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Medieval Irregular Warfare, c. 1000–1300

John France

> Insurgent actions are similar in character to all others fought by second-rate troops: they start out full of vigor and enthusiasm, but there is little level-headedness and tenacity in the long run.[1]

Thus Clausewitz dismisses irregular soldiers, but he was writing in an age when the contrast between regular and irregular warfare was very sharp. On the one hand there were the state armies of uniformed men, often with bands, marching in set formations and committed to well-defined savage and close-range confrontations. On the other there were what we have learned to call guerrillas, who wore no uniforms and were often poorly armed, wholly indistinguishable from the rest of the population, and who operated hit and run by ambush. The line between these was slightly blurred because various powers deployed irregulars, such as so-called "Croats" and Hussars, and even by the existence of sharpshooters like the British Rifle Brigade, but these were essentially only ancillary to the regulars. This sharp distinction between official and "other" forces has imprinted itself on our consciousness and forms the whole basis of military law as applied to relations between armies and populations. Yet it was a phenomenon of a particular age. War has changed since, and it was certainly very different from this stereotype before, and especially in the Middle Ages.

For in medieval Western Europe there was no such thing as a regular standing army. Towards 1100 the English crown, with what was then its unusual tax-raising capacity, had established a royal military household, but it formed only the kernel around which real armies could be organized in their short-term existences.[2] For even the English crown could not support large forces over long periods of time. At the end of the twelfth century, Richard I of England (1189–99) conceived of the idea of raising a permanent body of 300 knights, apparently to be paid for by remitting "feudal" service for taxes. Magnate resistance scuppered the idea, and Richard

1 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and tr. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ, 1976), p. 482.

2 J. O. Prestwich, "War and Finance in the Anglo-Norman State," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 4 (1954), 19–43; Marjorie Chibnall, "Mercenaries and the *Familia Regis* under Henry I ," *History* 62 (1977), 15–23; Michael Prestwich, "The Military Household of the Norman Kings," *English Historical Review* 96 (1981), 1–37.

could not pay for it out of his own resources because it would have cost over half the normal annual income of the crown.[3] In fact, in the eleventh century the English kings were unusual, because most monarchs were struggling to assert the ascendancy implied by their title. Essentially, kings were landowners amongst other landowners who all felt they could use armed force in pursuit of their ends. In 1187 Reynald of Châtillon, lord of Kerak, raided a caravan in defiance of his king's treaty with Saladin, and when upbraided responded "that he was just as much lord in his own land as he [the king] was of his."[4]

It has rightly been said that in the eleventh century "the age of kings seemed to have passed and that of princes to be the future."[5] But even those princes could not easily command the forces of the leading men within their principalities who equally felt they had a right to resort to arms. Chivalry was, at heart, violence used for private ends. When Parisians complained that the feuds of the nobility were weakening the French realm threatened by Henry V of England (r. 1413–22), the duke of Berry responded: "We fight each other when we please and we make peace when we see fit."[6] So monarchs had no monopoly of violence such as Clausewitz assumed for the state. In this situation, what is irregular warfare?

No matter who raised a force, it was essentially made up in the same way – of mounted armored men who formed a relatively small strike force, together with fairly poorly equipped infantry who provided labor for sieges, willing plunderers and mass in the rare event of a major battle. The mounted men came from the gentle-born servants of the great, but they were mostly estate managers, and only a few were professional soldiers. The foot were drawn from amongst the more unsettled and adventurous young men of the peasantry, and perhaps stiffened by the employment of mercenaries, though this was very expensive. All provided their own dress and weapons, so there was no "uniform," and for the most part they found their own food and other equipment. Of course, except in so far as they could train themselves as individuals or very small groups, they were not trained, and commanders relied on what I have called elsewhere their "native skills."[7] A large army was simply an agglomeration of such retinues. The retinue of any great magnate, while it might be quite large, would be composed of people from his scattered lands who did not know one another.[8] As a consequence the coherence we associate with "regular" forces barely existed. Crusades were collections of such armies, and individuals were often only loosely tied to leaders.

