



**Nicholas A. Gribit.** *Henry of Lancaster's Expedition to Aquitaine, 1345-46: Military Service and Professionalism in the Hundred Years' War.* Rochester: Boydell Press, 2016. 392 pp. \$70.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-78327-117-7.

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Nicholas Gribit's in-depth survey, *Henry of Lancaster's Expedition to Aquitaine*, opens with an admirably bold goal: to use the treasure trove of English administrative documents to study the campaign "in the round" (p. 2). The book is a history of war written through the lens of Lancaster's retinue of military personnel, including the logistics of recruitment and remuneration, and the rise of military professionalism in the mid-fourteenth century.

There are several excellent studies of the series of on-again, off-again military actions between the French and the English during what scholars call the "Hundred Years' War" over English control of territories in France (1337-1453). This is particularly true for the first "phase" of the war, which ran from 1337-60 under the direction of the English king, Edward III. However, as Gribit notes, the field is ripe for scholars to consider the deep history of the conflict, which goes back at least until the 1290s, and perhaps as he suggests, even earlier into the twelfth century when England acquired territories in France that they would later lose (pp. 9-10). Gribit situates his study in middle of the first phase of the war. He focuses on the notably well-documented and successful campaign of Henry, Earl of Lancaster, to reclaim the territory of Aquitaine (1345-46). Aquitaine was

brought under England's control with the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine to King Henry II of England (1152). Gribit carefully documents the English campaign in Aquitaine by considering the wider military community, rather than the battles themselves. Gribit shifts the focus away from emphasis on tactics and the decisions of the elite leaders to a broader survey of how kings and leaders financed, recruited, and paid their soldiers. The most compelling chapters are those that deal explicitly with logistics and especially the prosopographical examination of elite soldiers and their careers that concludes the book.

Gribit's "in the round" study of Lancaster's campaign in Aquitaine presents a feasible model on which to build a holistic and experiential study of premodern warfare. In the early chapters, Gribit's careful reading and handling of the data from "patchy extant" accounts allows him to provide an impressive amount of detail on the socioeconomic composition of the armies, and how leaders recruited (or coerced) soldiers, to meet their quotas (p. 74). Further, his comprehensive study of the various accounts books demonstrates how bureaucratic innovations in the fourteenth century, which optimized the efficiency of and flexibility in paying war expenses, was a crucial factor in supporting Lancaster's army.

The middle chapters represent solid, standard contributions to a study of the campaign. With the final three chapters, Gribit considers Lancaster's ability to recruit. He charts the "cohesion" of his retinue. Through a careful prosopographical reading, Gribit demonstrates that Lancaster had a stable "core group" comprised of elite fighting men who already shared kinship or social ties with him. He illustrates how Lancaster's sociopolitical networks solidified over the previous ten years allowed him to recruit and maintain a larger fighting force, including men from Aquitaine. Even with the necessary influx of new soldiers at the beginning of the campaign, this core group helped administer his army effectively and recruit more fighting men through their kinship and sociopolitical networks. By recruiting through networks, Gribit argues, Lancaster minimized disruption to his retinue, which contributed to their cohesion and, ultimately, their success as a fighting force. Extending his argument in the final chapter, which deals with increasing professionalization of military personnel, Gribit contends that the episodic nature of warfare and retinue-focused system in the fourteenth century pushed the development of a military "profession" and "career" knights, who, while still attached to their retinue captains, made decisions to stay with or move to different captains according to personal opportunities for gain. As Gribit notes, it is impossible to track the actions of lower-level soldiers, such as archers. Nevertheless, his close study of career knights does suggest a nascent fighting identity based on an individual's political decisions and self-interest.

Gribit has established an approach that other military scholars could use to illuminate the experience of recruitment for not only the soldiers themselves but also local communities, and the impact of the mobilization of resources required for the military preparations. For example, it would be interesting to compare a detailed reading of military-focused accountants with those of other lords, local notables, and town councils along with other sources, such as local chronicles,

to consider the experience of war on populations hidden from military-centric sources, such as women, and the impact on the natural environment because of widespread military provisioning.

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