

Soldiers, Villagers, and Politics: Military Violence and the Jacquerie of 1358

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The Jacquerie of 1358, in which the rural inhabitants of the Île-de-France, Picardy, Champagne, and parts of Normandy rose up and attacked the nobility, remains a hotly contested incident, but the importance of soldiers as a cause of the revolt is one of the few things on which scholars agree. Siméon Luce, whose book remains the only scholarly monograph on the event, argued that the Jacquerie was a pre-emptive effort, coordinated with anti-royal rebels in Paris, to destroy castles that had been recently slated for garrisoning by soldiers, who would brutalize the countryside's inhabitants and threaten rebel's position in Paris¹. Jules Flammermont – who agreed with Luce on hardly anything about the Jacquerie – also thought that soldiers were at the root of it, though he imagined the matter more simply: The Jacquerie was an unplanned rising, accidentally set off by a fight between soldiers and peasants, which gave an outlet to the peasants' centuries of accumulated hatred against the nobility². More recent historians continue to be divided as to whether the Jacquerie was coordinated with or even directed by Paris or a spontaneous uprising organic to the countryside³. But all hold that the presence of soldiers created intolerable insecurity for rural inhabitants who were moved, whether by calculated self-interest, outside manipulation, or drunken bloodlust, to oppose the pillagers with violence. As Nicholas Wright concludes, 'there can be little doubt that it was the presence of large numbers of soldiers ... which was the spark of the revolt'⁴.

There is ample evidence that soldiers, many of them foreign-born mercenaries, had become a serious threat to health and safety in many parts of France by 1358. Due to the lull in hostilities that followed the Battle of Poitiers in 1356, where the English resoundingly defeated the French and took King Jean II captive, thousands of soldiers found themselves without commanders or wages. Many of these then formed independent companies, occupying castles, pillaging for their own profit, brutalizing local inhabitants, and holding rural settlements to ransom⁵. The situation was made worse for the common people by the failure of both the crown and the nobility to exercise effective authority. In the months and years after Poitiers, royal government was weak

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¹ Luce 1895.

² Flammermont 1879.

³ Scholarship favouring coordination includes Cazelles 1978; Cazelles 1982; Cazelles 1984; Bessen 1985; Firnhaber-Baker 2014. For the opposing view see, Henneman 1976, 75; Durvin 1978; Leguai 1982; Aiton 2007.

⁴ Wright 1998, 84. *cf.* Delachenal, 1909–1931, I: 398, whose passing objection has been ignored until now.

⁵ Fowler 2001; Sumption 1990–present, II, ch. 8; Contamine 1975.

or even simply absent. In Paris, the adolescent Dauphin Charles was nominally in control, but in fact had to cede most of his power to a coalition led by the *prévôt* of the Paris merchants Étienne Marcel and his close associate Bishop Robert le Coq of Laon⁶. Dedicated to the cause of reform and good governance, this coalition nevertheless impeded the normal working of government by purges and the substitution of inexperienced men for those whom they deemed corrupt⁷. When the uneasy *modus vivendi* between this coalition and the Dauphin broke down in the winter and spring of 1358, the two sides began preparing for war. Adding to insecurity was King Charles II of Navarre, who possessed both a reasonable claim to the French throne and a large number of soldiers, and who maintained a threateningly high profile in northern France⁸, occupying much of Normandy and the Beauce and (at least initially) allying closely with the Dauphin's enemies in Paris⁹. As for the nobility, their legitimacy had been seriously harmed by perceived cowardice at Poitiers, and there was a general feeling that they had not only abdicated their responsibility to protect the *laboratores*, but were also joining in the pillaging themselves¹⁰.

The Jacquerie as an outburst of rural rage against villagers' traditional protectors – the nobility – for the failure to defend them from the violence of soldiers thus makes a great deal of contextual sense. There is, as we shall see, substantial evidence of rustic anger against aristocrats and a feeling that local communities had to take on the responsibility of defense for themselves in the absence of both royal and seigneurial protection. This is not dissimilar to the circumstances that led the famous peasant leader Grand Ferré and his community to defend themselves (though with royal permission) against English troops in 1359¹¹. Comparing the geography and timing of the Jacquerie to that of the various military bands at work in northern France from 1356 to the revolt's beginning in late May 1358, though, shows that few communities that participated in the Jacquerie had direct experience of military violence. Most of them could only have feared what they had heard about second-hand. Attention to place and time suggests rather that the Jacquerie was closely related to the strategic aims of the Parisians, whose conflict with the Dauphin – and his close allies, the nobility – had come to the boiling point by mid May. While this should not lead us to discount evidence about the fear of soldiers, it is important to consider how the leaders of the revolt used that fear, and how the language of fear is deployed in the documents, to motivate or excuse the acts that the Jacques committed.

⁶ Delachenal 1909–1931, I, ch. 7–10. For Marcel, see d'Avout 1960; for Robert le Coq, see Funk 1944.

⁷ Cazelles 1982, 231–233, 238–287, 294–297, 304–313.

⁸ For Charles of Navarre's army: Charon 2014, 477–494.

⁹ Charon 2014; Bessen 1983; Secousse 1758.

¹⁰ E.g. de Beaurepaire, ed. 1851; J. de Venette, ed. Beaune 2011, 174; Molinier & Molinier, eds. 1882, 127–128.

¹¹ Beaune 2013, 13–20, 205–215.