3 John France, *Western Warfare in the Age of the Crusades* (London, 1999), p. 58.
4 *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, ed. Peter Edbury (Aldershot, 1996), p. 29.
5 Jean Flori, *L'idéologie de la glaive: préhistoire de la chevalerie* (Geneva, 1983), p. 168.
6 Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1999).
7 John France, *Perilous Glory. Understanding Western Warfare* (New Haven, 2011), p. 25 and many other points.
8 Michel Bur, *La formation du comté de Champagne, v. 950–v. 1150* (Nancy, 1977) is a fine study of a great fief of the French crown with very useful maps of the count's holdings.

Moreover, in this period tactics were dominated by destruction and ravaging. This served to feed and provide loot for an invading force and to undermine the economy of their enemy. William of Poitiers described the Conqueror in what was intended as approving terms:

> This was his chosen way of attack: to strike fear into the settlement by frequent, lengthy expeditions in that territory, to lay waste the vines, fields and domains, to capture fortified places and put garrisons in them wherever it was desirable; finally to attack the region relentlessly with a great multitude of troubles.[9]

Such a style of war inevitably engendered skirmishes between attackers and defenders, and these emphasized the personal qualities of bravery and skill so crucial to chivalry, rather than discipline and cohesion essential for large-scale operations. It is really what eighteenth-century soldiers described as *petite guerre*. In such war the distinction between civilian and soldier busy inflicting "multitude of troubles" was fine, especially as plunder seems often to have formed a major part of the wages paid to the fighter. And, of course, this was not so very different from war on the fringes of the settled lands, which certainly constituted a form of irregular warfare. On the borders between England and Wales a bloody struggle persisted for centuries. Raiding and ambush were classic irregular tactics used by both sides. The savagery was notable. On the Welsh border the taking of heads was particularly condemned by the English as barbaric – and indeed the same kind of attitudes appeared with regard to the Scots.[10] It is interesting that in the years when Byzantium had a long frontier with the Caliphate local forces were encouraged to adopt the classic tactics of the guerrilla, but of course this was ancillary to a regular army, the only one of its period.[11] So there is a vast range of irregular warfare; but within the settled lands, given that so many could raise such forces, were there no regulars or irregulars?

Putting the question in this way emphasizes the key question of authorization. In medieval society authorization was a matter of social status. This was the sharply delineated world of the "Three Orders," of those who fight, those who pray and those who serve, and it was the first group who felt that they alone could grant authorization.[12] In many ways the key text is the *Annals of St Bertin*, composed in the late ninth century at a time when the West Frankish monarchy

9 William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. and tr. R. H. C. Davies and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford, 1998), p. 61.

10 Frederick C. Suppe, "The Cultural Significance of Decapitation in High Medieval Wales and the Marches," *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 36 (1989), 147–60, and the same author's *Military Institutions on the Welsh Marches: Shropshire 1066–1300* (Woodbridge, 1994); Sean Davies, "The Teulu c. 633–1283," *Welsh History Review* 21 (2003), 413–54; John Gillingham, " Conquering Barbarians: War and Chivalry in Twelfth-Century Britain," *The Haskins Society Journal* 4 (1992), 67–84.

11 Lucas McMahon, "The Past and Future of *De velitatione bellica* and Byzantine guerrilla warfare," MA dissertation (Central European University, 2015), argues that this kind of warfare was a strong and continuing tradition in Byzantium.

