Cross-Border Representations of Revolt in the Later Middle Ages: France and England During the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453)

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1) REPORTING FROM ABROAD

Pointing to the Hundred Years' War and its manifold political, social and cultural consequences, one could easily argue for an albeit hostile but nonetheless strong connection between the kingdoms of England and France in the later Middle Ages. Since 1337 English kings were trying to take hold of the French crown and to secure their possessions on the continent, which led to more than a century of interrupted warfare and deeply affected the societies on both sides of the channel. As the war more than once lay at the roots of popular unrest in these countries,[1] there should have been a good deal of cross-border reporting of insurgency in England and France, making the period an ideal field of research for the transnational representation of pre-modern revolts.

The findings, however, are surprisingly few in number. They are almost exclusively restricted to chronicle sources and even there cannot be said to abound.[2]

1 This has been pointed out for the Jacquerie, the 1380s' tax rebellions, the Peasants' Revolt and for the rising of Jack Cade and will hold for even more revolts in the period; see, for example, R. W. Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order. England and France in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1988), 349-60; L. Mirot, *Les insurrections urbaines au début du règne de Charles VI (1380-1383): Leurs causes, leurs conséquences* (Paris, 1905), 7-9; I. M. W. Harvey, *Jack Cade's Rebellion of 1450* (Oxford, 1991), 53-64.

2 Outside the chronicles we know of only a single case from England or France, namely an allusion to the French Jacquerie in a petition of the English Commons in 1377; see *The*

Combing through more than eighty chronicles from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, we have only been able to find some fifteen examples of popular revolt in England and France being reported by authors from the other side of the channel. English accounts have survived for the Jacquerie of 1358,[3] the urban tax revolts of the early 1380s[4] and the risings in Normandy fifty years later;[5] French texts include the Peasants' Revolt of 1381,[6] the risings against the Ricardian Earls in 1400[7] and the disturbances surrounding the Kentish rebellion of 1450.[8] As none of these movements has been recorded by more than three chroniclers from the other country, we can speak of a fairly even distribution of transnational coverage

Parliament Rolls of Medieval England 1275-1504, ed. C. Given-Wilson et al., 16 vols. (London, 2005), 6: 47. Further examples are from the German Hanse [two letters reporting the English risings of 1381 and 1450] and from Venice [a decree of the senate concerning the 1450 revolt]; cf. F. Pedersen, "The German Hanse and the Peasants' Revolt of 1381", *BIHR* 57 (1984): 92-98; *Hanserecesse von 1431-1476*, ed. G. von der Ropp, 7 vols. (Leipzig, 1876-1892), 3: 506-10; *Calendar of State Papers, Venice*, 38 vols. (London, 1864-1947), 1: 74.

3 Sir Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica 1272-1363*, ed. A. King (Woodbridge, 2005), 152-5, 164-165, 168-169; *The Anonimalle Chronicle 1333 to 1381*, ed. V. H. Galbraith (Manchester, 1927), 41-43.

4 *The St Albans Chronicle: The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, ed. J. Taylor, W. R. Childs and L. Watkiss, Oxford Medieval Texts, ed. J. W. Binns et al. (Oxford, 2003), 1: 390-395, 652-655; *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, ed. G. B. Stow (Philadelphia, 1977), 60; John Capgrave, *The Chronicle of England*, ed. F. C. Hingeston, Rolls Series (London, 1858), 235-236.

5 *Chronicles of London*, ed. C. L. Kingsford (Oxford, 1905), 137-140.

6 *Œuvres de Froissart*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, 26 vols. (Brussels, 1867-1877), 9: 386-424; *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys*, ed. M. L. Bellaguet, 6 vols. (Paris, 1839-1852), 1: 132-135, 256-259; *Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la France*, ed. J. F. Michaud and J. J. F. Poujoulat, 32 vols. (Paris, 1836-1839), 2: 348, 358.

7 *Chronicque de la Traïson et Mort de Richart Deux Roy Dengleterre*, ed. B. Williams (London, 1846), 77-103, 229-261; Religieux de Saint-Denys, 2:734-738; Œuvres de Froissart, 16: 221-219. Jean Creton, "French Metrical History of the Deposition of King Richard the Second", ed. J. Webb, *Archaeologia* 20 (1824): 1-423, 209-216, 400-407 does not mention popular agency here.

8 Thomas Basin, *Histoire de Charles VII*, ed. C. Samaran, 2 vols. (Paris, 1964-1965), 2: 60-64, 166-168; *Histoire de Charles VII. Roy de France*, ed. D. Godefroy (Paris, 1661), 448-449, 602-604.

in our period.[9] Such numbers, to be sure, are quite considerable compared to the reports from or about other countries like Italy or the Empire,[10] but the interest in Flemish insurgency, both in England and in France, appears to have been a good deal higher than any mutual notice of revolt in the two kingdoms.[11] To understand this relative scarcity of findings we first have to consider the conditions of cross-border representation in late medieval chronicles and annals.