I. Localizing Insecurity, 1355–58

The insecurity upon which the Jacquerie has often been blamed was not localized to the revolt's heartlands in the Île-de-France, Picardy, and Champagne. Rather, this insecurity was a condition that plagued many parts of rural France much more seriously than the Jacquerie's epicenters and which had been growing for several years before the revolt. Much of it was related to the royal armies directly involved in the Hundred Years War. Indeed, real panic about soldiers was first stirred up by the famous *chevauchée* in Languedoc that Edward, Prince of Wales, had undertaken in autumn of 1355, which had terrified the whole realm and advertised traditional authorities' impotence¹². The king's own soldiers were not much better behaved; evidence of their depredations can be found in a famous clause of the *ordonnance* promulgated by the Estates General assembly of Languedoil in late 1355, which authorized individuals and communities to resist pillaging soldiers (*soudoiers*) forcibly and on their own authority¹³. When Charles of Navarre was arrested in April of 1356 under accusations of treachery, a new war opened up in Normandy under the command of Charles's brother Philip, who allied with England and declared war on France in May¹⁴. It was a new *chevauchée* by the Prince of Wales in August that drew French royal troops away from the war in Normandy and led them, disastrously, to Poitiers in September¹⁵. That military disaster, the captive King's absence, and the Dauphin's inexperience, obviously did nothing to ameliorate the situation. After Poitiers, the sites of violence became more numerous and spread north and eastward under the auspices both of royal troops and of less formally constituted groups acting for their own profit. To summarize Jonathan Sumption's narrative synthesis of the period¹⁶: In the winter of 1356–1357, the Navarrese and the English occupied western Normandy, and Philippe of Navarre rode east in January as far as l'Aigle¹⁷ before heading South through the Chartrain and then returning to Normandy, a venture that panicked the capital. English adventurers, eager to make their fortunes by pillage, poured into France. By the summer of 1357, numerous bands, not clearly subject to any higher authority, spread out through Normandy, occupying the small fortresses and strong places of the duchy. Anglo-Navarrese troops seized Honfleur¹⁸, thus taking control of the Seine estuary, and another 1,400

¹² Sumption 1990-present, II, 175–187; Hewitt 1958.

¹³ *Et pour ce que pour fournir nostre Guerre, il Nous convient avoir des Soudoiers dehors nostre Royaume, tant de Genz de cheval comme de pié, lesquelz aucunes foiz pillent et robbent ... Nous voulons que chascun leur puisse resister par voie de fait* (Laurière & al., eds. 1723–1849, III, 36).

¹⁴ Delachenal 1909–1931, I, ch. 5.

¹⁵ Rogers 2000, 7–8 and ch. 10

¹⁶ For what follows, Sumption 1990–present, II, 268–304.

¹⁷ Orne, ch.l. de c^{on}

¹⁸ Calvados, ch.-l. de c^{on}.

troops arrived in the autumn, enabling Navarrese control of most of that river's southern bank. Southwest of Paris, the Beauce came under attack. A man called Ruffin led his bands on pillaging expeditions between the Loire and the Seine, attacking at least a dozen towns and villages.

Over the winter of 1357–1358, Paris and the Île-de-France began to feel seriously threatened: the Dauphin's own soldiers pillaged the Chartrain in lieu of wages¹⁹. The south-west was also victimized by troops associated with Charles of Navarre under the command of an adventurer called James Pipe. Pipe's men took over the castle at Épernon²⁰ some 30 km north of Chartres, from which they ravaged the surrounding countryside that spring, moving east to the Gâtinais in May, burning Nemours and damaging Grez²¹. To the east in Champagne there were additional troop movements. In December 1357, the royal bailiff of Provins and Meaux had to pay *gens d'armes* to deal with 'enemies', as well as to visit certain *maisons fors* near Provins from which soldiers had damaged the countryside²². In early April, after an assembly dominated by nobles at Provins, the Dauphin broke decisively with Paris and began military preparations to take back the city, requisitioning the castles at Montereau-Fault-Yonne and Meaux²³. The townsmen's irritation at the garrison at Meaux is well known, and at Montereau, the commander later received remission for holding to ransom the countryside's merchants and *bonnes gens* and stealing their goods²⁴.

II. Jacques and Soldiers

Thus, in late May 1358, when the Jacquerie broke out, the countryside to the west, south, and east of the Île-de-France, running in a rough crescent from Honfleur to Nemours with outposts in Montereau and Meaux, was occupied by troops, including men fighting for the French crown or the Anglo-Navarrese, as well as independent bands without clear allegiances. Only the regions to the north/northeast in a triangle running from Paris to the Vexin and Picardy, had not been subject to pillaging soldiers in the aftermath of Poitiers. These regions are, of course, exactly the area from which we have the most evidence for participation in the Jacquerie. Stretching from

¹⁹ See the contrasting claims about these men in speeches made by the Dauphin and Étienne Marcel in January 1358 (Delachenal, ed. 1910–1920, I, 135, 137). For the Dauphin's payment policy, see Sumption 1990–present, II, 305 and 373 and n. 41, below.

²⁰ Eure-et-Loir, c^{on} of Maintenon.

²¹ Seine-et-Marne, c^{on} of Nemours, Delachenal 1909–1931, I, 368; Sumption 1990–present, II, 304, 315; Delachenal, ed. 1910–1920, I, 171, 175–176; Paris, AN JJ 90, no. 421, fol. 212r; AN JJ 86, no. 122, fol. 44v–45r.

²² Provins et Meaux, Seine-et-Marne, ch.-l. de c^{on}. BnF, fr. 25701, no. 121 (cited by Sumption 1990–present, II, 301). My thanks to Dr Anna Russakoff for providing an image of this document.

²³ Montereau, Seine-et-Marne, ch.-l. de c^{on}, Delachenal, ed. 1910–1920, I, 164–170.

²⁴ AN P 2293, p. 453–456.

