article, then, has three parts. It begins by revealing how the *Opusculum* was researched and sponsored and, in so doing, roots Simon's Anglo-Scottish cult in the sense of regional historicity shared by the collaborators who worked on the tract, which bound their thirteenth-century present to seventh- and eighth-century Northumbria. It then deploys the *Opusculum* in a fine-grained investigation of the Evesham dark trophies. In the process, our geographic focus switches to another borderland region: the Welsh Marches. It was the marcher lords who set upon Simon's body, in order to send trophies to recipients in the Marches and Wales. Their actions were guided by a set of customs that belonged to their own socio-military culture surrounding the treatment of enemy dead. The final part explains why the marchers applied their dark trophy custom to the earl of Leicester. In order to uphold his regime in the face of marcher opposition,

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[8] D.C. Cox, *The Battle of Evesham: A New Account* (1988; 2nd edn, Evesham, 2019), pp. 33–44; J.R. Maddicott, 'Follower, Leader, Pilgrim, Saint: Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, at the Shrine of Simon de Montfort, 1273', *English Historical Review*, cix (1994), pp. 641–53; C. Valente, 'Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, and the Utility of Sanctity in Thirteenth-Century England', *Journal of Medieval History*, xxi (1995), pp. 27–49. The Evesham miracle collection is preserved in London, British Library [hereafter BL], Cotton MS Vespasian A VI (printed in *Chronicle of William de Rishanger*, ed. Halliwell, pp. 67–110). For Simon's hand at Evesham Abbey: *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Joseph Stevenson, Bannatyne Club (Edinburgh, 1835), p. 205.

[9] BL, Cotton MS Faustina B IX, fos 66r–73v, printed in *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, pp. 198–216.

Simon attempted the takeover of the Marches and agreed their cession to the Welsh. The treatment of his body was thus a marcher response to an egregious attack on the marcher lordships themselves. This finding calls attention to the Battle of Evesham as critical to the history not only of England's constitution but also of the political structure of the Atlantic Archipelago.

I

The production of the *Opusculum* can be reconstructed thanks to analysis conducted for the new stratigraphic edition of the Chronicle of Melrose, as well as internal evidence. The *Opusculum* sits within stratum 38 of the chronicle (British Library, Faustina B IX, fos 61r–75v), fourteen folios added at some point between April 1286 and May 1291, in the final phase of the chronicle's continuation and following about ten years of little activity. A team of four scribes contributed to the copying of the stratum.[10] The *Opusculum* appears on folios 66r–73v (amounting to over eighteen pages in its current edition), charting the religiosity, downfall and posthumous triumph of Simon de Montfort. The tract survives only here and the author was probably a monk of Melrose, given the identities of his informants and sponsors (the suggestion of earlier editors that the author was Franciscan is thus unlikely).[11] His informants apparently included someone who shared Simon's chamber, who furnished details of the earl's daily devotions unparalleled in other sources, as John Maddicott was the first to highlight.[12] A strong candidate for the role of informant on these details and others, as Keith Stringer has suggested, is John de Vescy, lord of Alnwick.[13] John had been a committed Montfortian throughout the war.[14] He attended the great Westminster parliament of

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[10] D. Brown and J. Harrison, *The Chronicle of Melrose Abbey: A Stratigraphic Edition*, I: *Introduction and Facsimile*, Scottish History Society, 6th ser., i (2007), pp. 9, 168–9.

[11] *The Chronicle of Melrose*, ed. A.O. Anderson and M.O. Anderson (London, 1936), pp. xix–xx; J.R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 87–8 and n. 32.

[12] *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, pp. 207–11; Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, pp. 87–9.

[13] K.J. Stringer, 'Nobility and Identity in Medieval Britain and Ireland: The de Vescy Family, *c.*1120–1314', in B. Smith, ed., *Britain and Ireland, 900–1300: Insular Responses to Medieval European Change* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 199–239, at 227 n. 118.

[14] *Documents of the Baronial Movement of Reform and Rebellion, 1258–1267*, ed. R.F. Treharne and I.J. Sanders (Oxford, 1973) [hereafter *DBM*], pp. 284–5; I. Stone, 'The Rebel Barons of 1264 and the Commune of London: An Oath of Mutual Aid', *English Historical Review*, cxxix (2014), pp. 1–18, at 4; F. Oakes, 'The Barons' War in the North of England, 1264–1265', in Jobson, ed., *Baronial Reform and Revolution*, pp. 199–217, at 204–25, 210; Stringer, 'Nobility and Identity', p. 215.

January to March 1265 and was with Simon in the weeks before Evesham. In the final battle he was one of fourteen Montfortians known to have been taken alive.[15] Released under the terms of the Dictum of Kenilworth, he went into revolt in 1267, was subdued at Alnwick by Edward's forces, and thenceforward built a career in Edward's service.[16] John was a significant benefactor of Melrose Abbey, so was well placed to kindle devotion there.[17]

The Vescys were also the founders and chief patrons of Alnwick Abbey.[18] It was John who established Simon's cult at Alnwick, retrieving one of Simon's feet from the battlefield and entrusting it to Alnwick's care. A rich account of the foot's reception is included in the *Opusculum*, probably obtained from John.[19] News of events at Alnwick could also reach Melrose via the abbot of Dryburgh Abbey, Alnwick's daughter house, which lies just three miles from Melrose as the crow flies.[20] Oliver, abbot of Dryburgh, was almost certainly consulted for the *Opusculum*, for an intimate account of his visit to Hereford to meet Edward and Simon in May 1265 is included.[21] Thomas Stonegrave, abbot of Rievaulx, the parent house of Melrose, is said personally to have

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[15] S.T. Ambler, 'Magna Carta: Its Confirmation at Simon de Montfort's Parliament of 1265', *English Historical Review*, cxxx (2015), pp. 801–30, at 811, 816–17; *The Royal Charter Witness Lists of Henry III (1226–1272) from the Charter Rolls in the Public Record Office*, ed. M. Morris, List and Index Society, ccxci, ccxcii (2 vols, 2001) [hereafter *RCWL*], ii, p. 149; Knowles, 'Disinherited', Appendix I.

[16] Knowles, 'Disinherited', i, p. 54, iii, pp. 59, 71, 101–102, and iv, p. 108; Stringer, 'Nobility and Identity', pp. 208, 210, 212, 219.

[17] *Liber Sancte Marie de Melros*, ed. Cosmo Innes, Bannatyne Club (2 vols, Edinburgh, 1837), i, pp. 307–10.

[18] Stringer, 'Nobility and Identity', pp. 206, 219–20, 227. The Vescys also had ties to Rievaulx: Eustace fitz John (d. 1157) (father of William de Vescy I [d. 1183]), who had founded Alnwick Abbey in 1147, was present at both the foundation of Rievaulx by Walter Espec in 1132 and the confirmation of Walter's grants by Henry I in 1133; William de Vescy I also granted to Rievaulx rights in the waste below Pickering. *Cartularium Abbathiae de Rievalle*, ed. John Christopher Atkinson, Surtees Society, lxxxiii (1889), pp. 16–21, 140–41, 138–9. Vescy patronage of Rievaulx continued in the thirteenth century but only the titles of grants made by Eustace de Vescy (d. 1216), Agnes de Vescy (wife of William II de Vescy [d. 1253]) and John de Vescy are recorded (*Cartularium Abbathiae de Rievalle*, ed. Atkinson, p. 273).

[19] *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, pp. 203–4. Simon's foot relic was recorded by Henry VIII's officers at Alnwick in 1536 (*Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, X: *1536*, ed. James Gairdner [1887], p. 137).

[20] Stringer, 'Nobility and Identity', pp. 223–4.

[21] *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, p. 215. The *Opusculum* account is the only record of Oliver's visit but, on 8 May 1265, the Montfortians authorised a Scottish embassy comprising Nicholas of Prenderleith, abbot of Jedburgh, Guy Balliol, Walter of Lindsey and John of Denmuir, envoys of the king of Scots (*Calendar of Patent Rolls of the Reign of Henry III* [6 vols, 1901–13] [hereafter *CPR Henry III*], *1258–1266*, p. 424), granting safe conduct until 24 May; the safe conduct reached them at 'Huntingdon' (whether the Huntington in Cheshire, Shropshire or Hereford) on 19 May and they asked for a fuller safe conduct because more time was needed (Kew, The National Archives [hereafter TNA], SC 1/3/184). Possibly Oliver was an unnamed member of this embassy. He is recorded as abbot of Dryburgh between 1262 and 1273 x 96: 'Oliver, abbot of Dryburgh (fl. 1262–73 x)', *People of Medieval Scotland, 1093–1371* (King's College London et al., 2010–) [hereafter PoMS]:, no. 2557, at https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/person/2557/ (accessed 18 Feb. 2021).

provided the information that one of Simon's hands was kept at Evesham.[22] The production of the *Opusculum* was thus the collaborative effort of a small network of Cistercian and Premonstratensian houses and their patrons, anchored in Roxburghshire and northern Northumberland. The houses of Melrose, Rievaulx, Alnwick and Dryburgh were bound by the mother–daughter bonds of the Cistercian and Premonstratensian orders and through neighbourhood, to both England and Scotland through their cross-border landholdings, and to a magnate who was their patron and cherished, as Keith Stringer has observed, a 'pronounced sense of place as a Borderer'.[23]

The naming of informants allows us to estimate that the *Opusculum* was researched, and perhaps substantially completed, between August 1265 and the early 1270s. Possibly the tract was circulated among the houses that contributed to it, as is hinted by the choice of a Melrose scribe to close the tract with 'Explicit opusculum de nobili Simone de Monte Forti editum' (if the final word is read as 'published'). The work was then augmented and polished *circa* 1290 (as Stringer has suggested), for the author refers to John de Vescy as he 'of happy memory', and John died early in 1289.[24] His funeral at Alnwick may have inspired the insertion of the *Opusculum* into the Melrose Chronicle. He was buried in the conventual church at Alnwick by the abbot 'with great honour'

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[22] *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, p. 205. Thomas Stonegrave began his term as abbot *c.*1286: D.M. Smith and V.C.M. London, eds, *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales*, II: *1216–1377* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 302. His naming provides the *terminus post quem* for stratum 38: Brown and Harrison, *Chronicle of Melrose: Stratigraphic Edition*, p. 169. For contact between Melrose and Rievaulx: E.M. Jamroziak, 'Cistercian Identities in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Scotland: The Case of Melrose Abbey', in M. Hammond, ed., *New Perspectives on Medieval Scotland, 1093–1286* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 175–82, at 176.