Putting aside the traditional distinction between 'chronicles' and 'histories', which had lost most of its strictness by the fourteenth century anyway,[12] a chronicler in the late Middle Ages was primarily concerned with recording events. He usually provided the continuation of an older chronicle and relied on other writers for what happened before living memory, so that his major contribution, apart from collecting the sources, was to relate contemporary history.[13] The focus of medieval historiography varied to a considerable degree, ranging from domestic or urban history to regional and national history, all of which could include passages

9 The French accounts, however, outnumber those from England by nine to six.

10 See, for example, *Chronicon Adæ de Usk A.D. 1377-1421*, ed. E. M. Thompson, 2nd edn. (London, 1904), 99-100, 276-277 [Rome 1405]; Capgrave, *Chronicle of England*, 242 [Austria 1386]; Matteo Villani, *Cronica. Con la continuazione di Filippo Villani*, ed. G. Porta, 2 vols. (Parma, 1995), 2: 185, 214-216, 274-275 [Paris 1358]; *Mercanti Scrittori. Ricordi nella Firenze tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*, ed. V. Branca (Milan, 1986), 383-385 [Paris 1381].

11 Thus, a single Flemish rising like the rebellion in Ghent led by Philip de Artevelde could get the attention of at least nine chroniclers from England and France; see Œuvres de Froissart, 9: 158-236, 341-378, 431-445; 10: 1-175; Religieux de Saint-Denys, 1: 108-119, 168-231; *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois*, ed. S. Luce (Paris, 1862), 284-290, 294, 302-308; *Chronique du Mont-Saint-Michel (1343-1468)*, ed. S. Luce, 2 vols. (Paris, 1879-1883), 1: 14; Nouvelle Collection, 2: 346-348, 351-356; St Albans Chronicle, 1: 314-317, 376-379, 604-609, 650-653; Historia Vitae et Regni, 55, 60, 71, 76; *The Westminster Chronicle 1381-1394*, ed. L. C. Hector and B. F. Harvey, Oxford Medieval Texts, ed. C. N. L. Brooke et al. (Oxford, 1982), 24-27; *Eulogium (Historiarum Sive Temporis)*, ed. F. S. Haydon, Rolls Series, 3 vols. (London, 1858-1863), 3: 355.

12 B. Guenée, "Histoire, annales, chroniques. Essai sur les genres historiques au Moyen Age", *Annales ESC 28* (1973): 997-1016, 1008, 1015; cf. J. Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1987), 37-39; N. Bulst, "›Jacquerie‹ und ›Peasants' Revolt‹ in der französischen und englischen Chronistik", in Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewußtsein im späten Mittelalter, ed. H. Patze (Sigmaringen, 1987), 791-819, 795.

13 Cf. Taylor, Historical Literature, 40-42; C. Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England* (Hambledon & London, 2004), 59-60.

on what may be called "general" or even "international history".[14] Even more versatile in their outlook were biographers and chivalric historians, for they wrote about the deeds of people, and these moved freely through regions and countries. Nevertheless, the internal history of foreign countries was not on top of the list of medieval historiography. With a few notable exceptions, it focused on events at home and only occasionally looked for news from across the borders.

But what made medieval chroniclers write about an incident from abroad? This, it appears, was a question of attention as well as of interest. First of all, the author must have got wind of the event and been sufficiently impressed not to dismiss it without further consideration. The incident, in other words, must have caught his attention. Arguing from the cases in our sample, there often seems to have been some kind of impulse, like first-hand experience or personal shock, which led to the insertion of foreign material into an account. The monk of St. Denis probably would not have noted the rising of 1381, if not for his presence in England at the time of the revolt and the indignation he felt when he learned about the way the insurgents had treated their archbishop's head.[15] Closer still to the revolt he recorded was Adam of Usk, for when in 1405 the people of Rome rose against Pope Innocent VII, he was working for the papal see and therefore barely escaped the public anger himself.[16] Eyewitnesses, then, seem to be the most likely candidates for the cross-border representation of insurgency.

However, attention was not the only condition for a popular revolt to be reported abroad. There had to be interest as well, in those involved in the incident, in its background and consequences, in the implications of the episode. This goes beyond the mere focus of a text, for a chronicler will only be interested in a foreign event if it can be useful for his narrative, if it has entertaining, explanatory or

14 Cf. Given-Wilson, Chronicles, 93-97 for the focus of institutional writers. A distinctly universal outlook can be found in universal chronicles, but these were mainly concerned with earlier periods of history; Taylor, Historical Literature, 40.