Auffay in eastern Normandy to the eastern Amiénois and running south to Soissons, the uprisings mentioned in the sources, the bulk of which are letters of remission for Jacques, were undertaken by people in the northern Île-de-France, the Beauvaisis, the county of Clermont, and Picardy²⁵. A thick line of implicated villages snakes up the River Oise from Pontoise to Compiègne, and another runs down the Thérain between Beauvais and Montataire²⁶. Despite Luce's assertion that it was 'precisely in the regions [in which soldiers had been pillaging] that the Jacquerie would erupt'²⁷, in fact, when the revolt broke out at Saint-Leu-d'Esserent²⁸ and Cramoisy in the Beauvaisis, it brought large-scale violence to one of the few regions of northern France that had not yet known it.

In only three instances on the periphery of this area can we substantiate participation in the Jacquerie against existing garrisons of soldiers. There is one explicit, if isolated case from western Picardy, where one Simon Doublet, who served as captain of several villages during the Jacquerie, received a letter of royal pardon, which recounts how the ravages of 'the English and other enemies' led to the communities' decision to destroy noble castles:

Since, in order to consider how each region could rightfully best resist the English and other enemies of the Realm of France, who had been pillaging and destroying the countryside from the castles and fortresses which they had taken ..., the inhabitants of

²⁵ Auffay, Seine-Maritime, c^{on} of Tôtes: Luce 1895, no. 48. Sources for the eastern Amiénois include: AN JJ 88, no. 89, fol. 56v–57r (Andechy, Somme, c^{on} of Montdidier and Goyencourt, Somme, c^{on} of Roye); AN JJ 97, no. 358, fol. 94 (Cachy, Somme, c^{on} of Boves); Luce 1895, no. 64 (Villers-aux-Érables, Somme, c^{on} of Moreuil); Chicago, Newberry Library MS f.37, fol. 168v–169r edited on Froissart, ed. Ainsworth & Croenen 2007–present: <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/onlinefroissart> (Plessis-de-Roye); For the Soissonnais: AN JJ 90, no. 174, fol. 97v–98r and no. 530, fol. 264v–265r (both Acy, Aisne, c^{on} of Braine); AN JJ 86, no. 322, fol. 107v–108r (Neuilly-Saint-Front, Aisne, ch.-l. de c^{on}); AN JJ 86, no. 352, fol. 120 (Soissons, Aisne); JJ 90, no. 364, fol. 186 (Soissons and Neuilly-Saint-Front); AN X1a 17, fol. 272v–274 (Soissons and Berzy-le-Sec, Aisne, c^{on} of Soissons); AN JJ 90, no. 413, fol. 209r (diocese of Soissons and Charentigny, Aisne, c^{nc} of Villemontoire, c^{on} of Oulchy-le-Château). In this note, and those that follows, the list of documented places is intended as indicative rather than exhaustive.

²⁶ Southern Picardy AN JJ 86, no. 313, fol. 104v–105r (Pontoise, Val-d'Oise, ch.-l. de c^{on}); Luce 1895, no. 25, AN JJ 90, no. 162, fol. 92, AN JJ 90, no. 425, fol. 212v–213r, Delachenal, ed. 1910–1920, I: 177–178 (Beaumont-sur-Oise, Val-d'Oise, ch.-l. de c^{on}); AN JJ 86, no. 246, fol. 82, AN JJ 90, no. 82, fol. 40v (Précly-sur-Oise, Oise, c^{on} of Montataire); AN JJ 86, no. 224, fol. 73v, AN JJ 94, no. 4, fol. 3v; AN JJ 101, no. 55, fol. 30v–31r (Pont-Sainte-Maxence, Oise, ch.-l. de c^{on}); Luce 1895, no. 39 (Verberie, Oise, c^{on} of Pont-Sainte-Maxence); AN JJ 86, no. 223, fol. 73, AN JJ 86, no. 361 and 362, fol. 123r (Jaux, Oise, c^{on} of Compiègne). Thérain: AN JJ 90, no. 564, fol. 279r (Beauvais, Oise); AN JJ 90, no. 148, fol. 79v–80r (Beauvais and Ponchon, Oise, c^{on} of Noailles); AN JJ 90, no. 244, fol. 130v, AN JJ 94, no. 26, fol. 11r (Mouchy-le-Châtel, Oise, c^{on} of Noailles); Delachenal, ed. 1910–1920, I: 177 (Cramoisy, Oise, c^{on} of Montataire); Luce 1895, no. 29 and 63, AN JJ 100, no. 643, fol. 190v (Montataire, Oise, ch.-l. de c^{on}).

²⁷ Luce 1895, 22. Many of Luce's citations in support of this hypothesis are incorrect: The depredations of the garrison at Creil (Oise, ch.-l. de c^{on}), a fortress at the confluence of the Thérain and Oise, for example, in fact date to 1359. Also post-Jacquerie are the episodes of *routier* violence in some letters of remission he cited and the scenes the famous peasants Guillaume l'Aloue and Grand-Ferré's bravery in the supposed Jean de Venette's chronicle (ed. Beaune 2011, 206–215). For Flammermont's part, his assertion that the Dauphin's troops ravaged 'the Beauce, the Île-de-France and the Beauvaisis' is not supported by the source he cited, Étienne Marcel's letter to the Dauphin, which as mentioned above, complains about soldiers to Paris's south and west (Flammermont 1879, 124).

²⁸ Oise, c^{on} of Montataire.

