

H-France Review Vol. 20 (January 2020), No. 25

Mollie M. Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée of 1355*. Woodbridge, England and Rochester, N.Y.: The Boydell Press, 2018. xi + 248 pp. Maps, tables, figures, notes, bibliography, and index. £60.00 (hb). ISBN 978-1-78327-356-0.

Review by Clifford J. Rogers, West Point.

In 1355, Edward of Woodstock, Prince of Wales, the eldest son of King Edward III of England, led a dramatic fifty-nine-day campaign from English Guienne straight across southern France, all the way to the Mediterranean. His small Anglo-Gascon army left thousands of square miles burnt and pillaged. Large towns and cities such as Carcassonne, Limoux, Narbonne and Toulouse were either destroyed or lost their unwallled suburbs. *Chevauchées* of this sort sometimes culminated in decisive battles, and sometimes did not. The 1355 campaign fell into the latter category, but its strategic consequences were still substantial: the boundaries of the English “obedience” were pushed out; several important border lords transferred their allegiance to King Edward; King Jean II was badly weakened both politically and fiscally. The campaign thus set the stage for Prince Edward’s decisive operations of the following year, leading to the Battle of Poitiers, the capture of King Jean, and ultimately (in 1360) to English victory in the first stage of the Hundred Years’ War.

The core purpose of this book is to use the prince’s operations as “a case study of the logistics of a *chevauchée*” (p. 1). The 1355 campaign is a reasonable choice for that purpose, since it is well documented for a campaign not led by the king himself, and because its particular course allows the historian to examine how the English dealt with a variety of challenges, from cross-Channel shipping, to movement through the desolate Landes, to resupplying the army both in friendly and in hostile territory, and coping both with river crossings and the occasional dearth of water. Two chapters go to the preparations for the expedition in England: one for material logistics, and one for recruitment. Three more cover the march out to Narbonne, the return to Bordeaux, and the post-campaign operations through the winter of 1355-1356. Helpful appendices (among other things) list the ships of the prince’s fleet and the names of as many of the army’s soldiers as can be recovered—15 pages’ worth.

Madden works her basic question in both directions: to see how details of the campaign can cast light on medieval logistics, and also to see how logistics-focused analysis can help clarify what happened during the expedition, and why. Unsurprisingly for a former student of Bernard S. Bachrach, Madden draws on the basic methodology developed by Donald Engels in his 1978 book *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army*: estimating the number of people and mounts in the Black Prince’s army, then multiplying by constants derived from modern

military manuals to calculate the weight of food, forage and water needed each day to sustain the force.<sup>[1]</sup> That then leads to educated guesses about the number of wagons and pack animals in the baggage train; those guesses then have to be fed back in to the calculations of logistical demands. Multiplying estimates times approximations and factoring in guesswork leads to conclusions that must be understood as suffering from large total margins of error, especially since even the most basic number (the size of the prince's army including noncombatants) cannot be established with much precision due to relatively thin record sources. Nonetheless, this sort of calculation does allow for ruling out certain claims in the sources, for example the greatly exaggerated size of the Anglo-Gascon force in the otherwise much more reliable chronicle of Geoffrey le Baker.

The 1355 campaign has been studied carefully before, among others by Jean-François Jeanjean, H. J. Hewitt, Peter Hoskins, and myself, though not as thoroughly as in this book. A core task for Madden is to develop a detailed, day-to-day narrative of the campaign, from the English perspective (a focus that may be somewhat disappointing for readers of H-France). That is not easy, because of the very unorthodox place-name orthography of the principal (English) sources. To do this, she draws on unpublished record sources, especially the accounts of John Henxteworth, the prince's treasurer; local histories; and archaeological studies; as well as the chronicle accounts, campaign bulletins, and campaign diary that previous historians have mainly relied upon. She then uses logistical analysis to resolve difficulties such as whether the place that le Baker calls "le Serde" should be identified with Lagardère, Lasserre, or "La Ressingle" [Larressingle], as various historians have done (176). Le Baker tells us that the prince's center division rested for a day at Réjaumont, then advanced to "Le Serde," one league from Condom, crossing a large river along the way. "Le Serde" was destroyed and its castle razed to the ground. Madden prefers Larressingle, because it is about the right distance from Condom (3.67 miles) and Réjaumont (20 miles), and because the route to there crosses the Petite Baïsse river. That seems unlikely to be correct: aside from the phonetic distance between the two names, which she ignores, there is the problem she does acknowledge: the fortifications at Larressingle survived the war intact. On the other hand, Madden is persuasive in arguing that Lasserre (north of Condom) is probably wrong, because it is too far from Condom (9 miles) and from Réjaumont (25 miles). Given that, le Baker's "le Serde" was probably the château de Lasserre, two miles southeast of Condom, a possibility not considered in the book.

Why does it matter if the prince camped in Lasserre, Laressingle, Lagardère, the château de Lasserre, or "La Serre (unidentified)"? In this particular case, it does not matter much, except that Madden's purpose includes telling the story of this campaign with as much detail and providing as many reliable facts as possible. In another case that Madden tackles in a similar way, however, her conclusions do matter to the fundamental understanding of the nature and purpose of this *chevauchée*, and perhaps to English *chevauchées* of the period in general. Historians of the 1355 campaign have held widely divergent views on the question of whether Prince Edward was looking for a fight with the French forces in the area. In a prime example of her approach and its value, Madden uses logistical analysis to conclude that he was seeking battle, at least at one particular point during the operation. She notes that historians have argued for two different routes for the army in the period 13-15 November. One group sees the army as passing south of Carcassonne in hopes of bringing on combat with a French army operating there; the other, as moving north of the city and aiming to avoid battle. Peter Hoskins previously supported the former interpretation based on topography, toponymy, and calculations of time and distance. For Madden, "adding the logistical constraints--the ineluctable needs of men and animals for

provisions and water, the consumption rate [of supplies], the speed of march, [and] the physical and human topography...confirms that the Prince and his staff chose the more difficult route--south--and sought to meet the French forces" (p. 155). This is as important for interpreting the French side of the campaign as the English, since it confirms contemporary English claims that King Jean II's lieutenant, the count of Armagnac, preferred flight to fight in this campaign. For students of French history seeking to understand the transfers of allegiance that followed this *chevauchée*, or why Jean II chose to fight at Poitiers the next year, that is a significant datum.

These two examples illustrate the strengths and some of the limitations of Madden's approach. Because of the diligent research reflected in her extensive footnotes, bibliography, and appendixes, the strengths outweigh the limitations even for students of medieval French history, and all the more so for specialists in medieval warfare or those interested in the impressive capabilities of the English government in the fourteenth century.

#### NOTE

[1] Donald Engels, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

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ISSN 1553-9172