15 Religieux de Saint-Denys, 1: 134: *"Michi causam ecclesie nostre in hoc regno promoventi, cum indignanter audirem ipsa die per ville bivia illius archiepiscopi capud sacratum plebem pedibus huc illucque projecisse, unusque assistencium diceret: "Scias in regno Francie abhominabiliora futura et in brevi," hoc solum subjunxi: "Absit ut Gallie continuata fidelitas tanto monstro deformetur!"*. For an English translation see S. K. Cohn, *Popular Protest in Late Medieval Europe: Italy, France, and Flanders* (Manchester, 2004), 277.

16 Chronicon Adæ de Usk, xxv, 99: *"Que dies illa presencium compilatori dies erat ire, calamitatis et miserie, quia, usque ad ligulas spoliatus, vix cum vita, in habitu fratrum predicatorum per octo dies latitans, vix eorum tirannidem evasit."* He was, in fact, a personal friend of the pope.

rhetorical potential. The Jacquerie must have been a "good story" to the compiler of the Anonimalle Chronicle, a story related to the world of chivalry like most of the other foreign accounts he included in his narrative.[17] Thomas Basin had other reasons to write about the English rebellion of 1450, for he regarded the disturbances as a result of the expulsion of the English from Aquitaine and his native Normandy.[18] Of course, the revolts in these examples had also caught the attention of the authors, but it was a combination of attention and interest that was decisive for their transnational representation.

These considerations might help to explain the relative dearth of cross-border representation in our sources. In his study of popular protest in medieval Europe, Sam Cohn has pointed out that there was hardly any international coverage of the now most famous late medieval risings – the Ciompi, the Jacquerie and the Peasants' Revolt. By contrast, at least fourteen non-Roman authors recorded the riots in Rome in 1378 to enforce the election of an Italian pope.[19] As it comes as no surprise that writers all across Europe should be informed of as well as interested in the forced election of a pope, it must have been mainly interest that was lacking for the other risings. A parliamentary petition of 1377 proves that the Jacquerie was well-known in England at the time,[20] but only two English chroniclers bothered to report this event from abroad.[21] Others obviously saw no reason to do so, either because it did not fit in or because it was of no use for their narratives. And this, it appears, will have been primarily due to the fact that the Jacquerie did not affect European politics the same way the Roman rising did, and that the Jacques were not established political players like the Flemish rebels contemporary historians so loved to write about.[22]

However, neither their prevalence in contemporary chronicles nor the conditions for their being included make for the real significance of these cross-border reports of revolt. To fully appreciate their transnational character in our

17 Cf. Anonimalle Chronicle, xxxiii, xxxviii; see also A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 2 vols. (Ithaca, 1974-1982), 2: 112.

18 Basin, Histoire, 2:166: *"Quales autem quantique civiles et domestici tumultus atque motus, postquam Normannia primum deinde Aquitania pulsi fuerunt, inter Anglos in suo regno oborti sint, non ab re fuerit neque impertinens si hoc loco aliquid de rebus hujuscemodi retulerimus."*

19 S. K. Cohn, *Lust for Liberty. The Politics of Social Revolt in Medieval Europe, 1200-1425: Italy, France, and Flanders* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 2.

20 Parliament Rolls, 6: 47; cf. R. B. Dobson, *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*, 2nd edn. (London, 1983), 75, 77.

21 Gray, Scalacronica, 152-155; Anonimalle Chronicle, 41-42.

22 Cf. Cohn, Popular Protest, 4, 265-266 for the Flemish rebels and their political standing.

considerations, we have to look at the particularities of their representation of foreign insurgency, both compared to the picture of those risings painted by native chroniclers and to their own depiction of insurgency at home. In this way it should be possible to shed some light on the influence an author's origin had on the way he wrote about popular revolts in another country. And, since in our case the country he was writing about was at war with the country he was coming from, there could well emerge some alternating sympathies for rebels and authorities at home and abroad.

2) ALTERNATING SYMPATHIES

The depiction of popular insurgency in medieval chronicles was usually characterized by a strong hostility towards the rebels and their causes. Most of the authors were coming from – and writing for – the social elite, which held the agitated populace with contempt and greatly feared the frenzy of the insurrectionary crowd. This general attitude was shared by chroniclers all across Europe, and one will hardly find any narrative source openly siding with the insurgents. Nevertheless, there could still be significant differences in the representation of revolt. Comparing the chronicle pictures of the Jacquerie and of the Peasants' Revolt in England and France, Neithard Bulst has pointed to different traditions of perceiving and portraying social conflict in these countries. French chroniclers tended to fall back upon stereotypes and tropes, even denying the rebels any sense of reason in some cases, while their English counterparts gave much more attention to an accurate and detailed description of what they were writing about, and were much more interested in the causes of the events.[23]