Grandvilliers, Poix and Lignières, recently assembled on the field in arms ... and by common decision elected Simon Doublet of Grandvilliers their captain, giving him orders ... to go attack some castles, houses, places, and fortresses of some of the nobles of those frontiers and regions...²⁹

It is possible that the fortress at Poix had already fallen into the hands of the English by May 1358 and that the villagers were reacting to this³⁰, but the other two cases from the northwest are more ambiguous: According to the Norman chronicler, during the Jacquerie there were attacks against the fortresses at Villepreux and Trappes, both of which the royal chronicler reported as falling into Anglo-Navarrese hands in late 1357³¹. The role of military violence against local inhabitants as a motivation for this attack is unclear, though, as the Norman chronicler stated that it was done at the behest of Étienne Marcel and a later judicial source reports that the violence at Trappes was directed not at Anglo-Navarrese soldiers, but at the house of a French knight ‘whom the Parisians detested’³².

In Champagne, where an area around Saint-Dizier saw significant participation in the Jacquerie³³, a cluster of remissions issued to individuals in the bailliage of Vitry attests to the fear of soldiers in similar terms to that of Simon Doublet’s remission. One relates that local villages, now standing accused of participation in the revolt, had assembled for self-defense since was ‘common knowledge through the whole region of Champagne, that the Lorrainers and the Germans or other enemies of the realm meant to pillage and burn the region’³⁴. Another remission explained that local communities were allowed to assemble ‘for the tuition and defense of the parish and resistance to the enemies’ and that when the village of Bailly-aux-Forges

²⁹ Poix, Somme, ch.-l. de c^{on}; Grandvilliers, Oise, ch.-l. de c^{on}; Lignières-Châtelain, c^{on} de Poix-de-Picardie. *Que comme pour avoir avis et deliberacion comment chascun pais en droit soy pourroit mieux resister au fait des anglois et autres ennemis du Royaume de France que par le chasteaulx et foreresses qu’il ont pris et tiennent en ycelui ont gaste destruit et pille ... les habitans des villes de Grantvillier, de Poys et de Linières se feussent nagaires assemblez sur les champs en certain lieu d’icelles marches et pais et de commun assentement eussent esleu et fait Symon Doublet de Grantvillier leur capitaine et ayce lui fait commandement ... pour aler abatre aucuns chasteaux, maisons, lieux et forteresses d’aucuns nobles des marches et pais* (AN JJ 86, no. 392, fol. 136).

³⁰ Luce 1895, 26 argued this was the case, but the *arrêt* he cited leaves the date ambiguous, noting only the year the castle’s lord left it to serve in the royal army and that the castle was taken in consequence (published in Timbal, ed., 1961, 286–87). The *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois*, however, lists Poix among the castles taken by Navarrese forces in the autumn of 1358 (Luce, ed. 1862, 87).

³¹ Trappes, Yvelines, ch.-l. de c^{on}; Villepreux, Yvelines, c^{on} of Saint-Nom-la-Bretèche, Molinier & Molinier, eds. 1882, 128; Delachenal, ed. 1910–1920, I, 127.

³² Luce 1895, 220, citing AN X1a 21, fol. 481–482.

³³ Saint-Dizier (Haute-Marne, ch.-l. d’arrt.): AN JJ 86, no. 258, fol. 86v–87r (Sompuis, Marne, ch.-l. de c^{on}); Luce 1895, no. 32 (Bettancourt-la-Ferrée, Haute-Marne, c^{on} of Saint-Dizier); AN JJ 95, no. 22, fol. 10v–11r (Blacy, Marne, c^{on} of Vitry-le-François); AN JJ 86, nos. 358–360, fol. 122 (Vitry-la-Ville, Marne, c^{on} of Écurey-sur-Coolé; Étrepy, Marne, c^{on} of Thiéblemont-Farémont and Drouilly, Marne, c^{on} of Vitry-le-François); Luce 1895, no. 34 (Saint-Vrain and Blacy); AN JJ 86, no. 578, fol. 209v–210r, confirmed at AN JJ 95, no. 116, fol. 44v (Saint-Lumier-en-Champagne, Marne, c^{on} of Thiéblemont-Farémont and Saint-Vrain, idem), and see the next three notes.

³⁴ Luce 1895, no. 33.

actually did so, it was because ‘many soldiers committed many excesses in some towns of these bailliages’³⁵. In a third case, the royal pardon states that ‘during the commotions [i.e. the Jacquerie] in various areas of the realm last summer, the inhabitants of numerous Perthois villages assembled in order to decide how they could best resist the evil designs of some foreigners, whom they mistrusted, as well as the nobles of the realm’³⁶. In these cases, as for Poix, there is some corroborating evidence of the presence of soldiers, and it is possible that the Dauphin’s entourage and those of the noblemen riding to join his forces had created some disturbances³⁷. But it is notable that only one of the three cases from Vitry indicates that the community was responding to violence that had *already* occurred. The presence of soldiers was a fairly recent occurrence of limited extent in Champagne relative to the occupation of other territories. Indeed, when the Dauphin moved in April to garrison the eastern castles, Étienne Marcel wrote to him to complain that this area was *not* in need of defense because the soldiers causing problems were all to the southwest, between Paris and Chartres: *les gens d’armes qui sont en vostre compagnie fussent mieulx à vostre honneur entre Paris et Chartres, là où sont les ennemis que là où vous estes, qui est païs de pais et sans guerre*³⁸.

This southwestern area of such concern to Marcel did witness significant participation in the Jacquerie³⁹, and there is some specific overlap here between the movements of soldiers and the revolt. Of the near dozen places that Jean le Bel and Froissart listed as overrun by ‘Ruffin’ and his band in the southern Île-de-France, three of them, Étampes, Châtres, and Montlhéry, were in the path of people who later rose during the Jacquerie⁴⁰. The garrison of the château at Montereau, which had been requisitioned by the Dauphin in April, was later remitted for pillaging merchants and *bonnes gens du plat pays* during, as well as before and after, the Jacquerie, as

³⁵ Bailly-aux-Forges, Haute-Marne, c^{on} of Wassy, *ibid.*, no. 40.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 46.

