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Tutor's Guide to:
Teaching Medieval Castles
by Robert Liddiard

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General Introduction

Ask anyone to visualise the Middle Ages and, almost inevitably, they conjure up the image of the castle. Together with the great cathedrals and parish churches, castles are one of the most vivid symbols of our medieval heritage. Castles are 'tangible' monuments that exert a powerful hold on the imagination of students and academics alike.

The medieval castle is therefore a potentially valuable teaching resource. Castles can provide an excellent starting point for the study of medieval history, especially for those students who, due to the constraints of school curricula, are only familiar with twentieth-century history. The variety and distribution of castles across Britain ensures that they can offer tremendous potential for fieldtrips and seminars in the field. Alongside the familiar role of military fortress, castles also provide potential for the study of topics as various as the household, attitudes to authority, lordly lifestyles, landscape design and spirituality.

Alongside the undoubted benefits, teaching the medieval castle also prevents certain problems. The study of the castle frequently does not fit easily into 'traditional' undergraduate units in medieval history or archaeology. This is due, in part, to the multifarious nature of the castle itself. Castles had a multiplicity of roles in the medieval period and, according to the demands of the undergraduate unit in question, often appear in only one of their many forms: as military fortresses, estate centres, as part of the infrastructure of government, as tools of conquest. Only rarely is the unified concept of 'the medieval

castle' tackled in undergraduate seminars. Moreover, various structural problems ensure that teaching castles can be, frankly, difficult. Many castles are physically inaccessible to campus-based undergraduates and this is compounded by the fact that students themselves, particularly those registered on history degree programmes, often find it difficult to interpret complex architectural arguments or follow the nuances of archaeological reports.

It is often the case that before the really interesting questions concerning castles can be attempted, it is necessary to wade through a vast mass of material on architectural history, archaeology and contextual social history - something that seems to take us away from the castle itself. What follows here is intended as a guide to how the castle can be put at the centre of teaching and used as a vehicle for exploring wider issues and problems in the study of medieval society. It is by no means prescriptive, but hopefully highlights some of the key points of debate in recent years and direction on key pieces of work. The focus is very much on England and Wales, but the bibliography does include material from Continental Europe and the Holy Land.

Fast Track to Castles

In recent years, castle studies have been dramatically transformed. Scholars from a variety of backgrounds have seriously questioned, and in many cases rapidly overturned, much of the received wisdom about castles that has been handed down to us by previous generations. The main focus of this new thinking has concerned the military role of the castle. Rather than judging castles as primarily military buildings, the historiographical trend is now to see them as noble residences built in a military style. This is undoubtedly a shock to most undergraduates as the 'battering rams and boiling oil' approach of the military engineer is still the dominant perception of the medieval castle. The clearest way of explaining when and why this change came about is to discuss in some detail castle historiography. This also serves as a platform for the various teaching topics suggested below, all of which relate back to a theme that has been at the centre of debate for over a century: what were castles actually for?

Such has been the pace of change within castle studies that it has been fashionable in recent years to sum up the historiography of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries with reference

to what has come to be known as the 'castle story'. In essence, this represents the overarching analytical framework within which castles and castle development could be explained and it represented the orthodoxy for many years. Although now open to question at almost every turn, the 'castle story' is one that is elegant, highly persuasive and remarkably enduring. Even for students encountering castles for the first time, much of the story is familiar and provides a good basis from which to begin further study.

The Castle Story

The 'story' begins when the castle (together with feudalism, the social organisation which supported it) was introduced into England in 1066 during William the Conqueror's invasion of England. In the Norman settlement that followed the victory at Hastings, William and his followers studded England with castles in order to pacify a potentially rebellious population. These castles were chiefly of motte and bailey type (the motte being an artificial mound of earth and the bailey the adjacent enclosure) which had the advantages of being quick to build and offered good protection for the invaders. Once the immediate danger of the Conquest had passed, however, new threats emerged, this time from the Norman barons themselves, who used their castles for private war – as seen during the reign of King Stephen. If the monarch was not powerful enough to subdue them, barons would usurp royal authority and fight each other (and the king), using their castles as bases. It was only in the late twelfth century, as siege weaponry developed, the costs of building in stone became prohibitive, and royal authority was strengthened, that the evils of private castle-building began to be curbed.

Thereafter the development of castles became something of a Darwinian evolutionary struggle between attacker and defender and the form of the castle changed in response to the demands of siege warfare. Round towers came to replace square towers in order to counter the threat of mining; the development of the gatehouse reflected the need to protect the weak point of the castle gate; water defences grew more extensive to prevent attacking engines from reaching the walls; concentric lines of defensive walls maximised the castle's defensive firepower. These developments in military science achieved their high point in the late thirteenth century with the castles built in North Wales by King Edward I.

