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M. A. Pollock, *Scotland, England, and France After the Loss of Normandy, 1204-1296: 'Auld Amitie'*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015. 228pp. £60 U.K. (hb). ISBN: 978-1-8438-3992-7.

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The year 1204 has long held special significance for historians of medieval England and France. In that year, King Philip II of France successfully conquered the duchy of Normandy from King John of England, ending over a century of political affiliation between England and Normandy. The so-called “Anglo-Norman realm” had been separated before, in the dynastic crises of 1187, 1100, and 1144, but in those instances the various cross-Channel aristocratic networks had been more or less preserved as each claimant sought to reunite the composite “realm” under their singular rule. In 1204, however, matters were different. If King Philip harboured claims to England, they were separate from his desire to incorporate Normandy into his kingdom of France. Normandy’s tenurial nexus with England was anathema to the structural integrity of Philip’s wider realm, and was deliberately severed through a policy of permanent confiscation in Normandy. With a few notable exceptions, those Norman landholders who sided with the English king lost their lands in the duchy. The failure of King John and his son, King Henry III, to reconquer Normandy had profound implications for the separate development of the kingdoms of England and France.

It is perhaps a symptom of the frequent disaggregation of “Anglo-French” and “British” history that the impact of 1204 has not been much studied for the other lands settled by Anglo-French aristocrats. In her new book, *Scotland, England and France after the Loss of Normandy, 1204-1296: 'Auld Amitie'*, Melissa Pollock seeks to fill that historiographical gap by arguing that King John’s loss of Normandy had important consequences for the relationship between Scotland and France. From the reign of King David I of Scotland (1124-53), Anglo-French lords had been invited to colonise parts of the Scottish kingdom. This not only helped to Europeanise (or Anglicise/Gallicise) the political community of Scotland, but also ushered in a period of close interaction between the aristocratic families of Scotland and France. As scholars such as Geoffrey Barrow, and the author herself, have shown previously, those Anglo-French aristocrats maintained ties to their (mostly Norman) French territories throughout the twelfth century.[1] The crisis of 1204 meant that the thirteenth century witnessed the dissolution of such direct tenurial connections and the rise of official royal diplomacy between Scotland and France. Pollock contends that the formal Franco-Scottish alliance inaugurated by the Treaty of Paris (1295) would have been unnecessary had the informal aristocratic nexus remained intact.

This book takes as its focus the intervening period, after the severance of the cross-Channel connection in 1204, but before the formal inauguration of the “Auld Alliance” in 1295. Over the course of five chronological chapters, Pollock traces the influence of the Anglo-French aristocracy of Scotland on the political history of the three kingdoms of Scotland, England and France. In particular, she contends that the tendency of English dissidents to flee north as well as south promoted relations between Scotland and France during the several political struggles that gripped thirteenth-century England. From this perspective, King William the Lion’s seemingly disparaging marriage to Ermengarde, daughter of the viscount de Beaumont-sur-Sarthe in Maine, was part of a broad strategy of informal political affinity with

France. Too early to be part of the “Auld Alliance,” Pollock characterises this Franco-Scottish relationship as an “Auld Amitie.”

As one of the few historians to attempt to bridge the gap between “Anglo-French” and “British” history, Pollock deserves praise for her ambition. With ambition, however, comes risk. One of the great challenges of writing transnational history is that the author must master several historiographies, each with their own preoccupations and specialisations. Since Pollock focuses on family relationships and local aristocratic networks, she faces the daunting task of engaging with work on the many and varied regions of medieval Scotland, England, and France. Because the Scotland-England-France axis was not a closed system, Pollock is also forced to dip into, for instance, Irish and Welsh historiography. This is quite an undertaking, made all the more daunting by Pollock’s determination to trace each and every family network herself. Depth is not to be sacrificed for breadth, meaning that the 220 pages of text are crammed with prosopographical analysis taking in dozens of families.

There are indications that Pollock may have stretched herself too thin while trying to reconstruct from scratch the many aristocratic networks she covers. “Perhaps” and “possibly” are prevalent caveats, and build upon each other to create systems of questionable reliability. This problem is compounded by a persistent, if understandable, tendency to affirm her underlying thesis by mapping important political connections through Scotland. Few (if any) historians will have the broad base of knowledge requisite to query all of her conclusions, but individual networks are certainly vulnerable to scrutiny from specialists. Having worked on the Briouze and Lacy families myself, I was drawn to her coverage of them. Pollock argues that the two families were part of the influential “networks in the Évrecin” (pp. 17-27), and that “understanding the Évrecin dimension of Franco-Scottish contact is paramount to appreciating the political developments during the last six years of King John’s kingship and the minority of John’s son, Henry III” (p. 37). It is a measure of the scope of the book that this review is only able to engage fully with a small, though by her own admission vitally important, corner of Pollock’s prosopographical web. It will hopefully offer insight into the overall quality of the book under review.