³⁷ See n. 22, above. Luce 1895, 21, n. 2 (where a reference to Froissart, ed. Luce & al. 1869–present, V, 134–136 is not given) admits that his source places mercenaries in Champagne only toward the *end* of 1358, but his instinct to put them there earlier may have been right nonetheless. For the Dauphin in April 1358, see Delachenal, ed. 1910–1920, I, 164–170. There are some complaints about the violence of this host once assembled (e.g. AN JJ 86, no. 202, fol. 66r), but this was after the Jacquerie.

³⁸ Chartres, Eure-et-Loir. Edited in d’Avout 1960, 302.

³⁹ Southern Île-de-France: AN JJ 86, no. 329, fol. 110v (Fontenay-lès-Briis, Essonne, c^{on} of Limours); AN JJ 86, no. 316, fol. 105v–106r (Saulx-les-Chartreux, Essonne, c^{on} of Villebon-sur-Yvette); AN JJ 86, no. 304, fol. 101v (Longjumeau, Essonne, ch.-l. de c^{on}); AN JJ 86, no. 232, fol. 76r and AN JJ 86, no. 306, fol. 102r (Grigny, Essonne, ch.-l. de c^{on}), AN JJ 86, no. 364, fol. 124 (Saint-Fargeau, Yonne, ch.-l. de c^{on}); and see below, for Étampes (Essonne, ch.-l. de c^{on}), Montlhéry (Essonne, ch.-l. de c^{on}), Châtres (Seine-et-Marne, c^{on} of Tournan-en-Brie), and Boissy-sous-Saint-Yon (Essonne, c^{on} of Saint-Chéron).

⁴⁰ Jean le Bel, ed. Viard & Déprez 1904–1905, II, 249–250; Froissart, ed. Luce & al. 1869–present, V, 95. Étampes: Luce 1895, no. 23 and AN JJ 86, no. 385 (corr. 395), fol. 137v. Châtres: Luce 1895, no. 30. Montlhéry: AN JJ 86, no. 297, fol. 99v.

were members of the garrison of Étampes, by then also back in royal hands⁴¹. The village of Boissy-sous-Saint-Yon fled before James Pipe's troops on 15 May 1358 and was later remitted for participation in the Jacquerie⁴². But it is not necessarily the case that these incidents should be understood as part of the Jacquerie. The best candidate for such overlap is at Étampes, where the *bonnes gens*, tired of being murdered, pillaged, and raped by the garrison, attacked the castle. There is no extant remission issued to them specifically for this act, but the inhabitants of the county of Étampes were included in the general remission issued for the Jacquerie and the noble reaction to it, and the remission for the soldiers who repulsed the attack on the castle cites this plenary remission as part of the rationale for forgiveness⁴³. In the other cases, the relationship between actual military violence and Jacquerie is much less clear. The documents draw no connection between the troops present in the area and the participation of the inhabitants of Châtres and Montlhéry in the uprisings. At Boissy-sous-Saint-Yon, the inhabitants ran from rather than fought against Pipe's men, an act recounted in a different document than their letter of remission for the Jacquerie and which makes no appearance even as an excuse for that violence.

The evidence for firsthand experience of violence at the hands of military men by communities involved in the Jacquerie is thus fairly limited. Most of the areas that played host to the revolt were relatively unaffected by troops' predations, and even in those places where they did overlap, we have only a few instances in which behavior understood as revolt was directed at soldiers⁴⁴. Furthermore, if we look at regions farther to the south and west that we know to have been certainly and significantly affected by military violence against civilians between 1356–1358, there is no evidence of revolt, though there is a fair amount of evidence of resistance to soldiers. In the winter of 1358, for example, villagers attacked the *stipendarii* of Bruyères-le-Châtel in the Chartrain, for failure to pay for their provisions⁴⁵, and south of Sens, the inhabitants of Branches attacked some rude vagabonds out of fear that they were *depredatores seu pillatores*⁴⁶. In Cravant,

⁴¹ Montereau: *tant durant le temps de la discussion qui a été entre les nobles et les gens du plat pais, comme devant et après, ayant fait plusieurs prises* ... (AN P 2293, p. 453–56). *Discencion* should be read in place of *discussion*, probably a mistake of the eighteenth-century copyist. Étampes: AN JJ 86, no. 385 (corr. 395), fol. 137v where the Dauphin's permission to pillage in lieu of wages is explicitly mentioned as the rationale for a garrison's depredations

⁴² Fleeing soldiers: AN JJ 86, no. 122, fol. 44v–45r; Jacquerie: AN JJ 86, no. 215, fol. 70.

⁴³ General remission: Luce 1895, no. 23. General remission cited: AN JJ 86, no. 385 (corr. 395), fol. 137v. Sumption 1990–present, II, 331 sees this incident as incited by Étienne Marcel's commands to the Jacques given at Chilly-Mazarin (Essonne, ch.-l. de c^{on}) on 24 June, which is mentioned in a remission to the crier of Châtres (Luce 1895, no. 30). See discussion below.

⁴⁴ Guy Fourquin sought to explain this discrepancy with reference to the poor grain prices that those in the Beauvaisis had experienced 'since 1315', but obviously, as Leguai pointed out, a circumstance that had already endured for four decades hardly explains why the revolt broke out just then (Fourquin 1964, 233; Leguai 1982, 55).

⁴⁵ Essonne, c^{on} of Arpajon, AN JJ 86, no. 105, fol. 38r.