[23] R. Fawcett and R. Oram, *Dryburgh Abbey* (Stroud, 2005), pp. 8–14, 145–69; R. Fawcett and R. Oram, *Melrose Abbey* (Stroud, 2004), pp. 14–18, 241–2, 250; R. Bartlett, 'Cults of Irish, Scottish and Welsh Saints in Twelfth-Century England', in Smith, ed., *Insular Responses*, pp. 67–86, at 82–3; J. Burton, 'Dioceses, Saints' Cults and Monasteries', in K.J. Stringer and A.J.L. Winchester, eds, *Northern England and Southern Scotland in the Central Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2017), pp. 173–96, at 190–93; K.J. Stringer, 'Identities in Thirteenth-Century England: Frontier Society in the Far North', in C. Bjørn, A. Grant and K.J. Stringer, eds, *Social and Political Identities in Western History* (Copenhagen, 1994), pp. 28–66, at 40–43, 52–6, 62–3, 66; Stringer, 'Nobility and Identity', pp. 217–25, quotation at 219. For borderer activity and identity in the First English Revolution, see S.T. Ambler, 'The Surrender of Gloucester Castle in June 1265', in N. Saul and N. Vincent, eds, *English Government and Administration: Essays in Honour of J.R. Maddicott*, Pipe Roll Society, new ser., lxv (2023), pp. 257–77, at 266–8.

[24] *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, p. 203; Stringer, 'Nobility and Identity', p. 227; C.H.D.C. Farris, 'The Pious Practices of Edward I, 1272–1307' (Univ. of London Ph.D. thesis, 2013), p. 171 and n. 593; *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, II: *Edward I* (London, 1906), no. 723. The information that one of Simon's hands was kept at Evesham, provided by Thomas Stonegrave (see above, n. 22), comes at the end of the section on Simon's remains and was probably added at this second stage.

(according to the house chronicle) on 10 February 1290.[25] He was laid to rest among his forebears, for Alnwick was the Vescy mausoleum.[26] This lends further significance to John's decision to present Simon's foot to the abbey. In so doing, he associated the relic with the Vescy dynasty and, in expectation of his own interment at Alnwick, ensured that his bond with Simon would endure beyond his own lifetime. The attachment would be visible to those attending John's funeral or visiting the church, one of whom was William de Vescy III, John's younger brother and heir.[27] He too had been a Montfortian, one of a cadre of Northumbrians installed by Simon to defend Gloucester Castle following Edward's escape from Hereford at the end of May 1265. The Northumbrians surrendered Gloucester to Edward at the end of June; the terms of surrender obliged William and several others to change sides, in return for a full pardon for the entire garrison. Although William went on to pursue a career in Edward's service, there is reason to believe that, at least by the early 1290s, he was regretting his change of allegiance at Gloucester.[28] He took charge of the family's lands and responsibility for its religious patronage shortly before the *Opusculum* was copied into the Melrose Chronicle.[29] There is, therefore, strong circumstantial evidence for his involvement in rejuvenating Simon's cult—and his family's association with Simon—in the eastern borders.

But while the Vescy brothers could encourage Simon's cult, what inspired the special enthusiasm responsible for the *Opusculum*? The tract is distinct from other textual contributions to

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[25] John died in Montpellier and his body was transported to Gascony, from where his bones were fetched by Alnwick's abbot, Alan de Staunforde (William Dickson, ed., 'Cronica Monasterii de Alnewyke ex quodam Libro Cronicarum in Libraria Collegii Regalis Cantabrigiae de dono Regis Henrici VI Fundatoris', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 1st ser., iii [1884], pp. 33–45, at 37–8; Stringer, 'Nobility and Identity', p. 208). The Alnwick Abbey Chronicle gives the date of John's burial at Alnwick as 4 Ides February (10 February) 1288, presumably a mistake for 1290: Dickson, ed., 'Cronica Monasterii de Alnewyke', pp. 37–8. Given that John died not long before 2 February 1289, the time taken to retrieve his bones suggests a likely date for his burial of 10 February 1290, several months before his heart was buried at the London Blackfriars in December 1290: *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. Stubbs, i, p. 99.

[26] Stringer, 'Nobility and Identity', pp. 219–20.

[27] In 1290 William was at Alnwick around Epiphany: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Dodsworth 49, fos 18v–19r. He was at Westminster on 21 January: *Calendar of the Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Edward I*, III: *1288–1296* (1904), p. 107. At Westminster a pardon for debts was granted to him on 6 February: *Calendar of Patent Rolls of the Reign of Edward I* (4 vols, 1983–1901) [hereafter *CPR Edward I*], *1281–1292*, p. 340. I can find no trace of him again until *c.*15 July at Westminster: *CPR Edward I*, *1281–1292*, p. 375.

[28] Ambler, 'Surrender of Gloucester Castle', pp. 262–7, 268–71.

[29] *Calendar of Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office* (22 vols, 1911–62), *1272–1307*, p. 259

Simon's cult, which typically centre on a comparison to St Thomas of Canterbury. Having struggled against an oppressive English king and offered his life in that cause, Simon fitted the model of sanctity established by St Thomas and popular in thirteenth-century England.[30] The *Opusculum* acknowledges the parallel but does not pursue it.[31] The reason for contributors' interest in Simon must, therefore, be sought elsewhere. Here it is worth anticipating the suggestion that they were drawn to him by a common antagonism towards the English crown. The *Opusculum* was composed and then inserted into the chronicle during an unprecedented—if not wholly stable— era of peace between Scotland and England, between 1217 and the spring of 1291, when Edward I would begin to assert his claims to overlordship of Scotland. There was thus no immediate sense of the impending storm and the enmity it would bring.[32] Indeed, the scribes at work on stratum 38 followed the *Opusculum* with a laudatory account of Edward's crusade of 1270–72.[33] It was only later, in the midst of Anglo-Scottish conflict, that the cult of St Thomas, and to a lesser extent that of Simon, would be weaponised against an English king.[34]

Equally, the *Opusculum* cannot be characterised by reference to the normal run of contributions to the Melrose Chronicle. As Dauvit Broun has shown, the chronicle reflects the emerging perception in the thirteenth century of the Scottish realm as a coherent political entity, encompassing the king's territories both north and south of the Forth, as well as the community's own growing sense of Scottish identity.[35] There is one hint of this in the *Opusculum*, in the mention

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[30] S.T. Ambler, *Bishops in the Political Community of England, 1213–1272* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 67–8, 132–4; A. Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, tr. J. Birrell (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 167–70.

[31] *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, pp. 211–12.

[32] Brown and Harrison, *Chronicle of Melrose: Stratigraphic Edition*, pp. 75, 169.

[33] *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, pp. 217–21. Again, the likely informant was John de Vescy, who participated in Edward's expedition to Outremer.

[34] M. Penman, '"Sacred Food for the Soul": In Search of the Devotions to Saints of Robert Bruce, King of Scotland, 1306–1329', *Speculum*, lxxxviii (2013), pp. 1035–62, at 1046–9; Walter Bower, *Scotichronicon by Walter Bower*, VI: *Books XI and XII*, ed. N.F. Shead et al. (Aberdeen, 1991), pp. 354–7. I am grateful to Steve Boardman for bringing the latter reference to my attention.

[35] D. Broun, 'Kingdom and Identity: A Scottish Perspective', in Stringer and Winchester, eds, *Northern England and Southern Scotland*, pp. 31–86, at 37–9; Brown and Harrison, *Chronicle of Melrose: Stratigraphic Edition*, pp. 10–12; D. Broun, 'Becoming Scottish in the Thirteenth Century: The Evidence of the Chronicle of Melrose', in B. Ballin Smith, S. Taylor and G. Williams, eds, *West Over Sea: Studies in Scandinavian Sea-Borne Expansion and Settlement Before 1300. A Festschrift in Honour of Dr Barbara E. Crawford* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 19–32, at 28–31.

of Guy Balliol, Simon's standard-bearer at Evesham, who was 'by nation a Scot' and who died righteously for the cause of justice.[36] The Balliols were a cross-border family whose activity by the thirteenth century centred on Scotland: Guy's father was chamberlain of Scotland, and Guy was a member of the Scottish embassy authorised to visit the Montfortian camp at Hereford in May 1265.[37] Yet the author of the *Opusculum* had another reason for foregrounding Guy particularly. The Balliols were prominent benefactors of Melrose and Guy's father, Henry, and sister, Ada, had been afforded an honoured place of burial in its chapter house.[38] Indeed, the *Opusculum* is characterised not by a sense of regnal but of regional identity, the first clue to which is the cross-border network that fed the tract, described above.

The second is the substantial middle part of the work (occupying around a quarter of the whole), in which the author traced the dispersal of Simon's body parts. This was a peculiar task. Many chroniclers described Simon's dismemberment on the battlefield; three noticed the sending of his head to Maud Mortimer, and three the dispatch of his hands and feet to his foes, although they did not attempt to trace their destination and reception.[39] The tale of the hand taken by the marchers was included in the miracle collection compiled at Evesham Abbey.[40] This agrees with the narrative in the *Opusculum* but is briefer and does not describe the agents of the trophy-making. In searching for the unique motivation of the author of the *Opusculum*, the typology of his account is revealing. For instance, the dismemberment and distribution of Simon's body did not accord with the burial customs of the lay aristocracy. While the thirteenth century saw an increasing trend for the removal and separate burial of the heart (and to a lesser extent the viscera), this did not

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[36] *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, p. 200; Broun, 'Becoming Scottish', pp. 26–7.