Two important arguments to emerge from Pollock’s treatment of the Évrecin networks are that, first, they explain the origin of King John’s anger towards William de Briouze, which eventually led to his spectacular destruction in 1210, and second, the Scottish element recommended an escape route from John to the earl of Ulster, Hugh de Lacy, that same year. To deal with the first claim: Pollock argues that William de Briouze fell foul of John for his reaction to the loss of Normandy in 1204. “Both the Lacy and Briouze families held land in the fee of Lacy (Lassy, Calvados) from the church of Bayeux before 1204, but, unlike the Lacys, William de Briouze continued to hold three fees of the honour of Briouze, two knights’ fees of the church of Bayeux, and possibly Montrabot in the Manche probably through a separate agreement with King Philip” (p. 17). On the face of it, this is just the sort of bold reassessment of the transnational aristocracy that the book promises to deliver. King John is known to have publically reproached William Marshal for coming to a similar arrangement with King Philip II after 1204, which resulted in the Marshal fleeing to self-imposed exile in Ireland. If Pollock is correct, then the open warfare that broke out between John and his magnates in Ireland in 1207 (which included Briouze, Marshal and the Lacys), might have been the direct result of this accommodation with King Philip (p. 20). So too the alliance the Lacys negotiated with King Philip in 1209 or early 1210, for which William’s son Giles de Briouze, then in Paris, was presumably an intermediary (pp. 23-4).

The foundation of this theory is William de Briouze’s accommodation with King Philip II after 1204, evidence for which Pollock finds in the feudal survey Philip conducted of his newly conquered duchy in 1208-10, *Feoda Normannie*. Unfortunately, the source does not support this conclusion. There is no mention of William de Briouze in *Feoda Normannie*, and what evidence exists suggests that his family had ceased to hold its lands in Normandy by the time that the survey was conducted (i.e., with the rest of King John’s adherents in 1204). Under the church of Bayeux, *Feoda Normannie* records that the “fee of Philip de Briouze” (“Feodum Philippi de Braiosa”) owed two knights to the church. Philip de Briouze was long

dead by 1208, and his fee was simply an administrative placeholder for the vacated territory, much like the “fee of Lacy” (“Feodum de Laceio”) mentioned just before it. By contrast, other individuals who are known to have retained their Norman lands are listed as personally owing service to the church without any mention of their “fees.” A similar arrangement is observable for Montrabot, where the “fee of Philip de Briouze” (“Feodum Philippi de Braiosa”) owed two knights. Finally, it is clear that the family patrimony at Briouze was in the hand of the king (“Braosa, iii feoda. Rex habet”).^[2] All of this indicates that William de Briouze did not retain any lands in Normandy after 1204.

If more evidence of William de Briouze’s Norman forfeiture is needed, then King Philip’s 1208 confirmation to Lyre abbey of the grants at Couvert (Calvados) that the abbey had of Loretta de Briouze “de libero maritaggio suo de Covert in Normannia” may imply that the king had even seized Briouze estates in dower.^[3] The final source that Pollock cites in her argument is the anonymous *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre*. This source states that upon William’s death in 1211, “his son, the bishop of Hereford, buried him, and it was to him that the king [Philip II] then delivered his father’s lands.”^[4] This might well have suggested that William de Briouze had retained his Norman lands after 1204, had the *Feoda Normannie* not shown otherwise. Instead, those unspecified lands were more likely a consolation given to William when his failed rebellion against John drove him to Paris in 1210.^[5] As Pollock notes, King Philip had just intrigued with Briouze’s in-laws (the Lacys) to foment rebellion in England and Ireland (p. 23), so showing William favour in exile might have given heart to other English dissidents.