These contrasting ways of representing revolt are also reflected in the cross-border reports of the Jacquerie and the Peasants' Revolt. There is one chronicle in each country covering both of them, the *Anonimalle Chronicle* in England and Jean Froissart's *Chroniques* in France. Rather surprisingly, both texts seem to follow the French model for the French revolt and the English pattern for the English rising. Thus, the *Anonimalle Chronicle* has a detailed and fairly balanced account of the

23 Cf. Bulst, ›Jacquerie‹ und ›Peasants' Revolt‹, 813-819. For the chronicle representation of these risings see also M.-T. de Medeiros, *Jacques et chroniqueurs: Une étude comparée de récits contemporains relatant la Jacquerie de 1358* (Paris, 1979); Bommersbach, Gewalt in der Jacquerie, 46-81, 71-79; P. Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century* Texts (Princeton, 1992), 34-51; H. Hinck, "Das zeitgenössische Bild der englischen Rebellen von 1381 und ihres aufständischen Handelns" (MA thesis, Bielefeld University, 2005).

Peasants' Revolt, but its report of the Jacquerie is primarily focused on the atrocities of the rebels, showing no interest whatsoever in their motives or in the causes of their rising.[24] With Jean Froissart it is just the same: he offers an albeit prejudiced but nonetheless valuable account of the English rising, but is only concerned with the rebels' cruelty and beastliness in his influential version of the French revolt.[25] However, this curious manner of following the representational conventions of the country written about is not shared by a third cross-border reporter of these risings, the Englishman Sir Thomas Gray. His brief account of the French Jacquerie is an essentially English one: despite reproducing some of the stereotypes it takes a much more sober approach and does not try to vilify the insurgents beyond measure.[26]

But how can we account for these different ways of representing revolt at home and abroad? In the cases at hand it will have been largely a matter of sources. Both Froissart and the author of the *Anonimalle Chronicle* seem to have drawn on sources from abroad for their cross-border reports of revolt, importing the "foreign style" of representation in this way. The account of the Jacquerie included in the *Anonimalle Chronicle* has much in common with the so-called "chivalric version" found in the chronicles of Jean le Bel and Jean Froissart,[27] but it also provides some distinctive new material not known from any other text on the rising. It therefore appears that the English compiler had access to an unknown report of the Jacquerie which was in some way related to the chivalric texts from abroad.[28] Froissart himself, by contrast, relied on oral evidence for his account of the Peasants' Revolt.[29] That he, almost exclusively among the chroniclers, cared to distinguish between an essentially good-hearted majority of insurgents and the "great venom"

24 Anonimalle Chronicle, 41-42, 133-151; cf. Bulst, ›Jacquerie‹ und ›Peasants' Revolt‹, 807; Cohn, Popular Protest, 144, 172-173. Cohn's translation, however, has to be approached with caution.

25 Œuvres de Froissart, 6: 44-58; 9: 386-424; cf. Bulst, ›Jacquerie‹ und ›Peasants' Revolt‹, 812-813. Most of the account of the Jacquerie was copied from Jean le Bel, but Froissart introduced some variants in the second and third redactions of his chronicles; cf. Cohn, Popular Protest, 143, 150-158; Gransden, Historical Writing, 2: 89-92.

26 Gray, Scalacronica, 152-155, 168-169; cf. Bulst, ›Jacquerie‹ und ›Peasants' Revolt‹, 815.

27 For the "version chevaleresque" see Medeiros, Jacques et chroniqueurs, 26–27, 45–46.

28 Cf. Anonimalle Chronicle, xxxviii; Bulst, ›Jacquerie‹ und ›Peasants' Revolt‹, 807-808. For the chronicle in general see Gransden, Historical Writing, 2: 110-113; Taylor, Historical Literature, 133-147.

29 Cf. Gransden, Historical Writing, 2: 91; Taylor, Historical Literature, 321; Given-Wilson, Chronicles, 11.

leading the rebel forces,[30] for the most part may have been a literary decision. But it also shows his closeness to the English government, for this had adopted a similar perspective by pardoning all but the "principal leaders and exciters" of the rising.[31]

No such connections were entertained by Thomas Gray, who based his account of the Jacquerie on oral testimony as well. Taking part in an expedition to France just a year after the events, he will have collected his evidence on the spot and thus was able to produce a relatively independent version of the revolt for his chronicle.[32] The independence of his report becomes apparent in the lack of any overstated attempt to scandalize the Jacques or to idealize their opponent, the French nobility. Gray's account is remarkably balanced and favours neither the nobles, who were his peers and shared the chivalric values of his writing, nor the rebels, who had risen against those he was fighting as an English soldier. It must have been his position as an outsider to the conflict that enabled him to maintain such a neutral view. Had he been directly involved in the events, either as a victim of the rising or as a participant in its suppression, the tenor of his report might have turned out quite differently. It is most unfortunate that he did not live to see the English commons rise against their betters in 1381, so that we will never know how Gray would have portrayed the insurgents in his own country.[33]