[37] PoMS, no. 1994, at https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/person/1994/ (accessed 6 Oct. 2021); see above, n. 21.

[38] Henry Balliol (d. 1246) was buried in the chapter house, Ada Balliol (buried 1247) in an unspecified location near her father: E. Jamroziak, 'Making Friends Beyond the Grave: Melrose Abbey and its Lay Burials in the Thirteenth Century', *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses*, lvi (2005), pp. 323–36, at 326, 328–9. For the significance of the chapter house as a place of burial: D. Westerhof, *Death and the Noble Body in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2008), p. 67.

[39] For Simon's head: *Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, ed. Wright,, ii, p. 765; *Cronica Maiorum*, ed. Stapleton, pp. 75–6; Rishanger, *Chronica*, ed. Riley, p. 37; *Chronicle of William de Rishanger*, ed. Halliwell, p. 46. For the sending of his hands and feet: *Cronica Maiorum*, ed. Stapleton, p. 76; *AM*, iv, pp. 170–71; *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, ed. Stubbs, ii, p. 548.

[40] *Chronicle of William de Rishanger*, ed. Halliwell, p. 70.

extend to the separation of limbs for multiple burials.[41] Simon's popular saintly status could, however, invite the author to reclaim the traumatic act of violence at Evesham by locating it within a profound tradition: the distribution of saintly relics for veneration by the faithful. Still, his particular subject, the creation of relics through battle trauma and their subsequent transmission, was potentially challenging. Normally, a saint's remains were broken up years or centuries after their death, particularly at a translation ceremony. This might require violence of a sort—with the use of a knife, a hatchet or even a devotee's teeth—but this hardly compared to a saint being hacked up fresh.[42] A closer comparator was the retrieval of the relics of martyr-saints at the moment of death. Examples of martyrdom were rare in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century West and so the case of St Thomas of Canterbury might have formed a striking exemplar. Even as his body lay on the cathedral floor, devotees rushed to collect his blood in vials or by dipping pieces of clothing.[43] While Simon could be likened to St Thomas in the fact of his martyrdom, however, the dissimilarity of their deaths was awkward. Few of Simon's relics were retrieved by devotees. Most were seized by his enemies, their thaumaturgical significance unrecognised. It was left to devotees to transform their status from dark trophy to relic. Moreover, Simon was a warrior layman, felled in battle. Such men, if crusaders (as was Simon), could be considered martyrs but were rarely saints, not least because martyr-saints typically offered their lives unresisting, as did St Thomas.[44] Finding a path to sainthood through death in battle was, therefore, exceptionally unusual. There were only a couple of notable examples. One was St Olaf of Norway, killed at the Battle of Stiklestad in 1030, whose vigorous cult was centred on Trondheim.[45] The other was St

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[41] Westerhof, *Noble Body*, pp. 82–8.

[42] R. Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton, NJ, 2013), pp. 240–43. For the use of a hatchet: *AM*, ii, p. 289. For the use of teeth: Adam of Eynesham, *The Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, ed. D.L. Douie and H. Farmer (2 vols, London, 1961–2), ii, pp. 169–70.

[43] *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. James Craigie Robertson and Joseph Brigstocke Sheppard, Rolls Series, lxvii (7 vols, 1875–85), ii, pp. 15–16.

[44] S. Niskanen, 'The Origins of the *Gesta Francorum* and Two Related Texts: Their Textual and Literary Character', *Sacris Erudiri*, li (2012), pp. 287–316, at 305–9; Bartlett, *How Can the Dead Do Such Great Things*, pp. 178–9.

[45] A. Ommundsen, 'The Cults Of Saints In Norway Before 1200', in H. Antonsson and I.H. Garipzanov, eds, *Saints and their Lives on the Periphery: Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c.1000–1200)* (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 67–93, at 67, 71, 73, 76, 78.

Oswald of Northumbria, killed at the Battle of Maserfelth in 642.[46] Oswald met his death at the hands of pagan Mercians and so could be considered a martyr (he was categorised as such by the tenth century), and his cult flourished in post-Conquest England.[47] An author addressing the subject of the making of Simon's relics could trip on the particularities, unless he could align his subject with such a model.

Fortunately for the Melrose author, Oswald of Northumbria was a glittering exemplar for the treatment of Simon's remains. Not only had Oswald been killed in battle but Maserfelth had become a focus for pilgrims in the following years, the earth on which he fell reputed to have healing powers.[48] His cult was also associated with holy wells, with that at Winwick (Lancashire) said to mark the site of his death, that at Oswestry (Shropshire) the spot onto which his right arm was dropped by the raven who had carried it off.[49] Here was a close precedent for the site at Evesham, the healing powers of the battlefield's soil, and the miraculous appearance of the healing spring a year after the battle at the place of Simon's death, which formed a focus for pilgrimage along with Evesham Abbey.[50] More popular still with Oswald's devotees was Heavenfield, where the king had erected a wooden cross and defeated the British in 634. Pilgrimage to Heavenfield was encouraged after 705, when bishop Wilfrid of Hexham and his community became sponsors of the site, conducting an annual pilgrimage and constructing a church there—one still flourishing in the later Middle Ages.[51] It was the treatment of Oswald's remains, however, that sharpened the similarity to Simon: his arms and head were severed on the orders of the king who killed him,

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[46] There are signs of devotion to King Edwin of Northumbria, killed at Hatfield Chase in 633, in the early eighth century, but the cult did not flourish: M. Strickland, '"Undying Glory by the Sword's Edge": Writing and Remembering Battle in Anglo-Saxon England', in M. Ní Mhaonaigh, R. Naismith and E. Ashman Rowe, eds, *Writing Battles: New Perspectives on Warfare and Memory in Medieval Europe* (London, 2020), pp. 39–76, at 58–9.

[47] A. Thacker, '*Membra Disjecta*: The Division of the Body and the Diffusion of the Cult', in C. Stancliffe and E. Cambridge, eds, *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint* (Stamford, 1995), pp. 97–127, at 97, 125–6; D. Rollason, 'St Oswald in Post-Conquest England', in Stancliffe and Cambridge, eds, *Oswald*, pp. 164–77.

[48] *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969) [hereafter *EH*], III. 9–10

[49] Thacker, '*Membra Disjecta*', pp. 102–3.

[50] Cox, *Battle of Evesham*, pp. 36–9; Maddicott, 'Follower, Leader, Pilgrim, Saint', p. 652.

[51] *EH*, III. 2; Thacker, '*Membra Disjecta*', pp. 107–9; A. Binns, 'Pre-Reformation Dedications to St Oswald in England and Scotland: A Gazetteer', in Stancliffe and Cambridge, eds, *Oswald*, pp. 241–71, at 255.

Penda, and hung on stakes.[52] They were retrieved the following year by Oswald's brother, Oswiu, and entrusted to religious communities. The arms were taken to Bamburgh, where Oswiu had founded the church of St Peter to care for his brother's relics. The right arm and hand endured incorrupt, as foretold to Oswald by the saintly bishop Aidan; they were enclosed in a silver reliquary at Bamburgh and performed miracles.[53] Oswald's head was entrusted to Lindisfarne, the church Oswald had founded after his victory at Heavenfield and where he had established Aidan.[54] What remained of Oswald was brought by Oswiu's daughter, Osthryth, to Bardney in Lindsey, the house she had founded with her husband, King Æthelred of Mercia.[55] Here, then, was a warrior martyr-saint who had been dismembered on the battlefield by his enemies in order to make dark trophies, so creating relics to be cherished by devotees. The precedent was all the more striking because the Battle of Evesham took place on 4 August, the vigil of Oswald's feast.

The parallel was not widely noticed. Although Oswald's feast was listed in the calendars of many houses, it was only the London chronicler who remarked on the fortuitous date of Evesham.[56] But Oswald's example is likely to have held particular meaning for the author of the *Opusculum* and his network. Oswald was king of Northumbria. He forged the vast and wealthy kingdom that stretched from the Mersey to the Humber estuary in the south, and from Ayrshire to the Firth of Forth in the north, launching Northumbria's 'golden age' of the seventh and eighth centuries.[57] The Melrose community was already responsible for fostering the cult of another

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[52] *EH*, III. 6, 12.

[53] *EH*, III. 6; Thacker, '*Membra Disjecta*', pp. 100–101. In the mid-eleventh century they were spirited to Peterborough Abbey: Rollason, 'St Oswald in Post-Conquest England', p. 168; J. Dale, 'Liturgical Landscapes in Post-Conquest England: Commemorating King Oswald in the Northern Province', *Viator*, li (2020), pp. 229–61, at 232–3.

[54] *EH*, III. 12. The community probably took the head when fleeing the Vikings *c*.875, together with the remains of St Cuthbert, depositing both at Durham when they settled in the 990s: R. Bailey, 'St Oswald's Heads', in Stancliffe and Cambridge, eds, *Oswald*, pp. 195–209, at 197. Oswald's head was kept in Cuthbert's tomb and was inspected when the tomb was opened in 1104: Rollason, 'St Oswald in Post-Conquest England', p, 176; V. Tudor, 'Reginald's *Life of St Oswald*', in Stancliffe and Cambridge, eds, *Oswald*, pp. 178–94, at 187–8.

[55] *EH*, III. 11–12. In 909 the body (or at least part of it) was translated to the Augustinian house of St Oswald's at Gloucester: M. Bintley, 'The Translation of St. Oswald's Relics to New Minster, Gloucester: Royal and Imperial Resonances', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, xix (2015), pp. 171–81.