⁴⁶ Yonne, c^{on} of Aillant-sur-Tholon, AN JJ 86, no. 260, fol. 87v.

near Auxerre, the inhabitants, who had been terrorized by the Anglo-Navarrese, attacked and imprisoned a knight and his men because they ‘thought that they were enemies, or at least not honest people’ (*ennemis, ou au moins non estre bonnes genz*)⁴⁷. None of these villages was later involved in the Jacquerie.

III. The Targets of the Jacquerie: Nobles and their Fortresses

The Jacquerie is differentiated from communal efforts of self-defense or vengeance not only by geography, but also by the language the documents use for their targets. At Boissy, Bruyères, Branches, and Cravant, the villagers attacked soldiers, characterized as such by military, moral, or political terms: *stipendarii, pillatores, depredatores, inimici/ennemis*. By contrast, remissions for communities and individuals involved in the Jacquerie identify the targets almost without exception as nobles and their property. The usual formula in the Jacquerie remissions speaks of the uprising undertaken by the people of the open countryside (*gens du plat pays*) against the nobility (*les nobles*) – or, less commonly, as the conflict that occurred between the nonnobles and the nobles – during which their fortresses and goods were destroyed⁴⁸. For the royal lawyers and clerks who redacted remissions, the people victimized by the Jacquerie were different from those targeted at Bruyères or Cravant, or at least, what was important about them in that context was different. But semantics do not tell the whole story here, for the line between soldier and noble was naturally a blurry one in a society dominated by a military aristocracy⁴⁹. Indeed we can see such conflation at Poix, where the depredations of ‘the English and other enemies of the Realm of France’ incited the villagers to ‘attack some castles, houses, places, and fortresses of some of the nobles’⁵⁰, and in the Perthois villages, where people were anxious not only about ‘some foreigners’ but also about ‘the nobles of the realm’⁵¹. And if actual military violence did not incite social revolt, anxiety about the potential of such violence could have led communities, who had grown mistrustful of traditional authorities, to take prophylactic action.

That the Jacquerie erupted to prevent the garrisoning of castles was, of course, a central element of Luce’s explanation for the revolt. He blamed it on a decision taken at the assembly of the

⁴⁷ Cravant, Yonne, c^{on} of Vermenton. Luce 1895, no. 42. Luce published the remission for this last incident as Jacquerie document, but there is no indication in the text itself that these deeds were part of the Jacquerie, and it is not clear from the document even when it happened. Note that *bonnes genz* may not simply mean good people but rather common-born local inhabitants.

⁴⁸ *commotions qui nagaires et derreinement ont este fait par les gens du plat pais contre les nobles du royaume*, a formula which is found, with some variation, in about one-third of the remissions. For the less common *entre nobles et nonnobles/inter innobles et nobiles* see AN JJ 86, no. 372, fol. 127r; Luce 1895, no. 36; AN JJ 95, no. 121, fol. 47–48r, among others.

⁴⁹ Wright 1998, 56; indeed, many of the most famous and successful ‘freebooters’ of the age hailed from noble households (Fowler 2001).

⁵⁰ AN JJ 86, no. 392, fol. 136.

⁵¹ Luce 1895, no. 46.

Estates of Vermandois at Compiègne in early May to put the region's fortresses in a state of readiness, which meant that the castles would soon be home to soldiers who would pillage the countryside⁵². Flammermont argued that Luce was wrong about the importance of this decision because the provision in question was not substantially different from similar clauses contained in promulgations of earlier such assemblies, which had not provoked an outpouring of rustic fury⁵³. Flammermont's point is well taken, but as Luce recognized, the clause also ordered destroyed those fortresses whose possessors would not or could repair them⁵⁴. This stipulation had also been part of earlier promulgations, and in fact, it appears that the Dauphin and the coalition led by Étienne Marcel had pursued a programme of inspection and destruction or reparation of castles over the autumn and winter of 1357–1358, specifically so that they could not become the redoubt of the 'enemies' or other predatory troops⁵⁵. This policy may have been an important contributor to the Jacquerie, which, as is not always fully recognized, was primarily aimed not at noble bodies, but rather at their fortresses. While Froissart and Jean le Bel almost certainly overstate the amount of interpersonal violence involved in the revolt – individual nobles killed by the Jacques number around two or three dozen, and we have no documentary evidence of rape – Jean le Bel was probably not exaggerating much when he counted 140 fortifications as damaged or even destroyed during the revolt⁵⁶.

The Jacques' attacks on castles were, as Luce and others have argued, also in line with other provisions of earlier meetings of the Estates had authorized self-defence for the resisting of soldiers⁵⁷. The remissions for some of the Champenois villages that had assembled in order to resist soldiers speak of *ordonnances* authorizing their behavior⁵⁸. In the years following Poitiers, there does seem to have been a general feeling that traditional authorities, especially the nobility, had abdicated their responsibilities and that communities had to organize their own defense. Both Jean de Venette and the Norman chronicler famously speak of the peasants' disappointment in the nobility, particularly regarding the issue of security⁵⁹. In most of the Jacquerie areas, as we have seen, security was a prospective concern rather than the fruit of bitter experience, but the anxiety and anger involved may nonetheless have been quite acute. A

⁵² Explicitly at Luce 1895, 54.

⁵³ Flammermont 1879, 126.

⁵⁴ *les abatent ou facent abbatre et arraser, si que dommage n'en vieigne* (Laurière & al., eds. 1723–1849, III, 224).

⁵⁵ E.g. AN JJ 90, no. 563, fol. 278; Musée de Paris AE II 376 (formerly AN K 948b, no. 40).