The second argument is that the Évrecin network’s Scottish element determined the fugitives’ escape route in 1210. Having crossed to Ireland to confront the Lacys and Briouzes in 1210, John marched on Hugh de Lacy’s stronghold of Carrickfergus in Ulster. Hugh and the Briouzes fled first to the Isle of Man and then to Western Scotland, where John’s men apprehended the Briouzes. Hugh managed to evade capture, and made his way to the bishop of St Andrews, William Mauvoisin. With John’s men hot on his heels, Hugh took ship to France, where he hid at the abbey of Saint-Taurin d’Evreux. From there, Hugh went to join Simon de Montfort (nephew of Count Amaury of Evreux) on the Albigensian Crusade. According to Pollock, Hugh’s entire flight, from Ulster to Languedoc, was the result of the Évrecin network. “Hugh [de Lacy]’s involvement with Bishop William Mauvoisin and then with Simon de Montfort was based on interaction between families in the Evrecin that spilled over into Scotland” (p. 26). This strikes to the heart of Pollock’s “Auld Amitie”: Scotland as a backdoor for English dissidents fleeing to France. “Their reasons for finding refuge in Scotland were not only because the Scottish crown was an intermittent enemy of the king of England but also because there were a number of men in Scotland who had contacts in France” (p. 23).

This argument is more difficult to disprove for the simple fact that it is largely speculative. It is, however, contingent upon the reliability of geographical proximity, monastic benefactions, and witness list appearances as indicators of political affinity. According to Pollock’s analysis, “the Mauvoisins, Montforts and Beaumonts moved in the same circles in France, and Montfort’s wife’s family, the Beaumont earls of Leicester, can be found making salvatory gifts from Les Essarts to Notre-Dame des Vaux-de-Cernay, an abbey that also received gifts from the Mauvoisins and Montforts” (p. 26). “Hugh de Lacy relied on these relationships to find refuge from King John in 1210” (p. 41). A short review cannot do justice to the ingenuity involved in the prosopographical reconstruction, and there can be little doubt that aristocratic networks in the Évrecin influenced Hugh de Lacy’s decision to flee first to Saint-Taurin (where he joined his brother Walter) and then on to Simon de Montfort. However, the role of William Mauvoisin as the hub of that network is questionable. For one thing, Hugh’s brother, Walter de Lacy, fled to Evreux directly from Ireland, without passing through Scotland. Despite all of her painstaking work, Pollock missed a much simpler explanation for the Lacys’ connection with Evreux and the Montforts. Hugh and Walter’s grandfather, Gilbert de Lacy (d.c.1163), had held two knights’ fees at Claville (Eure, cant. Évreux-Ouest) of the Montfort counts of Evreux. By 1210 these lands were in the hands of a cadet branch of the family, but, as Pollock acknowledges (p. 41), Walter de Lacy had kept up the affiliation with Saint-

Taurin.[6] Rather than needing the bishop of St Andrews to point them on their way, perhaps Hugh and Walter de Lacy relied upon their own extensive support network when fleeing King John.

A degree of speculation is unavoidable in medieval prosopography. Evidence is almost always fragmentary, and imagination is needed to fill in the gaps. However, that imagination should be supported by a robust methodology, and deployed in a well-structured argument. Melissa Pollock has demonstrated great ambition in her attempt to unite Anglo-French and British history into one transnational perspective, but her book lacks both a strong underlying methodology and a clear, uncluttered argument. It is hoped that in future Pollock will be able to deploy her undoubted prosopographical skills on a less-unwieldy project.

NOTES

[1] G.W.S. Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); Melissa Pollock, *The Lion, the Lily, and the Leopard: The Crown and Nobility of Scotland, France, and England and the Struggle for Power (1100–1204)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015).

[2] *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, ed. M. Bouquet et al. (24 vols., Paris, 1864–1904), xxiii, p. 699b (Bayeux), p. 701a (Montrabot), p. 707b (Briouze).

[3] *Cartulaire Normand de Philippe-Auguste Louis VIII, Saint-Louis et Philippe-le-Hardi*, ed. L. Delisle (Paris, 1882), no. 1093.

[4] “L’evesques de Herefort ses fils le mist en tierre, à cui li rois rendi puis la tierre son pere,” *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d’Angleterre*, ed. Francisque Michel (Paris, 1840), p. 115.

[5] Colin Veach, “King John and royal control in Ireland: Why William de Briouze had to be destroyed,” *English Historical Review* 129/540 (2014):1051–78, at p. 1076.

[6] Colin Veach, *Lordship in Four Realms: The Lacy Family, 1166–1241* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), pp. 24–5.

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