12 George Duby, *The Three Orders. Feudal Society Imagined*, tr. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, 1980).

was breaking down under the strain of internal feuding and external attack, especially from the Vikings. The entry for 859 reads:

> The Danes ravaged the places beyond the Scheldt. Some of the common people living between the Seine and the Loire formed a sworn association amongst themselves, and fought bravely against the Danes on the Seine. But because their association had been made without due consideration, they were easily slain by our more powerful people.[13]

This passage has been much argued about, and it has been used to assert that this was the start of a process of demilitarizing the lower classes of medieval society who became, as it were, the onlookers and sometime victims of war, but who, because of their helpless status, were spared its ravages. This, in my opinion, cannot be true because kings, when they could, were perfectly prepared to mobilize the broad mass of the population in times of need. The German kings levied infantry forces into the eleventh century.[14] William II Rufus of England (1087–1100) called all men to arms against the rebellion of 1088.[15] In a famous illustration of John of Worcester's *Chronicle* in Corpus Christi Oxford Ms 157, Henry I of England (1100–35) dreamed of the clergy renouncing him, the nobles in splendid armor seeking to depose him, and the poor, although armed only with scythes, pitchforks and spades, rising against him. In 1124 Louis VI (1108–37) of France called together a great host against invasion by the Emperor Henry V (1099–1125) of Germany, which seems to have encompassed more than merely the knightly entourages of the French nobility.[16] In 1181 Henry II of England (1154–89) promulgated the *Assizes of Arms* in two forms – for England and for his continental lands – demanding that all freemen should be able to arm themselves in a manner appropriate to their status.[17] The *Assize* was reissued and updated for England in 1252 and applied to all able-bodied men even down to the poorest who could afford only a bow and a few arrows. It was later embedded in the *Statute of Winchester* of 1285.[18] King John devised a system by which the whole male population could be mobilized for the defense of the realm when a French invasion threatened in 1205 and again in 1213.[19] Clearly the huge English infantry armies raised by Edward I (1272–1307) and refined by Edward III (1327–77) did not appear from out of the blue.[20]

13 *The Annals of St Bertin*, tr. Janet L. Nelson (Manchester, 1991), p. 89.
14 David S. Bachrach, *Warfare in Tenth-Century Germany* (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 70–101.
15 Robert Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075–1225* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 261–62.
16 Suger, *The Deeds of Louis the Fat*, tr. Richard C. Cusimano and John Moorhead (Washington, DC, 1992), pp. 127–32.
17 *English Historical Documents*, ed. David C. Douglas, 12 vols. (London, 1953), 2:416.
18 Hans Delbr ück, *History of the Art of War within the Framework of Political History, vol. III: The Middle Ages*, tr. Walter J. Renfroe Jr. (Lincoln, NE, 1982), pp. 172–77.
19 Austin Lane Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta 1087–1216* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 439–40; Bartlett, *England*, p. 262.
20 Michael Prestwich, *The Three Edwards: War and State in England, 1272–1377* (London, 1980) and idem, *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages: the English Experience* (New Haven, CT, 1996).

In fact there were a number of occasions when the military potential of the peasants and others who were not of the elite class was revealed. The quotation from the *Annals of St Bertin* stresses the importance of lordly sanction, but there was another kind, because the Christian Church had always maintained a distance from secular power. In parts of central France in the tenth and eleventh centuries the breakdown of royal power prompted the bishops to demand that the arms-bearers swear oaths to maintain the peace in great assemblies such as that recorded by Rodulfus Glaber. However, such moral pressure was not enough, as this chronicler noted: "like a dog returning to its vomit or a pig to wallowing in its mire, in many respects they broke their own sworn agreements."[21]

In fact, from the first it was recognized that moral pressure was not enough. Bishop Guy of Le Puy (c. 975–93) inaugurated the movement and was able to enlist his relatives to "persuade" the recalcitrant.[22] Aimo de Bourbon, archbishop of Bourges (1031–71) carried this to its logical conclusion by creating a militia of peasants led by some nobles to fight those who defied the peace. This was destroyed by a noble army in 1038, ushering in a period of cooperation between churchmen and aristocrats which acted to conciliate and thereby preserve the peace.[23] It is possible that Hereward the Wake had humble people in his rebellion against the Normans, and he certainly seems to have been a mercenary at some stage of his short career, which has been enshrined in romance.[24]