⁵⁶ Fourquin 1964, 240. Aiton 2007 notes that rape is not mentioned in a single remission for the Jacquerie. For the narrative function of rape in the chronicles see de Medeiros 1979. Jean le Bel, ed. Viard & Déprez 1904–1905, II, 257.

⁵⁷ Laurière, ed. 1723–1849, III, 19–37, 121–46; Luce 1895, 160–164; Durvin 1978; Firnhaber-Baker 2014, 368–371.

⁵⁸ Luce 1895, no. 33 and 40.

⁵⁹ See n. 10, above.

remission for an inhabitant of Arcy-Sainte-Restitue, south of Soissons, for example, recounts the reproaches laid upon the village's lord, about to ride off and leave the village unprotected, and the threat that if he would not protect them, then they would have to protect themselves⁶⁰. The village had not yet known any violence, but the lord's disregard of the inhabitants' fears fomented anger against him, nonetheless.

IV. The Politics of Fear

If we can connect the Jacquerie more securely with fear of and preventative action against soldiers than with actual violence, though, the question of timing becomes more acute. There had been soldiers near (though not in) the Jacquerie heartlands for over a year by May 1358, and anger at the nobility, particularly for their military failings, had been running high since at least Poitiers. Here, attention to space and time provides support for Luce's *other* theory about the Jacquerie: that it was directed at the enemies of the Parisian revolt led by Étienne Marcel and Robert le Coq. While Flammermont dismissed this possibility out of hand as impossible because *cela suppose un complot et par conséquent des hommes capables de raisonner*, Raymond Cazelles argued that Luce was right: *Il y a certainement eu concertation*⁶¹. Unlike Flammermont, whose objections rested entirely upon his view of the peasantry as drunken louts, Luce and Cazelles adduced significant evidence for their theories, including evidence of communication between the Jacques and the Parisians, as well as their cooperation in some military expeditions, especially around Paris and to its northeast. Certainly, people in high places blamed the Parisian rebels for the Jacquerie.

Innocent VI spoke of the events of June 1358 as authored by 'the Parisians and very many people of other communities of those parts of the realm of France against many nobles of those parts'⁶². The Dauphin, writing at the end of July about the recent disturbances, charged Marcel with having stirred up (*esmen*) the people against the nobles of the realm⁶³.

If there was significant coordination with Paris, many things about the timing of the Jacquerie and its targeting of the nobles make more sense. While the Estates at Compiègne may not have provided a new impetus for revolt because the clause about readying or destroying the castles was already a long-standing policy, the political circumstances of the meeting, at which the nobility dominated and the Parisians' delegates were turned away, were indicative of the crisis of relations between the Dauphin and his noble allies on one side and Paris on the other. The

⁶⁰ Aisne, c^{on} of Oulchy-le-Château, Luce 1895, no. 36.

⁶¹ Flammermont 1879, 127; Cazelles 1978, 660.

⁶² *Parisienses et quamplurimi aliarum communitatum aliarum partium de regno Francie populi contra nonnullos ipsarum partium nobiles* (Denifle & al., eds. 1889–1897, IV, no. 1239).

⁶³ *d'avoir esmen les gens du plat país de France, de Beauvoisins, de Champaigne et d'autres lieux, contre les nobles du dit royaume...* (published in Delachenal 1909–1931, II, no. 29).

Parisians were aware of their danger. The Hôtel de Ville had been fortified with artillery from the Louvre, and the Parisians were holding armed assemblies of their citizens⁶⁴. In May Marcel sent 2,000 florins south to Avignon to hire soldiers (*brigandi*) and to buy arms for the defense of Paris, but the messenger was captured and the money seized⁶⁵. Charles of Navarre was made captain of the city and fêted around town, though his troops were as much a threat to Parisian safety as those of the Dauphin⁶⁶. As Cazelles pointed out, nothing could have been more strategically useful to the Parisian rebels in late May than a massive effort to destroy the countryside's fortresses, crippling the Dauphin's ability to cut Paris's supply lines and preventing the nobility, his main allies, from joining his army⁶⁷.

Particularly north of Paris, where, as we have seen, the military oppression hypothesis is least demonstrable, the geographic spread of Jacquerie villages looks remarkably advantageous for Marcel. The concentration of villages in revolt along the Oise and Thérain rivers could easily be understood as a strategic counter-move to the Dauphin's domination of the Marne⁶⁸. The conflict at the river town of St-Leu-d'Esserent, where the Jacquerie allegedly began, was not an accidental confrontation, but rather, as Pierre Durvin showed, began when noble troops arrived in the town to take control of the town, which possessed both an important bridge over the Oise and supplies of stone for the reparation of castles⁶⁹. Another theatre of revolt, Champagne, was, of course, home to the strongest noble support of the Dauphin⁷⁰. It is also notable that two of the fortresses attacked during the Jacquerie, namely Trappes in the west and Étampes in the south, which had been held by Anglo-Navarrese troops, had passed back into the hands of the crown by May, again suggesting a strategic effort to counter the Dauphin⁷¹. Marcel himself, of course, denied involvement in the uprising in letters he wrote to Ypres in July, after the Jacquerie had been put down, but his denial was couched in narrow terms, and even there he admitted

⁶⁴ Artillery: Delachenal, ed. 1910–1920, I, 170–171 and d'Avout 1960, 303; armed assemblies: AN JJ 86, no. 253, fol. 84v–85r (*s'est a[r]mez aussi comme les autres et alez aus commandemenz des diz prevost et complices et aucunes foiz aus assemblees generalx qu'il faisoient en la dite ville*).

⁶⁵ Secousse, ed. 1755, 142.

⁶⁶ Delachenal, ed. 1910–1920, I, 174.

⁶⁷ Cazelles 1978.