[56] Rollason, 'St Oswald in Post-Conquest England', pp. 164–5; *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. Stubbs, i, p. 69. The dating was also noticed later by Walter Bower: *Scotichronicon*, VI, ed. Shead et al., pp. 354–5.

[57] F. Edmonds, *Gaelic Influence in the Northumbrian Kingdom: The Golden Age and the Viking Age* (Woodbridge, 2019), pp. xv–xvi, 13.

Northumbrian saint, Cuthbert. A community had been founded at Old Melrose *circa* 635 as a colony of Aidan's Lindisfarne, and Cuthbert was its second prior; the Melrose Cistercians maintained the chapel there, dedicated to Cuthbert, throughout the later Middle Ages.[58] In so doing, they joined a number of communities on both sides of the border devoted to Cuthbert.[59] The landscape of Oswald's early cult also lay in the Northumbrian heartlands on what, by the thirteenth century, was the Anglo-Scottish border. The landmark moments of Oswald's life and death and the anchoring of his saintly career in the borders—particularly in Bamburgh, Lindisfarne and Heavenfield—were celebrated with liturgical commemoration throughout the later Middle Ages across England's northern province, as Johanna Dale has shown.[60] This was the very landscape inhabited by the *Opusculum* network: Bamburgh stands on the eastern coast, two miles across the sea from Lindisfarne, about forty miles east of Melrose and Dryburgh and twelve miles north of Alnwick; Heavenfield lies about thirty miles south-west of Alnwick.

Moreover, the primary source for Oswald's dismemberment and the passage of his relics to Bamburgh, Lindisfarne and Bardney was the great Northumbrian historian Bede. In his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Bede promoted a sense of Northumbrian historical identity and championed Oswald as 'the Northumbrian Constantine', the victor of Heavenfield who had founded Lindisfarne and worked with Aidan to bring Christianity to Northumbria.[61] In the second half of the twelfth century, Bede's work served as inspiration for the Cistercian communities settling in the territory of ancient Northumbria, who cherished a connection to the Northumbrian saints on whom Bede was the authority. Rievaulx, the parent house of Melrose, was 'the centre of Bedan influence'.[62] Moreover, Bede's account of Cuthbert's role at Melrose encouraged a particular

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[58] Fawcett and Oram, *Melrose Abbey*, pp. 7, 18–20.

[59] S. Crumplin, 'Cuthbert the Cross-Border Saint in the Twelfth Century', in S. Boardman, J.R. Davies and E. Williamson, eds, *Saints' Cults in the Celtic World* (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 119–29; Burton, 'Dioceses, Saints' Cults', pp. 185–6, 188.

[60] Dale, 'Liturgical Landscapes', pp. 236–9, 247–50, 252.

[61] Thacker, '*Membra Disjecta*', p. 112; Edmonds, *Gaelic Influence*, pp. 13, 103.

[62] A. Gransden, 'Bede's Reputation as an Historian in Medieval England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xxxii (1981), pp. 397–425, at 413–14; Rollason, 'St Oswald in Post-Conquest England', p. 172; R.H.C. Davis, 'Bede after Bede', in

affinity with his scholarship there.[63] Indeed, when the Melrose scribes began their chronicle in the 1170s, they perhaps intended a continuation of the *Ecclesiastical History*.[64] The chronicle begins in 731, the end point of Bede's work, with the lamentation that, since the time of that 'most truthful historian and excellent doctor, the honour and glory of our people', none had lived up to his example. This is followed by Bede's description of Britain's ecclesiastical organisation in 731, with attribution to the *Ecclesiastical History*.[65] The community subsequently added a prequel reaching back to the Incarnation. By the early thirteenth century, however, the part of the chronicle covering the years 249 to 730 had been lost.[66] While the thirteenth-century scribes could not know how their forebears had treated seventh-century Northumbria, they could glean from what remained the significance of the *Ecclesiastical History*, and could still consult that work itself. At Melrose, then, were scholars deeply interested in Bede who inhabited the landscape of Oswald's cult, historian-devotees primed to recognise the rare form of sanctity claimed for Simon. They could find one further and arresting parallel. Alnwick Abbey now held, in Simon's foot, a relic of a warrior-saint created by his enemies as a trophy, then wrested from their clutches by a devotee who would offer it to the house under his patronage: an echo of the passage of Oswald's arms to Bamburgh. Moreover, Simon's foot, like Oswald's right arm, was found to be incorrupt and then enclosed in a reliquary of silver.[67] For Alnwick and its neighbours the parallels, heightened by the proximity of Alnwick to Bamburgh, must have brought a frisson of affinity across the ages. Furthermore, he who could narrate the welcoming of Simon's foot to Alnwick and chart the passage of his other relics would be following the example of that 'most truthful historian'. The author of the *Opusculum* and his collaborators, and then the scribes of stratum 38 who entered their work into the chronicle,

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C. Harper-Bill, C.J. Holdsworth and J.L. Nelson, eds, *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown* (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 103–16, repr. in his *From Alfred the Great to Stephen* (London, 1991), pp. 1–14, at 4, 6–7.

[63] Brown and Harrison, *Chronicle of Melrose: Stratigraphic Edition*, pp. 2–3.

[64] Brown and Harrison, *Chronicle of Melrose: Stratigraphic Edition*, p. 53.

[65] *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, pp. 1–3; *EH*, V. 23.

[66] Brown and Harrison, *Chronicle of Melrose: Stratigraphic Edition*, pp. 47–56.

[67] *EH*, III. 6; *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, pp. 203–4. The Alnwick reliquary was shaped as a silver shoe, with such reliquaries increasingly popular (Bartlett, *Such Great Things*, pp. 268–9). John de Vescy, unlike Oswiu at Bamburgh, was not the founder of Alnwick, which was established by his forebears in 1147–8; he is nevertheless described as 'founder and patron' by the Melrose author (*Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, p. 203).

could bind themselves implicitly to the early Christian communities of Northumbria and mark themselves as heirs to Northumbria's great historian. The Northumbrian cult of Simon de Montfort is thus testimony to the continuance in the later thirteenth century of the phenomenon so well attested in the twelfth: the vitality of saints' cults, recreated from a common past, fed by networks of houses and patrons across the Anglo-Scottish border.[68]

II

The inspiration that motivated the author of the *Opusculum* and his collaborators produced an account that illuminates a phenomenon otherwise only glimpsed in the flickering light of quotidian sources: the taking, sending and receiving of dark trophies, and the customs that informed the process. This evidence ought only to be used, however, with awareness of two methodological pitfalls. First, the treatment of Simon's body cannot be slotted into a general history of dark trophy practice across the Middle Ages. In fact, such a history would be fraught with peril. This was not a practice of the chivalric heartlands, and was to be found only in regions of trans-cultural warfare, such as the Holy Land and Egypt, Iberia, Ireland, Wales and the Welsh Marches.[69] There should be no assumption that customs guiding the treatment of enemy dead in one region would resemble those in another, and some superficial similarity should not mislead us into ignoring how practice and its meaning were inflected by local context. What the *Opusculum* offers, indeed, is a view onto a highly localised socio-military culture: that of the Welsh Marches. It reveals that Simon's hand was sent by one marcher to another, the second foot by marchers to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, prince of Wales. The *Opusculum* says nothing of Simon's head, but three independent authors note its

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[68] Burton, 'Dioceses, Saints' Cults', pp. 185–9, 194–5; Bartlett, 'Cults of Irish, Scottish and Welsh Saints', pp. 68–9, 81–3.

[69] A. Zouache, 'Têtes en guerre au Proche-Orient mutilations et décapitations, Vᵉ–VIᵉ/XIᵉ–XIIᵉ siècle', *Annales Islamologiques*, xliii (2009), pp. 195–244. For thirteenth-century examples in the crusader territories and Egypt, see John de Joinville, 'The Life of Saint Louis', in *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades*, ed. C. Smith (London, 2008), pp. 274–5; M. Fierro, 'Decapitation of Christians and Muslims in the Medieval Iberian Peninsula: Narratives, Images, Contemporary Perceptions', *Comparative Literature Studies*, xlv (2008), pp. 137–64; N. Vincent, 'Angevin Ireland', in B. Smith, ed., *The Cambridge History of Ireland*, I: *Ireland, 600–1550* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 185–221, at 200, 207; F. Suppe, 'The Cultural Significance of Decapitation in High Medieval Wales and the Marches', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, xxvi (1989), pp. 147–60.

dispatch by Roger Mortimer to his wife, Maud, at Wigmore Castle, with Simon's testicles by one account having been draped over his nose, by another stuffed into his mouth.[70] Identifying the agents of the Evesham dark trophy process, and investigating their motivations, points towards a specialised enmity borne by the marchers *qua* marchers towards Simon. The third section of this article reconstructs the Montfortian policy that provoked this enmity, which entailed a threat to the very existence of the marcher lordships. The subjection of Simon's body to the marcher dark trophy process was thus matched to Simon's heinous crime, overriding any scruples that might have been caused by his membership of a chivalric elite of the Anglo-French sphere. In this section, the treatment of Simon's body is therefore contextualised within the socio-military culture of the Marches and Wales. A handful of accounts reveal the possible options for the treatment of enemy dead in this region across the two centuries leading up to Evesham. These are investigated in preference to other, geographically distant practices, to avoid skewing our understanding of a regionally distinct culture. Examples from beyond 1265, whether within or outside this region, have also been excluded, because the potential alteration of custom—especially given the transformation of the political landscape in the Atlantic Archipelago under Edward I—presents a similar danger.