But a much more notable example of non-elite military organization emerged rather more than a century later and resulted in a sharp clash between social and ecclesiastical authorizations. By the 1170s central and southern France was plagued by mercenaries as a result of a complicated series of wars involving the Angevins, the Capetians, the count of Toulouse along with other major southern magnates, and the kings of Aragon.[25] At the same time the Church was threatened by the emergence of the heretics we nowadays call the Cathars.[26] In 1179 Third Lateran Council equated these scourges and proclaimed:

21 Rodulfus Glaber, *The Five Books of the Histories,* ed. and tr. John France, in *Rodulfus Glaber Opera*, ed. John France, Neithard Bulst and Paul Reynolds (Oxford, 1989), pp. 194–99.

22 H. E. J. Cowdrey, "The Peace and the Truce of God in the Eleventh Century," *Past and Present* 46 (1970), 42–67.

23 Thomas N. Bisson, "The Organized Peace in Southern France and Catalonia ca. 1140–1223," *American Historical Review* 82 (1977), 290–311 at p. 311; Thomas Head, "The Judgment of God: Andrew of Fleury's Account of the Peace League of Bourges," in Thomas Head and Richard Landes, *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000* (Ithaca, NY, 1992), pp. 219–38.

24 For his career in general see Peter Rex, *The English Resistance: the Underground War against the Normans* (Stroud, 2005) and for his service in Flanders see Elisabeth van Houts, "Hereward and Flanders," *Anglo-Saxon England* 28 (1999), 201–23.

25 Richard Benjamin, "A Forty Years War: Toulouse and the Plantagenets 1156–96," *Historical Research* 61 (1988), 270–85.

26 For a full discussion of the circumstances see John France, "People against Mercenaries. The Capuchins in Southern Gaul," *Journal of Medieval Military History* 8 (2010), 1–22.

> Whoever, following the council of holy bishops and priests, takes up arms against them, will enjoy a remission of two years penance and will be placed under the protection of the Church just like those who undertake the journey to Jerusalem.[27]

This is an important example of the diversification of crusading and forms a precedent for the eventual "Albigensian Crusade." Undoubtedly what was envisaged by the fathers is what happened in 1181 when Henry de Marcy, formerly abbot of Cîteaux and by then cardinal of Albano, led the "Crusade against Lavaur" which violently eliminated a major heretic center thirty kilometers north of Toulouse where Count Roger of Béziers, his wife and numerous heretics had taken refuge. By the terms of the surrender all the heretics renounced their errors, though it seems that most soon lapsed.[28]

But the equation of heretics and mercenaries produced a rather different result. In 1182 Durand, a poor man, described as a carpenter in some sources, approached Bishop Peter of Le Puy reporting a vision of the Virgin who gave him a picture of herself with Christ in her arms, bearing an inscription, *Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata Mundi, dona nobis pacem*. She further told him to ask the bishop to organize a fraternity to uphold the peace. This movement spread with extraordinary rapidity across vast areas of central and southern France, and even hostile chroniclers like the Anonymous of Laon and Gervase of Canterbury pay tribute to its good discipline. All sworn members wore a hood of white cloth with the badge presented by the Virgin upon it, hence the name Capuchins. This fraternity was clearly acting in accord with Canon 27 of the Fourth Lateran Council in consulting with bishops and seeking to attack the mercenaries, and under its terms shared something of the status of crusaders. We hear most about them in the Auvergne. They attacked a mercenary center at Neufchâtel, forcing the famous Mercadier to flee for his life, and drove out a group of *paleari* who took refuge with the lord of Dun-le-Roi near Bourges, whose lord was obliged by the Capuchins to give them up to massacre. Shortly after they were again victorious at Millau, where they hanged 50 along with two of their leaders, "Kerbogah" and one Raymond the Brown. There are witnesses to the movement from Burgundy to the Midi. What is interesting about these Capuchins is that they were clearly ordinary people, not of the elite arms-bearers. Some contemporaries were clearly horrified by the prospect of the armed masses. Eustace of Auxerre claimed that they had been tempted by the devil:

> There was no longer fear or respect for superiors. All strove to acquire liberty, saying that it belonged to them from the time of Adam and Eve, from the very day of creation. They

27 Karl Joseph von Hefele, *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux*, ed. Henri Leclerq, 9 vols. (Hildesheim, 1973) 5.2:1106–08.

28 Geoffroy de Vigeois, *Chronica*, in *Novae bibliothecae manuscriptorum et librorum*, ed. Philippe Labbe, 2 vols. (Paris, 1657), 2:326; Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, ed. William Stubbs, 2 vols. (London, 1878), 2:160–66; Yves M.-J. Congar, "Henri de Marcy, abbé de Clairvaux, cardinal évêque d'Albano et légat pontifical," *Analecta Monastica* 5 (*Studia Anselmiana*, fasc. 43, Rome 1958), pp. 35–38.

> did not understand that serfdom is the punishment of sin! The result was that there was no longer any distinction between the great and the small, but a fatal confusion tending to ruin the institutions which rule us all, through the will of God and the agency of the power of this earth.[29]

As a result, Bishop Hugh of Auxerre took his army to the Capuchin center of Gy and suppressed the movement, taking away the offending peasants' hoods and ordering that they, in all seasons and whatever the weather, should always go bare-headed, though he remitted this sentence at the request of his uncle, Bishop Gui of Sens.[30]

Another source tell us that:

> This foolish and undisciplined folk had reached heights of madness; they dared to notify counts, viscounts and princes that they should treat their subjects more gently than was their usual custom, under pain of quickly experiencing the meaning of their anger.[31]

Yet this view of social revolutionaries seeking to right wrongs is somewhat belied by the fact that, in accordance with the Lateran Council Decree, the Capuchins had consulted with bishops. Moreover, the Anonymous gives us a full account of their statutes, which demanded the payment of an annual fee of twelve *denarii* and banned gambling, ostentatious clothing, entry to taverns and the swearing of oaths, while prescribing attendance at mass. Like the Temple and the Hospital, the Capuchins allowed priests, but banned them from fighting.[32] It seems likely that the sight of the people made the elite queasy, and it has to be said that both Eustace and the Anonymous of Laon were writing some time after the events they describe.[33]

What happened to the Capuchins? In Burgundy, where they seem to have been rather feeble, they were easily put down by the bishop of Auxerre. In their heartland of the Auvergne they were destroyed because they attacked the wrong mercenaries. Geoffroy de Vigeois, who witnessed the whole movement, reports a savage raid by mercenaries led by Richard's commander, Louvart. This was repelled by the arrival of the Capuchins.[34] The Anonymous of Laon, in an aside, says that Louvart (*Lupacius*) destroyed the Capuchins at the "Portes de Berthe." It was one thing to drive out discharged mercenaries, even when hanging around awaiting employment enjoying the hospitality of local magnates, and even to

29 *Gesta episcoporum Autissiodorensium*, in Louis Maximilien Duru, *Bibliothèque historique de l'Yonne*, 2 vols. (Auxerre and Paris, 1850–63), 1:444–46; tr. from Achille Luchaire, *Social France at the Time of Philip Augustus*, tr. Edward Benjamin Krehbiel (London, 1912), p. 17.

30 Hugh's predecessor, Bishop Guillaume de Toucy (1167–81), was the brother of Gui of Sens and, therefore, Hugh's uncle: *Gesta episcoporum Autissiodorensium*, 1:421.

31 Anonymous of Laon, *Chronicon universale*, ed. A. Cartellieri and B. von Wolf Stechele (Leipzig and Paris, 1929), p. 40.