This we do know in another case, and a comparison of the reports of insurgency at home and abroad reveals some fundamental differences that cannot be explained by the sources. The author in question is Thomas Walsingham, a monastic chronicler from St. Albans, who wrote about the Peasants' Revolt as an eyewitness and is famous for his strong hostility towards the English rebels.[34] What is less well-known, however, is that he also included an account of the Parisian tax disturbances in his chronicle.[35] The difference between these reports could not be more striking. While heaping abuse after abuse on the English rebels, Walsingham

30 Œuvres de Froissart, 9: 404-406; for the "great venom" (*li grans venins*) see ibid., 406. Apparently, Froissart even had some sympathy for the simple ones; see ibid., 397, 400. A similar distinction can be found in the Anonimalle Chronicle, 137; cf. Hinck, Das zeitgenössische Bild, 22, 37-38.

31 Cf. Parliament Rolls, 6: 222-224, 240-247; Dobson, Peasants' Revolt, 325-333.

32 Gransden, Historical Writing, 2: 96; Bulst, ›Jacquerie‹ und ›Peasants' Revolt‹, 806-807.

33 For Gray and his work in general see Gransden, Historical Writing, 2: 92-96; Taylor, Historical Literature, 171-174.

34 St Albans Chronicle, 1: 410-563; cf. ibid., lxxxv-xcii; Bulst, ›Jacquerie‹ und ›Peasants' Revolt‹, 809-10.

35 St Albans Chronicle, 1: 390-395, 652-655. Cohn should have included this account in his collection.

completely refrains from judging the insurgents in Paris.[36] He may not be too comfortable with the fury and the violence of the crowd, but this is nothing compared to the indignation he expresses at the attacks occurring in England. The villain of his account, therefore, is not the rebellious people of Paris, it is the King of France, who is "proud and arrogant" after his victory in Flanders and resorts to deceit and cruelty to regain control of the city.[37] The distribution of sympathy in this cross-border report and in the account of the rising at home is completely reversed: Walsingham clearly despises the English rebels but apparently favours the French ones.

Walsingham's account of the Parisian disturbances is significant for yet another reason. The author pays much attention to the grievances of the rebels, the recapitulation of which even dominates his report. Starting with the usual reference to royal taxation, the complaints then move into a rather unexpected direction not to be found in any French version of the events. They focus on the country's defences, for in the eyes of the protesters these had not improved despite all the money collected from the people. Most importantly, the taxes had been wasted on a useless nobility, which, with the English rampant in the kingdom, was shamefully hiding in its castles instead of fighting the enemy.[38] Walsingham's emphasis on the cowardice and futility of the French nobles is curiously misplaced in this context, for it rather belongs to the background of the Jacquerie than to the situation of the early 1380s. And when the author in the end even has his rebels threatening to defect to the English, "whom they knew would rule them more gently than their natural French lords,"[39] it becomes clear that this list of grievances is English war propaganda laid into the mouths of French insurgents.[40]

To indicate that a king had lost the favour of his people was not an uncommon form of propaganda in the Middle Ages. Lancastrian authors also employed it against Richard II, and they did not fail to notice that it was by popular agency that

36 For his attacks on the English rebels cf. Hinck, Das zeitgenössische Bild, 39-50.

37 St Albans Chronicle, 1: 652-655.

38 St Albans Chronicle, 1: 390-393.

39 St Albans Chronicle, 1: 392: *"quin pocius, relictis suo rege et proceribus, qui continue eorum apporiacioni studebant, ad Anglos se conferrent, quos sciuerunt magis placide dominaturos super eos quam Gallicos suos dominos naturales."*

40 For French and English war propaganda in the 15th century see P. S. Lewis, "War Propaganda and Historiography in Fifteenth-Century France and England", *TRHS* 5.15 (1965): 1-21; N. Pons, "La propagande de guerre française avant l'apparition de Jeanne d'Arc", *Journal des Savants* (1982): 191-214.

the earls trying to restore him were stopped in early 1400.[41] But Richard had been on good terms with the French, and his deposition by Henry of Lancaster was perceived as an outrageous act of treason across the channel.[42] French accounts of the deposition therefore paint a different picture of the Earls' Revolt. They tend to play down the popular element in its failure, one of the texts ignoring it altogether, two others indicating that the commoners involved were primarily acting on orders.[43] Thus, it is the Countess of Hereford who in one of the French reports assembles the country people of Essex to put to death the Earl of Huntingdon. But the rustics are extremely sympathetic to the former king's partisan, and it takes a lot of curses and threats from the countess to make the executioner strike off his head.[44] Lancastrians like Walsingham or Usk, by contrast, do not mention the countess at all and simply state that the earl was captured and beheaded by the common people.[45] Keeping in mind how strongly the same commoners were condemned by Walsingham in 1381, and that French texts sometimes described the English as "evil and foolish people,"[46] it is ironic that elitist writers like these should consider the English populace as a narrative asset useful for propagandistic purposes.