The second potential pitfall concerns how we decipher the meaning behind the acts involved in the management of enemy dead. The risk of misreading gestures comes particularly from plucking comparators from a wider repertoire of violence and inferring a common meaning. These might include the judicial execution of criminals and, increasingly from the late thirteenth century, political enemies of the king (involving beheading or quartering); the summary beheading

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[70] *Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, ed. Wright, ii, p. 765; *Cronica Maiorum*, ed. Stapleton, p. 76; Rishanger, *Chronica*, ed. Riley, p. 37; *Chronicle of William de Rishanger*, ed. Halliwell, p. 46; *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. Stubbs, i, p. 69. This disparity of coverage might be explained by the author's model, for Bede only mentioned briefly that Oswald's head was received at Lindisfarne and interred there. The community was perhaps reserved in its veneration of Oswald, a potential rival to Aidan: *EH*, III. 12; Thacker, '*Membra Disjecta*', pp. 101–102. It was not until the twelfth century that so much ink was spent on the head relic, then at Durham: Bailey, 'St Oswald's Heads', pp. 197–8: Rollason, 'St Oswald in Post-Conquest England', pp. 174–6; Tudor, 'Reginald's *Life of St Oswald*', pp. 187–8.

of criminals resisting arrest by local communities; regarding the treatment of Simon's genitalia, the use of castration as punishment for rape in Wales or as a means of removing political opponents in the Anglo-Norman realm; or the rituals surrounding the distribution of meat after a hunt.[71] The choice of such a comparator would be arbitrary and bypass the specifics of the acts and their contexts, so that any explanation derived from the comparison would be distorted. This is arguably a flaw of a previous analysis by Frederick Suppe, in an article important for drawing attention to the prevalence in Wales and the Marches of the dismemberment of defeated enemies in our period. Having identified several cases in which combatants beheaded their foes, Suppe searched for the symbolic meaning of the act in terms of the 'cultural significance' of the head across the Celtic world, reaching back to Roman and even pre-Roman Britain.[72] In so doing, he assumed a cultural homogeneity across various peoples, one untouched by more than a millennium of societal change; he also ascribed a meaning to gestures that has no grounding in contemporary evidence. Moreover, in focusing on the act of severing the head, he omitted its transmission and reception and the potential for other body parts to act as trophies, and thus how agents attended to the distribution or disposal of the entire body via acts attached to their own set of meanings.

Avoiding these pitfalls requires an ethnographically inspired approach, namely, focusing on attempts by contemporaries to investigate and explicate practice. The author of the *Opusculum* himself can be seen as a proto-ethnographer. His task is 'microscopic': the detailed reconstruction of a single meaningful event within a strange culture, drawn from interviews with informants. He observes unfamiliar gestures and grapples with the concepts that motivated them, striving to capture both the facts and their significance. What he produces is inevitably his interpretation of

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[71] For instance, for the symbolic display of the heads of criminals executed summarily, see K.F. Duggan, 'The Ritualistic Importance of Gallows in Thirteenth-Century England', in S.M. Butler and K.J. Kesselring, eds, *Crossing Borders: Boundaries and Margins in Medieval and Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Cynthia J. Neville* (Leiden, 2018), pp. 193–215, at 204–7; and for castration, see C.M. Eska, '"Imbrued in their Owne Bloud": Castration in Early Welsh and Irish Sources', in L. Tracy. ed., *Castration and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 149–73, at 151–3, 156–8. Harrison, *Dark Trophies*, p. 23, suggests that the treatment of Simon's remains 'seems to have re-enacted the butchering of a stag after a royal hunt' and that it 'foreshadowed the practice of drawing and quartering'.
[72] Suppe, 'Cultural Significance', pp. 149–50.

the event, filtered through his informants, from which something can be understood.[73] With him, as historian-ethnographers, we are peering at an unfamiliar encounter, 'guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions'.[74] Applying this approach strictly to the subject at hand, for which the evidence is inevitably patchy, means that our reconstruction of practice and its meaning will be cautious and incomplete. It nevertheless offers a far better chance of recovering custom than filling in the gaps with our own inferences. It also allows us to sight, along the way, hitherto unnoticed aspects of socio-military culture in the Marches and Wales.

We begin, then, with the *Opusculum* account of Simon's hand, which opens the section on his remains.[75] A marcher (*marchius*) from Cheshire, who had been with Edward at Evesham, picked up Simon's hand after the battle. He sent it via an attendant (*cliens*) to his wife, 'so that she might rejoice at the death of an enemy, of whose death the amputated hand was a most reliable sign'. The courier, arriving at his lord's estate but not finding his lady at home, sought her in the parish church, close by, where she was attending Mass. 'He came with the hand, which he carried clutched to his chest wrapped in cloth, coming up to the lady, speaking to her in her ear of Simon's death. "And", he said, "this is the sign of his death", wishing to show her the amputated hand'. The woman did not wish to see the hand, however, until Mass was over. The courier took his place in the congregation to wait. At the elevation of the Host, when all raised their hands, Simon's hand miraculously raised itself, high above the heads of the congregation. It was noted that the cloth in which the hand was wrapped remained stitched closed. Having observed this miracle, the woman told the courier, 'This hand which my lord sent to me by you, report to him accordingly that it will not enter into my house'. The woman was 'struck with an amazed stupor' by the miracle, and told him that 'it is fitting as a great retribution for whoever the man is that cut off this hand'. She ordered the courier to narrate the spectacle (*visio*) to her husband and 'he

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[73] C. Geertz, 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', in his *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973), pp. 3–30, at 9, 20, 21.
[74] Geertz, 'Thick Description', p. 20.
[75] *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, pp. 202–3.

proceeded quickly with the hand, which he carried to the lord who had sent him, not entering into his lord's house'. While the *Opusculum* author was not comfortable with the way that the woman effectively rejected Simon's hand, he was pleased that her instructions meant that it never entered the marcher's house, for 'it was not fitting that her husband, a son of Belial, should possess in his house a hand of such sanctity, and therefore it is believed that it made its way, by divine providence, to a much better owner'.

Because the author's focus is the context of the miracle, we are offered a rare chance to view the presentation of a dark trophy. We can first see the role of the courier. Here the account of the *Opusculum* chimes with the briefer version of the same event in the Evesham miracle collection, which has the courier (*portitor*) diverted to the church on his mission to deliver the hand to 'a certain castle'.[76] As the *Opusculum* reveals, his role is not only to convey the trophy but also to explicate its significance. He tells the recipient that it signifies the death of her enemy—an explanation necessary because Simon's identity could not otherwise be deciphered from the trophy itself. We may glean from this detail the broader point that it was not necessarily only the head of a defeated enemy that held intrinsic symbolic meaning. The head was the chief trophy primarily because it enabled ready identification and thus served as the strongest proof that an enemy had been felled. Any member, however, could be made into a dark trophy, with meaning ascribed to it by agents. In such a case, as here and in the sending of Simon's foot to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, the courier's importance was amplified.

More significantly, the *Opusculum* (unlike the miracle collection) also reveals the role of the recipient. She is an integral agent in the dark trophy process: the hand is taken from the battlefield by the marcher combatant for the purpose of sending it to her. The Cheshire husband, indeed, recognises his wife as an active and equal partner in their victory over Simon, not least because the earl is identified as her enemy as much as his, in whose death she should rejoice. Between the lines

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[76] *Chronicle of William de Rishanger*, ed. Halliwell, p. 70.

of the account is a set of expectations that augments her role. She is expected to be happy to receive the prize, and to bring it into her house, the latter point emphasised through repetition. These expectations are not undermined but underscored by her rejection of the hand, prompted as that was by shock upon seeing the miracle ('perculsa enim erat miro stupore'). Her agency is underpinned by the fact that she had the option of rejecting the trophy and, indeed, of doing so emphatically by ordering its return to her husband. This account can be placed alongside the sending of Simon's head, together with his testicles, by Roger Mortimer to Maud at Wigmore. Roger had struck the lethal blow, so was well placed and entitled to take the chief trophy. He and Maud shared an enmity with Simon, not only as husband and wife but also as military opponents of the earl, as David Carpenter and Emma Cavell have suggested. Maud was lord of Radnor and was probably in command when Radnor was attacked by Simon's sons early in 1264.[77] The delivery of Simon's head and testicles may thus have been a 'gesture to satisfy Maud personally'.[78] While there is no narrative of Maud's reception of her trophy, the account of the Cheshire hand offers some insight into the options available to her. Moreover, it urges us to consider Maud a protagonist alongside Roger in the Mortimer victory over Simon, as signified by the spousal dark trophy custom.

The importance of recipients is also reflected in the account of Simon's second foot, sent to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, prince of Wales. Although the *Opusculum* does not record Llywelyn's response, it describes the reasons of the trophy-makers with determined specificity. They were moved to act by the alliance between Llywelyn and Simon, the foot 'sent to him [Llywelyn] in hateful contempt of both of them, namely him as much as Simon, so that by the sending of this foot the prince himself would understand to a greater extent, on account of Simon's foot, that he

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[77] D.A. Carpenter, 'A Noble in Politics: Roger Mortimer in the Period of Baronial Reform and Rebellion, 1258–1265', in A.J. Duggan, ed., *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 183–203, at 201; E. Cavell, 'Intelligence and Intrigue in the March of Wales: Noblewomen and the Fall of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, 1274–82', *Historical Research*, lxxxviii (2015), pp. 1–19, at 5–6.
[78] Cavell, 'Intelligence and Intrigue', p. 7.

is hated by the English'.[79] This alliance is explored below, but here it is worth noting again how meaning (in this case, enmity) was ascribed to the trophy by agents, and how the trophy-makers' attention to the intended recipient and the message they sought to convey shaped their actions on the battlefield. So much can also be inferred in two further cases, recorded respectively by Roger of Wendover and in the liberate rolls. Here the trophy was apparently intended to honour the recipient, the maker's lord. In 1231, Hubert de Burgh was presented by his men with Welshmen taken on a sortie from the castle of Montgomery: he commanded that the captives be decapitated and their heads sent to the king of England.[80] Again, one Richard de Muneton and his companions, slayers of Welsh at Strattondale near Montgomery, in 1233 brought fifty-seven heads to the king (they received a shilling per head).[81] In neither case is there a record of the king's management of the trophies. It is possible that, like the Cheshire wife, he was expected to keep them inside his home, but an alternative was displaying them on the outer wall of a fortress. This was the probable fate of the hundred Welsh heads taken on an English sortie from Deganwy during Henry's otherwise disastrous expedition of 1245. The heads were brought back in triumph, according to a knight of the expedition (he does not describe their usage but there could scarcely be another purpose in carrying heads to a besieged camp).[82] We can thus see how dark trophy custom reached far beyond the battlefield and so can only be understood by incorporating recipients as agents, whether kings and princes or wives presiding over the family seat.