32 Ibid., pp. 38–39.

33 For a detailed study of the Capuchins see France, "Capuchins as Crusaders," *Reading Medieval Studies* 36 (2010), 77–94.

34 Geoffroy de Vigeois, *Chronica*, 2: 340–41.

massacre them, and quite another to take on the princely army of Richard as duke of Aquitaine, which ultimately crushed the Capuchins.[35]

The Capuchins are important because they indicate the considerable military potential of the non-elite classes. They may have known of and been encouraged by earlier events in much the same area. In August 1173 some of Henry II's Brabançons were wiped out by angry local peasants at St Jacques-de-Beuvron. In 1176 another group was destroyed at St Mégrin, while in 1177 some of Richard's mercenaries suffered the same fate.[36] It is worth noting also that in 1190 at the siege of Acre the foot became disillusioned with their betters and launched an attack on Saladin's camp on their own initiative.[37] At about the same time a woman claimed from the Count of Hainaut the arms of an enemy knight whom she had knocked off his horse – alas we do not know if she got them.[38] Even more striking was the campaign in 1216–17 waged by William of Kensham – Willikin of the Weald – against the English barons who had rebelled against John (1199–1216) and later Henry III (1216–72) and were seeking to place Prince Louis of France on the English throne. He is reputed to have enlisted 1,000 archers who terrorized the invaders with sudden ambushes, even harassing the Anglo-French army besieging Dover and burning its siege engines. This was classic guerrilla warfare, and while not in itself decisive, it sapped the strength of the enemy. William of Kensham's remarkable activities were recognized by the biographer of William Marshall and have been recently by Sean McGlynn. It is interesting that his men cut off the heads of the enemy dead – this is the savagery of irregular warfare.[39]

Now clearly I have merely scratched the surface here in discussing the military potential of the non-elite classes. Space is the obvious reason but some phenomena have been deliberately excluded. The first of the crusaders to reach Constantinople in 1096 are often called the "People's Crusade," although this title was debunked by Frederick Duncalf as long ago as 1921. In reality these very disparate groups, which probably did contain many poor and non-combatants, were organized and led by nobles in much the same way as the armies which followed them, except that they lacked anyone with undisputed status to act as a commander.[40] Then there are the city militias whose armies are often

35 Anonymous of Laon, *Chronicon*, pp. 40, 58 (tr. from Luchaire, *Social France*, p. 17). On Mercadier in general and his relations with Richard I see John Gillingham, *Richard I* (New Haven, 1999).

36 France, *Western Warfare*, pp. 74–75 and n. 28.

37 "Old French Continuation of William of Tyre, 1184–97," tr. Peter Edbury, in idem, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade* (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 94–95.

38 Gislebert de Mons, *Chronique*, ed. Léon Vanderkindere (Brussels, 1905), p. 232, translation: Gilbert of Mons, *Chronicle of Hainaut*, tr. Laura Napran (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 132.

39 Sean McGlynn, *Blood Cries Afar. The Forgotten Invasion of England 1216* (Stroud, 2011), pp. 179–80, 189, 195–96, 201, 204, 220.

40 Frederic Duncalf, "The Peasants' Crusade," *American Historical Review* 26 (1921), 440–53; even Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade. A New History* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 78, 101, although recognizing that there were nobles in the ranks, uses this inaccurate title.

described as largely infantry. In Galbert's famous *Murder of Charles the Good* it comes as a surprise to note that the citizens of Bruges possessed swords, which we think of as elite weapons.[41] But the apparently well-armed citizens were the military expression of an emerging city government and highly amenable to control by traditional elites once they had come to agreements with their leaders. In a rather different vein Galbert mentions the "greedy band of plunderers" from surrounding villages who joined in the siege of the castle, and refers often to similar groups.[42] Undoubtedly it was from such people that retinue infantry and mercenaries were drawn. In the case of the Italian city-states we are in the grip of Italian exceptionalism: the notion that the cities produced sturdy, freedom-loving infantry. I have looked rather closely at the Italian city-states at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[43] But even at a much earlier date it seems to me that the armies of the city-states were dominated by the rural nobility and the urban patricians. Conflicts, such as that of the *Patarini* of Milan, sometimes portrayed as the emergence of civic freedom, increasingly seem to me to be factional quarrels in which the armies differ not at all from those of the great lords of northern Europe.