But to minimise popular agency was but one way to treat opposition to the favoured faction in the other country. Another was to emphasise it, and to use the representation of revolt for a general attack against the enemy and his character. The monk of St. Denis actually gives two reports of the Peasants' Revolt in his chronicle, the first expressing his shock at the rebels' atrocities in a short aside to his account of the urban tax disturbances in France,[47] the second recounting the

41 *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham 1376-1422*, trans. D. Preest (Woodbridge, 2005), 315-317; Chronicon Adæ de Usk, 41-43, 197-203; Historia Vitae et Regni, 163-165.

42 See C. Taylor, "›Weep thou for me in France‹: French Views of the Deposition of Richard II", *Fourteenth Century England* 3 (2004): 207-222.

43 See Creton, Metrical History, 209-216, 400-407; Traïson et Mort, 77-103, 229-61; Religieux de Saint-Denys, 2:734-8. Froissart is less sympathetic to Richard and his followers. For these accounts in general, see J. J. N. Palmer, "The Authorship, Date and Historical Value of the French Chronicles on the Lancastrian Revolution", *BJRL* 61 (1978-1979): 145-181, 398-412.

44 Traïson et Mort, 96-100, 253-256; but cf. Palmer, French Chronicles, 409.

45 Chronica Maiora, 317; Chronicon Adæ de Usk, 42, 198. The Historia Vitae et Regni, 165, however, has a version not unlike the French one: *"Et non multum post dominus Iohannes Holand comes Huntindonn, frater Regis Ricardi ex parte matris, apud Plasch' in Estsex' per comitissam Herford' captus et decollatus est."*

46 See Metrical History, 222, 410: *"gent mauvaise et folle."*

47 Religieux de Saint-Denys, 1: 132-135.

events in retrospect as background to the English expedition into Flanders in 1383.[48] In this latter passage, the author describes the populace of England as being bent on renewing the war and indicates that it had been their efforts to establish a lasting peace that the archbishop and other royal councillors had lost their lives for in the recent rising.[49] Since public opinion was rather concerned with the kingdom's defences in the early 1380s and serious resistance to an agreement did not show up until about a decade after,[50] this reading of the revolt is an essentially anachronistic one and primarily serves to polemicise against the English in general: holding an "inveterate and expiable hatred" for the French, they were "unable to endure peace" and even massacred their own government when this dared to work for reconciliation.[51] The rising of 1381 thus is turned into another proof of English wickedness here and as such appears to foreshadow the deposition of Richard II eighteen years later.

In all the cases of cross-border representation discussed so far we have been dealing with foreign authors writing about revolts of the common people against their own native betters. In Caux and Caen, however, the situation was different, for the risings of 1435 in these Norman regions were directed against an occupying authority, i.e. the English forces holding the duchy since 1415.[52] An English version of the events is included in one of the London Chronicles, but, instead of vilifying the rebels, the text maintains a rather neutral stance. It describes the revolts and their suppression like other military affairs on the continent and only blames the Duke of Burgundy, who is said to have incited the rising in Caux after his

48 Religieux de Saint-Denys, 1: 256-259. Cf. also the expanded translation of this in Nouvelle Collection, 2: 358, which curiously omits the reference to retrospectivity and therefore describes an independent rising in 1383 here: *"En l'an mille trois cens quatre-vingt et trois, en Angleterre y eut de grandes séditions et commotions"*.

49 Religieux de Saint-Denys, 1: 256: *"archiepiscopum Cantuariensem, virum utique in cunctis commendabilem, regis cancellarium, nonnullosque consiliarios regales ferali rabie agitati nequiter interemerant, occasionem addentes quia pacem perpetuam inter reges componere conabantur."*

50 See E. Searle & R. Burghart, "The Defense of England and the Peasants' Revolt", *Viator* 3 (1972): 365-388; N. Saul, *Richard II* (London, 1997), 205-225.

51 Cf. Religieux de Saint-Denys, 1: 4, 256 (*more suo quietis impacientes*), 290 (*odio inveterato et inexpiabili stimulante*). For the "hatred between nations" in the monk's chronicle see B. Guenée, *L'opinion publique à la fin du Moyen Age d'après la Chronique de Charles VI du Religieux de Saint Denis* (Paris, 2002), 68-70.