Turning from the creation and circulation of trophies *per se*, we can see a further option for the management of enemy dead. This was disposing of dismembered foes in flowing water, in full view of the comrades of the slain. The English knight reporting on his army's enforced sojourn

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[79] *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, p. 205.

[80] Roger of Wendover, *Chronica, sive Flores Historiarum*, ed. Henry Octavius Coxe (4 vols, London, 1842), iv, p. 221; Suppe, 'Cultural Significance', p. 147.

[81] *Calendar of Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Henry III* (6 vols, 1916–64), *1226–1240*, p. 218; Suppe, 'Cultural Significance', p. 147.

[82] Matthew Paris, *Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora*, ed. Henry Richard Luard, Rolls Series, lvii (7 vols, 1872–83) [hereafter *CM*], iv, pp. 481–4, at 483. This was a practice depicted on the seal of the city of Dublin of 1229: Vincent, 'Angevin Ireland', pp. 200–201.

at Deganwy in 1245 describes how comrades taken by the Welsh while raiding Aberconwy Abbey were 'hanged, beheaded, and horribly torn to pieces, and finally their wretched bodies thrown limb by limb into the river'.[83] This episode recalls two earlier examples. Orderic Vitalis recounts how Robert, lord of Rhuddlan and builder of Deganwy, 'the warlike marcher lord', atop the Great Orme with his men in 1093, observed a Welsh raid on his land, led by Gruffydd ap Cynan. Robert threw himself almost single-handed upon the Welsh loading their ships, and was surrounded. The Welsh 'in full sight of his men, cut off his head and fixed it on the mast of a ship as a sign of victory. Many, weeping and lamenting bitterly, saw this from the summit of the hill, but they were powerless to help their lord'. Robert's men launched their ships in pursuit, 'bitterly distressed when they saw the head of their leader on the ship's mast. When Gruffydd and his accomplices looked back and saw how maddened the pursuers were because of the insult to their lord they took down the head and threw it into the sea'. Robert's men abandoned their chase and settled for retrieving his body from the beach for burial.[84] The Anglo-Norman poetic chronicle *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland*, composed in the 1190s and recalling events within living memory, describes the English knights presenting to one Alice of Abergavenny seventy Irish prisoners and an axe. In retribution for the death of her lover, who had been killed in the preceding battle, Alice beheaded them and threw their bodies over a cliff.[85] It is surely telling that Alice of Abergavenny is the only woman named the poem (compared with 105 men, and one horse),[86] the author perhaps indicating her identity as a marcher through her disposal of her enemies' remains. The objective of this practice seems to have been the prevention of burial. So much is suggested by the elliptical recounting of the 1245 Deganwy episode by various Welsh chronicles, drawing from roughly contemporary material produced at Strata Florida. The fullest version, given in the Peniarth 20 version of *Brut y*

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[83] *CM*, iv, p. 482.

[84] Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall (6 vols, Oxford, 1969–80), iv, pp. 138–43, and 140 n. 1 for dating to 1093; Suppe, 'Cultural Significance', p. 151. There is no mention of Robert's end or Gruffydd ap Cynan's part in it in *Vita Griffini Filii Conani: The Medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, ed. P. Russell (Cardiff, 2005).

[85] *The Deeds of the Normans in Ireland/La geste des engleis en Yrlande: A New Edition of the Crhonicle formerly Known as The Song of Dermot and the Earl*, ed. E. Mullally (Dublin, 2002), p. 37 and ll. 1474–85.

[86] *Deeds of the Normans*, ed. Mullally, p. 34.

Tywysogion, tells how the English king fortified Deganwy 'against the will of Dafydd ap Llywelyn, and left knights of his there, and returned to England. And to commemorate this act, he left many corpses of his men dead in Gwynedd unburied, some in the sea, others on land'.[87] The treatment of enemy dead could, then, be calibrated for special distress and shame if the friends of the slain were watching.

This analysis allows us to read and contextualise the treatment of Simon's remains but also sheds light on the range of customs surrounding the management of enemy dead in Wales and the Marches. That these customs are spotted only in fragmentary form through scraps of evidence does not diminish their potential significance: such is the nature of recovering any social act that did not fall within the normal remit of medieval record-keeping and narrative writing. The result is particularly valuable in highlighting women as protagonists in this culture. The Marches were a militarised zone where, as Emma Cavell has noted, gender roles differed from those in England's heartlands: here, defending castles, raising troops and handling spies were regular tasks and thus integral expectations for women.[88] So too, it seems, was the management of the enemy dead. In 1265, Simon de Montfort's body was brought into this dark trophy economy. The final section of this article explains why.

III

Simon de Montfort's remains were subjected to marcher trophy-making custom in response to a

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[87] *Brut y Tywysogion, or, the Chronicle of the Princes: Peniarth MS. 20 Version*, ed. T. Jones (Cardiff, 1952), p. 107; *Brut y Tywysogion, or, the Chronicle of the Princes: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. T. Jones (Cardiff, 1955), pp. 238–9; *Brenhinedd y Saesson, or, the Kings of the Saxons: BM Cotton MS Cleopatra B v and The Black Book of Basingwerk, NLW MS. 7006*, ed. T. Jones (Cardiff, 1971), pp. 234–5. See also two versions similar to the Peniarth 20 account in the Breviate Chronicle and the *Chronicon de Wallia: Annales Cambriae: The B Text, From London, National Archives, MS E164/1, pp. 2–26*, ed. H.W. Gough-Cooper (Welsh Chronicles Research Group, 2015), available at http://croniclau.bangor.ac.uk/editions.php.en (accessed 30 Jan. 2024), p. 79; *Annales Cambriae: The E Text, From Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3514, pp. 507–19*, ed. H.W. Gough-Cooper (Welsh Chronicles Research Group, 2016), available at http://croniclau.bangor.ac.uk/editions.php.en (accessed 30 Jan. 2024), p. 19. For the relationship between these chronicles: H. Pryce, 'Chronicling and its Contexts in Medieval Wales', in B. Guy et al., *The Chronicles of Medieval Wales and the March: New Contexts, Studies and Texts* (Turnhout, 2020), pp. 1–32, at 7–9, 11; B. Guy, 'Historical Scholars and Dishonest Charlatans: Studying the Chronicles of Medieval Wales', ibid., pp. 69–106, at 82–3, 88–90.

[88] Cavell, 'Intelligence and Intrigue', pp. 15–19.

policy he enacted between 1264 and 1265. This was a policy of necessity, engineered to counteract the threat to the Montfortian regime presented by the marcher lords. It was built upon a military alliance with Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, prince of Gwynedd, initially for the purpose of sporadic, reactive incursions into marcher lands; but Simon was soon compelled to take increasingly aggressive measures. He attempted a wholesale seizure of the marcher lordships and then, in desperate straits in the summer of 1265, offered them to Llywelyn in return for military aid in what would be his final campaign. This policy presented an existential threat to the marcher lordships themselves and promised to overturn the balance of power in southern Britain. That threat was countered by men who were uniquely entitled and duty-bound to do so. Their contest with Simon was heightened, in the spring of 1265, as the theatre of war switched to the Marches, where it would remain until Simon's last days. A campaign of distinctly marcher flavour—fought between a Cambro-Montfortian alliance and the marcher lords—thus spilled across the Severn to end in the carnage that was Evesham.

The marcher lords were a distinguishable cohort, rooted in Shropshire and Herefordshire. The well-placed Pershore Abbey chronicler (one of the best sources for activity in the Marches in this period) identifies them in 1264 as 'the marchers of Wales (*marchiones Walliae*), namely Roger Mortimer, James Audley, Roger Clifford, Roger of Leybourne, Hamo Lestrange, and the Turbeville men [the brothers John, Hugh and Robert]'.[89] Chief among these was Roger Mortimer,

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[89] Matthew Paris, *Flores Historiarum*, ed. Henry Richards Luard, Rolls Series, xcv (3 vols, 1890) [hereafter *Flores Historiarum*], ii, p. 498. James Audley's estates were concentrated in Cheshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire: S. Lloyd, 'Audley, James (d. 1272)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [hereafter *ODNB*], available at https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-894 (accessed 24 Nov. 2021). Roger Clifford's were in Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Berkshire: K. Faulkner, 'Clifford, Sir Roger de (b. c. 1221, d. in or before 1286)', *ODNB*, available at https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5659 (accessed 24 Nov. 2021). Roger of Leybourne was not actually a marcher (he was named for a village in Kent) but as here was generally associated with the marchers: K. Faulkner, 'Leybourne [Leyburn], Sir Roger of (c. 1215–1271)', *ODNB*, available at https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-16624 (accessed 24 Nov. 2021). Hamo Lestrange was based in Shropshire: J. Mason, 'Lestrange [Le Strange], John (c. 1194–1269)', *ODNB*, available at https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-16510 (accessed 24 Nov. 2021). For the identification of this part of the *Flores Historiarum* as a Pershore Abbey product, see D.A. Carpenter, 'The Pershore *Flores Historiarum*: An Unrecognised Chronicle from the Period of Reform and Rebellion in England, 1258–65', *English Historical Review*, cxxvii (2012), pp. 1343–66.