In medieval society authorization is the key to defining irregular forces, and legitimate authorizing power lay with the social and political elite. At the same time the Church also had a legitimizing authority in military affairs, most clearly evident in the crusading movement. Ecclesiastical and secular elites usually worked together although the Church always maintained a degree of autonomy. As a result the legitimizing power of lords in time became vested in supreme rulers, and later in the state which gradually established its monopoly of violence. The Church's material authority, by contrast, waned and ultimately emerged as the power of moral judgment, which underlay the nineteenth-century insistence on the separation of soldier and civilian that has become established as a norm in advanced states. In this sense the legitimizing power of religion influenced the actions of states, though rarely decisively.

This evolution was European and was certainly not universal. In particular a radically different situation evolved in Islam. For all Muslims legitimacy in power lies in following the example of the Prophet, who combined secular and sacred authority over all the faithful. After his death many Muslims demanded that the choice of his successor, the Caliph, be limited to a particular line of descent from his family, giving birth to the Shi'ite movement (itself very divided) and their pursuit of the "hidden Imam": yet others, the Kharijis, took the position that any of the faithful could be chosen. The eventual solution, which commanded most support, was the establishment of Caliphs drawn from the wider

41 Galbert of Bruges, *The Murder of Charles the Good*, tr. James Bruce Ross (New York, 1982), p. 175.

42 Ibid., p. 160.

43 John France, "Campements fortifiés, sièges et engins de siège dans la vallée du Po au XIII siècle," in *Artillerie et Fortification 1200–1600*, ed. Nicolas Prouteau, Emmanuel de Crouy-Chanel and Nicolas Faucherre (Rennes, 2011), 33–40.

family of the Prophet, and this gave rise to the Umayyad, Abassid and Ottoman Caliphates revered by the Sunni. Troops were raised by these institutions and formed the official armies of Islam. At the same time a powerful tradition of volunteering for military service arose, and these *mujahideen* became a regular feature of Muslim armies fighting non-believers in *jihad*. At the battle of Antioch on 28 June 1098 it was these Islamic volunteers who suffered most of the casualties in the triumph of the First Crusade.[44] But even the Sunni Caliphate was often disputed and now has long perished. The power to raise troops, therefore, fell upon local rulers, but their legitimacy was open to dispute and was sustained only by success and prestige. Their successors, the European-style states established in the twentieth century, were essentially foreign impositions, and the corruption of the narrow elites who dominated them has contributed to the alienation of the masses. In these circumstances service to God in the form of militant rebellion is natural and understandable. In this sense the ISIS Caliphate is a shrewdly judged Islamic response to the problems of the Arab world. It re-establishes the supremacy of religion, always seen as the ultimate legitimizing authority, in the affairs of the faithful.

Our modern concepts of regular and irregular forces, therefore, arose from very particular historical events and cultures which are specifically European and draw upon European concepts of legitimacy. Even in Europe legitimacy and, therefore, irregularity or regularity, are quite elusive concepts, and they are not replicated in different contexts. In Europe our ideas about the conduct of war were almost set in stone by the experience of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Clausewitz almost always uses the term "insurrection" when he discusses irregular warfare, and this is logical in that he saw the state as monopolizing violence.[45] But the underlying notion of legitimacy varies enormously across the world and even in Europe his standpoint was of recent birth.

44 Kemal ad-Din, " La Chronique d' Alep ," in *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens orientaux*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1872–1906), 3:583.

45 E.g. Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 482.