52 For the occupation of Normandy in general see C. T. Allmand, *Lancastrian Normandy 1415-1450: The History of a Medieval Occupation* (Oxford, 1983).

betrayal.[53] More passionate than this is the account of Thomas Basin, a prominent Norman bishop much affected by the war and its devastations.[54] Even though he is not viciously hostile towards the English, Basin leaves no doubt that the insurrection was caused by English oppression and that the rebels were fighting for their natural lord, the King of France. The latter's inactivity, therefore, is all the more reprehensible in Basin's eyes, and it is at the French monarch's feet that he lays the ultimate responsibility for the plight of the faithful Norman people.[55] Despite showing different attitudes toward rebels and authorities in this conflict, the English and the Norman account have one thing in common: they put the real blame on a third party – the treacherous Duke of Burgundy in the English case, the indifferent King of France in the Norman one.

The distribution of sympathy certainly is one of the most interesting aspects of the transnational representation of revolt in late medieval England and France. The war had a strong influence on the way authors were reporting from abroad and in several of our cases the insurgents in the other country were used to slander the authorities there or even vilify the enemy in general. Naturally, this partisan approach to foreign insurgency was more interested in the national dynamics of a rising than in possible cross-border connections to other revolts, so that most of the writers betray a rather limited view of revolt in their chronicles. There are, however, some notable exceptions to this, and we will finally turn to the question of how contemporaries were linking insurgency across the borders, either unconsciously or deliberately.

3) LINKING THE INCIDENTS

To draw connections between historical events was definitely not the main concern of medieval chroniclers. Instead of explaining the incidents to their audience, they usually contented themselves with a simple account of what had happened, trying above all to tell the truth and to present examples, as they themselves frequently asserted.[56] Thus, it is not too surprising that we have found only a few chronicles in our sample that directly link occasions of insurgency in different countries. But such linking did not necessarily have to be explicit. An unconscious form of this

53 Chronicles of London, 137-140.

54 For a comprehensive study of Basin's life, work and attitudes see M. Spencer, *Thomas Basin (1412-1490): The History of Charles VII and Louis XI* (Nieuwkoop, 1997).

55 Basin, Histoire, 1: 196-227; cf. Spencer, Thomas Basin, 104-105.

56 Guenée, Genres historiques, 1008, 1010-1012; Bulst, ›Jacquerie‹ und ›Peasants' Revolt‹, 795-796; Given-Wilson, Chronicles, 1, 166.

appears when the description of foreign insurgency is notably shaped by the author's experiences of revolt at home. The Florentine Matteo Villani, for example, portrayed the Jacquerie of 1358 like one of the urban risings he knew from his Italian home town, merging this originally rural revolt with the rebellion of Etienne Marcel in Paris and completely passing over any peasant participation in the movement.[57] Froissart will have been influenced by his personal experiences in Flanders when he ascribed to the Londoners a major part in exciting the rising of the English counties in 1381.[58] The link between different manifestations of revolt is not an open and intentional one in these cases, but it nevertheless indicates that the author perceived something familiar in what he had heard or read about a rising in the other country.

Authors explicitly linking revolt across the borders were few, but there are some examples related to the so-called "cluster of revolts" in the 1380s, involving the rebellion in Flanders, the urban tax revolts in France, the English Peasants' Revolt and in one case even the Florentine rising of the Ciompi. A simple way to connect these revolts was to compare them or their participants. The Florentine writer Pitti, for example, remarks that the commoners rioting in Paris were people just like the Ciompi insurgents in his home town.[59] Froissart compares the French rebels to those in Ghent, pointing out that the very year the latter rose against their lord in Flanders the Parisians did the same in France.[60] More important than such comparisons, however, are connections attributed to the rebels themselves. These could have been inspired or even incited by insurgents from abroad, so that the rebellion in one country had been imported from another and therefore was derived from a "parent rising" there. According to the monk of St. Denis, public opinion had it that the people of France not only had received messengers and letters from Flanders but also was following the example of the English when almost all of it rose against the king in 1382.[61] Froissart even describes how the Parisians decided to await the

57 Villani, Cronica, 185, 214-216, 274-275; translated in Cohn, Popular Protest, 173-176. Cf. ibid., 144; Bulst, ›Jacquerie‹ und ›Peasants' Revolt‹, 815.

58 Œuvres de Froissart, 9: 389-390; cf. Dobson, Peasants' Revolt, 7, 137; Hinck, Das zeitgenössische Bild, 67.

59 Mercanti Scrittori, 384: *"Il popolo grasso, ciò è i buoni cittadini che si chiamano borgesi, dubitando che 'l detto minuto popolo che si chiamarono i Maglietti, ch' erano gente tali quali furono i Ciompi che corsono Firenze"*; translated in Cohn, Popular Protest, 303.