⁶⁸ For the Thérain and the Oise villages acting together see AN JJ 90, no. 148, fol. 79v–80r. Marcel had planned to claim the strategic fortress on the Marne at Meaux first but was pre-empted by the Dauphin (Delachenal, ed. 1910–1920, I, 169). His interest in the rivers, necessary to the supply of Paris (see Cazelles, 1982, 291–292), is also demonstrated by his reported orders to a Jacques captain to destroy all the fortresses between *deux eaux*, in this case, the Seine and Oise (Luce 1895, no. 25).

⁶⁹ Durvin 1978; Cazelles 1978, 663.

⁷⁰ Delachenal, ed. 1910–1920, I, 164–168.

⁷¹ See n. 31 and 43, above.

having authority over the Jacques, claiming he told them not to kill women and children, at least, ‘so long as he or she was not an enemy of Paris’ (*se il n’estoit ennemi de la bonne ville de Paris*)⁷².

It is possible, in fact, that Marcel and his agents used anxiety about soldiers in order to convince some people to participate in the Jacquerie. Remissions for supporters of Marcel state that he had not just usurped the government not just of Paris and the countryside around it, but that he had also ‘given people to believe that the Regent was going to allow the cities and the countryside to be pillaged by soldiers’⁷³. Given the pre-existing policies of castle demolition and communal self-defence discussed above and the concurrent mistrust of the nobility, it would not be difficult to imagine fear of these troops’ arrival being used to incite and justify attacking the local castle or manor house, especially since it was at just this moment that the Dauphin was mustering the troops for his own army, simultaneously increasing the number of troops in the area and moving the nobility away from the localities they were to protect. It was the departure of Arcy-Sainte-Restitue’s lord for the Dauphin’s army, for example, that provoked his villagers’ remonstrations about being left to fend for themselves, and the lord of Poix blamed his absence for the enemy’s capture of his fortress⁷⁴.

More speculatively, the conflation of soldiers with nobles that we observed in several cases above from Picardy and Vitry suggests that anxiety about soldiers could be manipulated to direct anger at the nobility. In addition to the instances already noted, there is a case from Moret-sur-Loing, west of Montereau on a tributary of the Seine, where, when the villagers raised the alarm about some approaching foot-soldiers (*brigandi*) and assembled to decide on their course of action, one of the villagers took the opportunity to say that ‘the nobles were false traitors’ (*nobiles essent falsi proditores*)⁷⁵. This apparent non-sequitur would make more sense as an effort to use the situation for political ends, and apparently it was perceived in such a light. Although these words did not provoke an uprising (*commotio*), they were nonetheless understood as seditious by the village’s noble captain, who imprisoned and fined the offender. The use of military insecurity to provoke aggression against the nobility need not, of course, have originated solely with the Parisians or to serve their interests, but in the context of Marcel’s alleged efforts to stoke such

⁷² Published in d’Avout 1960, 304–310, at 308 and Delachenal 1909–1931, II, no. 26.

⁷³ ...*audit peuple donnoient entendre que nous les voulions destruire et faire pillier par nos Genz d’armes, que abandone avions ladite Ville ave autres Citez et plait pais du Royaume de France ausdictes Genz d’armes* (Secousse, ed. 1755, 84). This language is similar to (and was probably modeled on) what is said in the general letter of remission for the Parisians: That Marcel governed not only Paris but also the nearby *plat pays* and that he and his followers *audit peuple donnoient à entendre que Nous les voullions destruire et faire pillier par nos Gens-d’armes; que abandonnée avions ladite Ville avec les autres Citez et plat Pays du Royaume de France, à iceulx Gens-d’armes* (Laurière & al. eds. 1723–1849, IV, 347).

⁷⁴ N. 60 and 29, above, respectively.

⁷⁵ Seine-et-Marne, ch.-l. de c^{on} AN JJ 86, no. 585, fol. 212. Notably, it was the presence of ‘enemies’ near Moret in December 1357 that had led the royal bailiff to hire *gens d’armes* (see above n. 22).

fears and the city's precarious position vis-à-vis the Dauphin and his noble allies, it is worth considering the possibility.

Conclusion

In an article of this length it is not possible to do more than to sketch the problem and some possible solutions to it. The geography and timing of the Jacquerie and the language used to talk about it in the documents strongly suggest that military depredations were not the immediate cause of the revolt. There were some limited areas of overlap between places occupied by soldiers – be they English, French, Navarrese, or freebooters – and places attacked by Jacques, but most of the uprising took place in areas that had heretofore escaped the experience of pillage. Furthermore, although the distinction between soldier and noble was not always a clear one and there are some instances of conflation (whether by unconscious association or instrumental design), the documents describe the Jacquerie's targets almost exclusively as *les nobles*, rather than *gens d'armes*, *soudoiers*, *brigans*, etc.

Nevertheless the military insecurity caused by the variety of troops to the west and south of Paris was of significant importance. Even if communities had not themselves experienced depredation, they were aware that this had happened elsewhere nearby, and that they might themselves fall victim in the future. These sorts of prospective anxieties were behind efforts to pull down local castles and to establish communal alliances for self-defense. Such efforts predated the Jacquerie, but they were also central to the mechanism of the revolt, which was organized through village assemblies and concentrated on the destruction of castles. The timing and geographic spread of the revolt make a great deal of sense in connection with the position espoused by Luce and Cazelles that the movement was closely connected with the Parisian efforts against the Dauphin and his noble allies. Marcel was accused of stirring up fears about soldiers' violence to incite people against the Dauphin, and such anxiety, in connection with established efforts to prevent troops' depredations, could well have been manipulated in the service of the Parisian rebels' cause.