lord of Wigmore, of an old marcher family and married to another marcher potentate, Maud de Briouze, lord of Radnor, co-heir of William de Briouze and Eva Marshal. Their marriage created one of the mightiest baronial families of England, its power centred on extensive holdings in the Middle March.[90] The raison d'être of the marcher lord was the defence of England from the Welsh, to which end he or she enjoyed quasi-royal powers in the region to provide justice and make war, 'as if he were king and justiciar' in his or her domain, as one contemporary put it.[91] In the spring of 1263, the marchers had encouraged Simon's return to England and joined him in waging a violent campaign to re-impose the revolutionary regime, but left his side for Edward's in October. They fought on the royalist side at Lewes in May 1264 and were corralled in Lewes Priory, but Simon was compelled to release them under the terms of the Mise of Lewes.[92] They were uncowed by Simon's victory, as they set out to demonstrate by raising war in the Marches. Their strength was augmented in March–April 1265 when Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester, abandoned his support of Simon in favour of the royalist cause. Gilbert himself was a great lord of the southern Marches, with lands reaching across Monmouthshire and Glamorganshire.[93] Together, Roger and Gilbert engineered Edward's escape from captivity, at the end of May 1265.[94] Edward's own holdings in Britain's western reaches were extensive, stretching across the northern coast of Wales and the south-west, and along the entire stretch of the borderlands, from Chester to Bristol.[95] The royalist party that took on the Montfortian regime thus comprised men who each had a vast dynastic interest—and together a controlling stake—in the Welsh Marches.

The threat posed by the marchers, even before Gilbert and then Edward joined their force,

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[90] J. Crump, 'Mortimer, Roger de, lord of Wigmore (1231–1282)', *ODNB*, available at https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-19352 (accessed 16 Feb. 2021); Carpenter, 'A Noble in Politics', pp. 184–5.

[91] R.R. Davies, 'Kings, Lords and Liberties in the March of Wales, 1066–1272', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., xxix (1979), pp. 41–61, at 41–2.

[92] Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, pp. 223, 226–9, 224, 272–3.

[93] J.C. Ward, 'The Estates of the Clare Family, 1066–1317' (Univ. of London, Ph.D. thesis, 1962), pp. 235–51.

[94] Ambler, *Song of Simon de Montfort*, pp. 305–39.

[95] His lands included the county of Cheshire, Bristol, Rhuddlan, Dyserth, Deganwy, Perfeddwlad, Grosmont, Skenfrith, White Castle, Montgomery, Carmarthen, Cardigan and Builth: *Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae et Acta Publica*, ed. Thomas Rymer et al. (4 vols in 7 pts, London, 1816–69), vol. i, pt i, p. 297. These were part of the vast appanage granted to Edward in 1254.

was severe. It is true that a personal feud between Simon and Roger Mortimer—which encompassed Roger's raid on Simon's marcher manor of Dilwyn in December 1263 and a retaliatory attack on Wigmore and Radnor early in 1264—sharpened hostilities.[96] But far more serious was the demand placed by marcher recalcitrance upon Simon's restricted military resources, especially while the danger of invasion from France lay on the horizon. Eleanor, queen of England, had worked with her sister and brother-in-law, the queen and king of France, to amass an armada in the summer of 1264.[97] Simon was fortuitously spared this invasion (the papal legate's efforts to negotiate a peaceful solution stayed the queen's hand; by October negotiations had failed, by which time Eleanor's funds had run dry and her forces began to disperse).[98] He could expect a renewed attempt in 1265. Should he fail to subdue the marchers by then, he would be fighting on two fronts and doomed. The immediate solution was a military alliance with Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, prince of Gwynedd. Thus, in the summer of 1264, when the marchers raised war in their homelands, the two forces joined to take the castles of Hereford, Hay, Richard's Castle and Ludlow, and to subject 'the lands and estates of Roger Mortimer's lordship everywhere to fire and plunder'. At Montgomery, Roger was forced to deliver his son as hostage, as was James Audley.[99] In November 1264, with the marchers disregarding the Montgomery agreement, Simon declared them public enemies and advanced again into the borderlands. With Llywelyn's help, he trapped the marchers at Worcester and imposed on them the so-called Peace of Worcester (to which we will return).[100] Finally, at the end of June 1265, Llywelyn again raided marcher lands on Simon's behalf, devastating Gilbert's lands in Monmouthshire 'by iron and flame', in order to cover Simon's exfiltration from Hereford (an unsuccessful attempt to escape the royalist blockade of the Severn across the Bristol Channel).[101] Simon's military alliance with Llywelyn in 1264–5 recalls an incident

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[96] Carpenter, 'A Noble in Politics', pp. 199–201; Cavell, 'Intelligence and Intrigue', pp. 5–6.

[97] M. Howell, *Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 200–203, 206–9, 212–17.

[98] Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 219–21; Ambler, *Bishops in the Political Community*, pp. 160–69.

[99] *Flores Historiarum*, ii, pp. 498–9; *CPR: Henry III, 1258–1266*, p. 344.

[100] *Flores Historiarum*, ii, pp. 503–4; *AM*, iii, p. 235; *Cronica Maiorum*, ed. Stapleton, pp. 70–71; *CPR: Henry III, 1258–1266*, pp. 394–5, 397–8.

[101] *Flores Historiarum*, iii, p. 3.

in 1258, when an argument erupted in parliament between Simon and William de Valence, earl of Pembroke. The Welsh had attacked Pembroke lands and William appears to have accused Simon, his enemy, of encouraging them. Simon's response, as described by Matthew Paris, is telling: 'inflamed by anger and boiling with rage', Simon cried, 'No, No, William, I am neither traitor nor son of a traitor; our fathers were unalike'.[102] To conspire with the Welsh against men of his own kingdom and invite Welsh raids on their lands was, by Simon's own admission, an act of betrayal.

Military attacks on marcher lands would not, however, be the most serious of Simon's assaults. Between November 1264 and March 1265, he attempted to cut the marchers from their landed power. First, in the Peace of Worcester, he demanded that the marchers deliver to Montfortian custodians all their castles along the entire stretch of the borderlands. Orders were issued for Bristol to be delivered to Simon, and Gloucester, Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth and Hereford to his closest captains. Moreover, the marchers were to be banished to Ireland for a year, their estates hypothetically held in trust for that time.[103] Integral to the settlement too was Simon's seizure of Edward's marcher dominion.[104] The 'enormity' of Simon's appropriation of Edward's estates has been remarked upon by John Maddicott: the total seizures deprived Edward of some 1,500 pounds *per annum* and 'went a long way towards permanently dismantling the appanage of the heir to the throne'.[105] The seizure of Chester has drawn particular comment: it made up two-thirds of Edward's income; it was granted personally to Simon and was perhaps intended for his eldest son, Henry; and, as Rodolphe Billaud has suggested, it provided a symbolic link to Ranulf, earl of Chester (who had sponsored Simon's move to England in the 1230s) and to the prestige Ranulf had enjoyed.[106] Chester was a rich prize and Simon benefited personally from its seizure

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[102] *CM*, v, pp. 676–7.
[103] *Flores Historiarum*, ii, pp. 503–4; *AM*, iii, p. 235; *Cronica Maiorum*, ed. Stapleton, pp. 70–71; *CPR: Henry III, 1258–1266*, pp. 394–5, 397–8.
[104] *Flores Historiarum*, ii, p. 504; *CPR: Henry III, 1258–1266*, pp. 395, 397.
[105] Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, pp. 321–2.
[106] Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, pp. 321–2, 326–7; R. Billaud, 'Simon VI et l'occupation du comté de Chester (1264–1265)', in M. Aurell, G.E.M. Lippiatt and L. Macé, eds, *Simon de Montfort (c.1170–1218): Le croisé, son lignage et son temps* (Turnhout, 2020), pp. 243–55, at 247–50, 255.

but, in fact, the scope of his ambition was far greater and less personal, for the seizure of Chester was embedded in the programme of attempted neutralisation of the marcher lords and the sweeping seizure of the Marches entire. So much was proclaimed in the great Westminster parliament of January to March 1265. In the parliament's dramatic climax, letters were read out in Edward's name, by which he was said to have sworn to surrender the Three Castles (Grosmont, Skenfrith and White Castle) to guarantee the good faith of the marchers, while the chancery issued confirmation of his delivery of Chester and Bristol to Simon.[107] Meanwhile, in January 1265, Henry de Montfort was at Chester not only to receive the homage of its tenants but also to meet with Llywelyn. The annalist of Chester noted that at this meeting the two 'to some extent settled the war that had continued between Cheshire and Wales for eight years and nine months' and that they 'mutually received from each other the kiss of peace'.[108] The seizure of the marcher lordships was, therefore, implicitly tied to Simon's alliance with Llywelyn, in ways that may not have been clear but were ominous for the marchers.

Simon's audacious marcher strategy gives added context to the defection of Gilbert de Clare. His relations with Simon were deteriorating by February 1265, and before the close of the Westminster parliament he had departed in disgust. His destination was the Marches, where he would unite with Roger Mortimer. By the end of May, the two would effect Edward's escape from captivity.[109] There were various grievances cherished by Gilbert early in 1265.[110] Not least among them, for one of the greatest marcher barons, must have been Simon's marcher policy. It entailed an attack on the hereditary holdings and legal rights of the marcher lords but also, even more seriously, an assault on the kingdom's security: the governorship of the Marches was to be

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[107] *Cronica Maiorum*, ed. Stapleton, pp. 71–2; *Foedera*, vol. i, pt i, pp. 451–2; *Calendar of the Charter Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office* (6 vols, 1903–27) [hereafter *CChR*], *1257–1300*, p. 54 (with the date on which the terms of release were issued corrected to 11 Mar. in *CChR*, *1300–1326*, p. xvi).