60 Œuvres de Froissart, 9: 394: *"cheux de Gand et de Flandres qui se rebelloient contre leur signeur, et en celle propre anée li Parisyen le fissent ossi et trouvèrent à faire les mailles de fier."*

61 Religieux de Saint-Denys, 1: 132: *"Sic temerarium ausum malignandi* […] *fere totus populus Francie assumpserat, nec minori agitabatur furia, et ut fama publica referebat,*

outcome of the conflict in Flanders before embarking on further insurrection of their own.[62] As it appears, at least those contemporaries with a broader outlook noticed a wave of insurgency in the early 1380s and tried to make sense of this clustering by ascribing transnational connections to it. Whether these really existed is another question, but it is highly unlikely that the rebels themselves were not aware of popular insurgency in other countries.

Of the writers explicitly linking revolt across the borders, Froissart was the only one to draw a connection across time as well. Thus, he not only linked the French, English and Flemish risings of the 1380s,[63] but also included the Jacquerie of more than twenty years before, comparing it to the English Peasants' Revolt as well as alluding to it in a passage about the rebellion in Flanders.[64] In fact, his chronicle contains more explicit linkings than any other text in our sample, which suggests that he maintained a somewhat specific view of popular insurgency. His general outlook was the most comprehensive to be found in the historiography of his day, for he was writing what amounted to a pan-European history of chivalry and included nearly all of western Europe in its scope.[65] The revolts he was recording therefore were more to him than just incidents occasionally linked to one another: they were part of a transnational phenomenon in his eyes, a "great devilry" which threatened to destroy the nobility in many European countries. This danger first appears in his account of the Jacquerie, and is repeated several times in the further course of the chronicle, arguably being one of the underlying themes of his narrative.[66] But thankfully, he asserts, God had always provided a remedy in time, so that the prospect of an annihilation of the nobility remained just a hypothetical one.[67] Froissart, then, is exceptional among the cross-border reporters of revolt. He had changing patrons and loyalties in England, Flanders and France, but due to his distinctly chivalric outlook he painted an almost universal picture of popular

per Flamingos, qui peste similis rebellionis laborabant, nunciis et apicibus excitatus, exemplo quoque Anglorum, qui eodem tempore contra regem et magnates regni rebellantes"; cf. ibid., 230, where the chronicler reports the rumour of a letter sent from Paris to Courtrai proposing an alliance between the cities. For English translations see Cohn, Popular Protest, 277, 287.

62 Œuvres de Froissart, 10: 146-147.

63 Œuvres de Froissart, 9: 394, 449; 10: 146, 185.

64 Œuvres de Froissart, 9: 386; 10: 147.

65 For Froissart's historical perspective see, for example, the different contributions in J. J. N. Palmer, ed., *Froissart: Historian* (Woodbridge, 1981).

66 Œuvres de Froissart, 6: 45, 46, 47; 9: 394, 403; 10: 147, 185. For the "great devilry" (*grant déablie*) see ibid., 9: 449; 10: 147.

67 Œuvres de Froissart, 6: 46, 47, 56; 9: 391; 10: 147.

insurgency in the later Middle Ages. And this proved to be a lasting one still shaping our perception today.

SUMMARY

The Hundred Years' War should have encouraged the mutual cross-border reporting of popular insurgency in England and France, but we have only been able to find some fifteen examples of revolt being reported by chroniclers from the other country. To understand this scarcity of findings it is helpful to consider the conditions of transnational representation in late medieval chronicles: these were not normally concerned with events from abroad, so that an incident had to catch the attention of an author and to be of interest for his narrative to be recorded in another country. Thus, it is not surprising that there was more transnational coverage of events like a riot in Rome to enforce the election of an Italian pope than there was of the ordinary risings of the populace, which for the most part did not affect other countries too much.

The transnational character of cross-border reports becomes apparent in the particularities of their representation of foreign insurgency, both compared to the picture of revolt painted by chroniclers abroad and to their own depiction of disturbances at home. In general, there was little sympathy for popular rebels in medieval historiography, even though the representation of revolt could differ considerably from country to country. Cross-border reporters sometimes imported a foreign style of representation with their sources, but they could also develop an independent approach, maintaining the neutrality of an outsider or even siding with the rebels in the other country. These were ideal to voice propaganda against enemy authorities and served well to question a government's legitimacy, so that insurgents from abroad were more likely to be favoured than their counterparts at home. Violent opposition to a faction rather well-disposed towards the author's country, however, could also be utilized for a cross-border polemic against the enemy in general.

Only a few transnational reporters cared to draw connections between individual incidents of revolt in their narratives. Some did so unconsciously, so that their description of foreign insurgency was shaped by their experiences of revolt at home. An explicit relation was created by comparing revolts or their participants, but more important than this were connections ascribed to the rebels themselves. By pointing out that these were inspired or even incited by insurgents from abroad, some of the authors were trying to make sense of a wave of insurgency in the early 1380s. The most inclusive perspective, however, was adopted by the chivalric historian Jean Froissart: to him, the late medieval uprisings were part of a transnational phenomenon which threatened to destroy the nobility all across Europe.