[108] *Annales Cestrienses, or, Chronicle of the Abbey of S. Werburg, at Chester*, ed. Richard Copley Christie, Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, xiv (1887), p. 91, available via *British History Online* (Institute of Historical Research, 2002–) at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/lancs-ches-record-soc/vol14/pp80-101 (accessed 17 Feb. 2021); Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, p. 321.

[109] Ambler, *Simon de Montfort*, pp. 302–9.

[110] Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, pp. 327–8; Ambler, *Simon de Montfort*, p. 302–3.

transferred to members of a rogue regime, a regime allied to the very adversaries the marcher lordships were established to resist.

In order to uphold his regime, Simon would go further still in attacking marcher power. By June 1265, his situation was desperate. His attempt to head off Gilbert's defection and then obstruct his unification with Roger's forces was scuppered, at the end of May, by Edward's escape. Over the first two weeks of June, Edward and Gilbert, at the head of the marcher barons, took almost the entire line of the Severn, trapping Simon to the west, at Hereford.[111] Outnumbered and cut off from reinforcements, Simon negotiated with Llywelyn to secure direct military aid.[112] On 19 June, Llywelyn promised to pay 30,000 marks and to 'aid the magnates with all our power' against those who opposed the Montfortian 'ordinance' set out at the Westminster parliament, including the seizure of Edward's estates, and all those who 'attempt to oppress those magnates in any way'.[113] Llywelyn also promised to treat with the Montfortian regime throughout the term of the alliance even 'if the lord king should depart for death' before the terms of the agreement were fulfilled or if the king should oppose the ordinance.[114] Whether an untimely end was envisaged for the king must remain unknown but the suspicious mind might recall the baronial plot against King John in 1212, in which the king's opponents planned to abandon him in the Marches, allowing the unchivalric Welsh to kill him.[115] Furthermore, Llywelyn promised, in this scenario, to fulfil the terms with Henry III's 'heir or successor' or 'otherwise at the disposition of the magnates of the kingdom'. This clause bore the threat of Edward's disinheritance.[116] Who the 'heir or successor' might be, or what 'otherwise at the disposition' of Simon's party might entail, is unclear. Suspicions may have been aroused, however, by the verbal agreement accompanying

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[111] Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, pp. 334–5.
[112] J. Beverley-Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd: Prince of Wales* (2nd edn, Cardiff, 2014), pp. 166–9; Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, p. 338.
[113] *The Acts of the Welsh Rulers, 1120–1283*, ed. H. Pryce and C. Insley (Cardiff, 2005), no. 361.
[114] *Acts of the Welsh Rulers*, ed. Pryce and Insley, no. 362.
[115] J.C. Holt, *The Northerners: A Study in the Reign of King John* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1992), pp. 79–83.
[116] Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, p. 338.

the pact: Simon's daughter, Eleanor, would marry Llywelyn.[117] This carried hints of Simon's ambitions for his children, as well as entrenching the alliance across the generations.

In return, in the king's voice, Simon made an extraordinary series of grants. He confirmed Llywelyn in possession of all his conquests and granted to him Castle Matilda and the castle of Hawarden, key fortresses at the northern edge and the centre of the Marches. He also acknowledged Llywelyn's 'dominion of all the magnates of Wales' and, indeed, named him Prince of Wales (the first such recognition from the English chancery).[118] The headline, however, was Simon's promise to provide 'counsel, aid and favour' to Llywelyn in conquering the remaining lands and castles 'pertaining to the right of the said prince and his magnates, which are in the hands of our common adversaries'. The 'common adversaries' were the marcher lords. These included Edward, for the goal of conquering Montgomery, belonging to Edward's appanage, was named explicitly. The Montfortians would, in other words, provide military assistance to the newly recognised sovereign prince in annexing the marcher lordships to Wales. The implications of this clause, which formed the culmination of Simon's anti-marcher strategy, were every bit as revolutionary as the seizure of central government by his conciliar regime. Effectively, Simon was agreeing to disintegrate the marcher lordships, remove the English-held borderland zone and abandon English territorial claims. It is no wonder that the agreement was quickly denounced in England—nor that the alliance provoked the marchers to the level of antipathy emphasised in the *Opusculum* and conveyed in the sending of Simon's foot to Llywelyn.[119]

The Battle of Evesham, then, would decide the political structure of southern Britain. Its significance was emphasised by its physical context and personnel. The battle was the climax of a war waged, for the previous five months, in the Marches, only crossing the Severn on 2 August, when Simon escaped Hereford to ford the river at Kempsey before being caught at Evesham on

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[117] *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, p. 205.

[118] *Foedera*, vol. i, pt i, p. 457; Beverley-Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, p. 169.

[119] Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, p. 338; Beverley-Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd*, p. 170; *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, p. 205.

4 August. The royalist army primarily comprised marchers, including the cohort led by Roger Mortimer, which was, as we have seen, charged with killing Simon, and which then set upon his corpse. Their opponents included a sizeable Welsh contingent, sent by Llywelyn. The role of this group was highlighted by three independent commentators well placed to notice. The eye-witness reporter writing at Evesham Abbey recalled how, as the Montfortians left the abbey and moved towards the battleground, 'the Welsh and the others turned and raised a cry up to the skies, so that the whole ground seemed to echo against this frightful noise'.[120] Their presence was also recorded in the Cardiff Chronicle, whose contributors could draw from their patron, the earl of Gloucester. This describes how 'many barons and soldiers and Welshman of unknown number' were killed with Simon.[121] The scale of Welsh involvement is revealed by the Pershore chronicler, who tells of how 'the Welsh foot soldiers, who have been estimated at near five thousand, first entered into flight, who in fleeing into the fields and gardens and throughout the country roundabout were found, afterwards, killed'.[122] While the figure of 5,000 is unrealistic, that Pershore is just six miles from Evesham invites the inference that its inhabitants saw the Welsh bodies and were struck by their number. Here, then, was the historic and present enemy of the marcher lords, arrayed alongside the man who intended to destroy their lordships. The marchers thus sealed their victory by offering, in the treatment of Simon's body, a marcher response to a marcher crime. In this way, the Battle of Evesham ended the war of, and for, the Welsh Marches.

The Montfortian commitment to annex the Marches to Wales while accepting Llywelyn's princely authority stands alongside other rare episodes in which the territorial structures of the Atlantic Archipelago were offered up to political expediency. One comparator is the offer in 1173 of Henry the Young King to cede Cumberland, Westmorland and Northumberland to William the Lion of

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[120] De Laborderie, Maddicott and Carpenter, 'Last Hours', pp. 410–11.

[121] G. Henley, 'The Cardiff Chronicle in London, British Library, MS Royal 6 B XI', in Guy et al., eds, *Chronicles of Medieval Wales*, pp. 231–87, at 231, 269–70.

[122] *Flores Historiarum*, iii, p. 5.

Scotland in return for military support against Henry II.[123] Another is the ceding of the same counties to Alexander II of Scotland by the northern barons warring against King John. In 1215–16, Eustace de Vescy and Robert de Ros, assuming the authority of the twenty-five barons of Magna Carta, recognised Alexander's claims to the counties and did homage to him for their lands there.[124] Yet the difference in circumstance in 1265 was acute. Eustace and Robert were members of a political and cultural cross-border elite (indeed both were married to daughters of William the Lion) and their act of cession recognised long-standing and credible claims by the king of Scots; there was no assumption at this point that the border should rest north of Cumberland, Westmorland and Northumberland.[125] They also expected a king of England to retain dominium over these counties, for they and Alexander would do homage to Louis of France, John's appointed replacement.[126] The Montfortians, in contrast, were assuming the sovereign authority of the English government to offer up territory to the Welsh, in a region where that would constitute an unprecedented act of self-harm.

The Melrose *Opusculum*, which traced the ghastly outcome of the Cambro-Montfortian alliance, speaks also to the significance of regional contexts in the Montfortian war and its aftermath. The making and circulation of the Evesham dark trophies in the Marches, and the perpetuation of their tale in the Anglo-Scottish borders, reveal the vitality of cultures bounded by region on England's fringes even as the English state became increasingly assertive. In the Welsh borderlands, this was a socio-military culture rooted in historic quasi-regal lordships, whose importance to the territorial structure and political and military dominance of the English state was only confirmed by the Montfortian war. This would be emphasised in the following decades, as Edward I determined to impose his supremacy over Wales once and for all and, in concert with

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[123] *Jordan Fantosme's Chronicle*, ed. R.C. Johnston (Oxford, 1981), pp. 20–21; M. Strickland, *Henry the Young King, 1155–1183* (New Haven, CT, 2016), pp. 140–41, 162–4.

[124] Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 131–2.

[125] K.J. Stringer, 'Introduction: Middle Britain in Context, *c.*900–1300', in Stringer and Winchester, eds, *Northern England and Southern Scotland*, pp. 1–30, at 9–10; K.J. Stringer, 'Law, Governance and Jurisdiction', ibid., pp. 87–136, at 89–90; Stringer, 'Frontier Society in the Far North', pp. 42–5.

[126] Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 132–3.

the Mortimers, destroy Llywelyn. In the Anglo-Scottish borders, the cult of Simon de Montfort was a manifestation of a socio-religious nexus across 'Middle Britain'.[127] Its protagonists were bound in a cultural web spun from centuries of a remembered Northumbrian past, which transcended political boundaries even as a fixed border became a reality in the mid-thirteenth century and as the rupture of that nexus came at the century's close. The political context of the Battle of Evesham, and its waging and remembrance, thus invite us to consider the 'first English revolution' within a British, rather than an English, war.

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[127] Stringer, 'Introduction: Middle Britain', pp. 11–14, 20–22.