Castles like Conway and Beaumaris represented the high point of medieval military architecture.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the castle went into decline. Conflict was more likely to be resolved by pitched battle, rather than by the siege (as during the Wars of the Roses), and cannon made the castle increasingly obsolete. In response, the castle increasingly made concessions to domestic comfort. The late medieval castle might still reflect a concern to deter local violence, but the classic fortified residence of the medieval regional magnate was slowly evolving into the country house. By the early sixteenth century, the strong Tudor monarchy had brought the medieval baronage to heel and the construction of a chain of artillery fortifications by Henry VIII showed that it was now the state that had responsibility for war and national defence. The age of the castle, and thus the castle 'story', was over.

Historiographical Commentary

The origins of the castle story (at least in its modern form) can be found in the late nineteenth century. At this time, castles were studied almost exclusively as fortifications and a new category of reference - 'Military Architecture' – provided a structure within which they could be studied. Castles were the medieval equivalent of the artillery forts and bastions that had been built in Europe from the sixteenth century and seventeenth centuries. The warlike image of the castle also dovetailed well with then current ideas about the nature of medieval European society. In an age where life was nasty, brutish and short, the castle was the lair of the robber baron.

In British historiography one of the first major studies in castles and castle-building was G. T. Clark's *Mediaeval Military Architecture in England* (1884-5). This work comprised a detailed survey of sites in Britain and France but an extended introduction charted castle development. Clark saw castles primarily as military structures and his interpretation of many individual buildings owed much to his background in civil engineering. Clark's work was highly inventive, but it was two books published in 1912 that would dominate castle studies for decades. The first was Ella Armitage's *The Early Norman Castles of the British Isles*.

Armitage, armed with a combination of Ordnance Survey maps and references to early castles culled from documentary sources, demonstrated that it had been the Normans who had introduced the castle to England. This was not an entirely new idea - the historian J. H. Round had also written on this subject some years earlier - but Armitage and Round had certainly blown out of the water the idea that mottes belonged to the Roman, Viking or Anglo-Saxon period. Armitage also discussed the siting and distribution of Norman sites and offered a tentative analysis of their landscape context. In this, and in many other senses, her work was pioneering. The second crucial work in the development of the castle story was A. Hamilton Thompson's *Military Architecture in England during the Middle Ages*. This was primarily a study of the architectural evidence and in a particularly persuasive argument, the book charted the evolution of the castle across several centuries. The engine driving forward castle development was the need to keep intruders out. In a characteristic remark he explained 'it is obvious that, in the history of military architecture, any improvement in defence is the consequence of improved methods of attack' and much of his work follows this logic. By the early decades of the twentieth century, then, the castle was firmly established as a 'Norman import' and there was a template with which to explain the changing form of the castle from the eleventh century to the end of the Middle Ages.

The Development of an Orthodoxy

The inter-war and immediate post-war periods saw the further development of this military interpretation of castles. The decades after 1945 were dominated by the work of three scholars - A. Taylor, R. Allen Brown and D.J. Cathcart-King. Arguably in the work of the latter two figures, the military interpretation of castles was taken to its logical conclusion. The period after the Second World War was a time when new research produced significant quantities of information about castles: the publication of the medieval volumes of the *History of the King's Works* marked a watershed in terms of information on royal castle-building and Taylor and Brown both published ground-breaking work on patterns of royal castle-building in England and Wales. At the same time D. Renn published his study of Norman castles, which provided valuable new information on castles of the earlier period. An enormous amount of documentary research and fieldwork allowed King in 1984 to publish his massive *Castellarium Anglicanum*, an inventory of castle sites in England and Wales, and, later, *The Castle: An Interpretative History* (1988).

In terms of their ideas on the function of castles, Brown and Cathcart-King in particular closely allied themselves to the basic tenets first formulated by Armitage and Hamilton Thompson. Brown's best-known work, *English Medieval Castles* (1954, 1962, published as *English Castles* in the 3rd edition, 1976 - now reprinted by Boydell and Brewer) leaves no doubt as to the military rationale that he believed governed castle development. A castle was 'a fortified residence of a lord' and despite the fact that new archaeological work necessitated the re-writing of earlier chapters for the third edition, he stuck closely to the idea that the castle was both feudal and military and had come to England at the time of the Conquest. The chapter headings to *English Medieval Castles* adhered to the familiar narrative: the development of keeps is described in a chapter entitled 'The Perfected Castle', that for the Edwardian castles of North Wales is entitled 'Apogee', but hereafter the castle goes into 'Decline'. The extended introduction to King's *Castellarium Anglicanum* perhaps owed more to the work of Armitage, in that it deals substantially with issues such as siting and distribution, but again the military character of castles as private fortresses was not in doubt.

This is not to say that the residential functions of castles were unappreciated or ignored at this time. Particularly innovative in the 1950s and 1960s was the work of P. Faulkner, who analysed castles in terms of their internal domestic arrangements and tried to relate the design of castles to their residential purpose. It is also worth noting that even some of the greatest exponents of the military school were puzzled over the seeming weakness of even some of the most famous castles. King speculated over castles such as Portchester, where a Norman keep stands in the corner of a Roman shore fort. The Roman structure exhibited the military advantageous rounded towers that allowed flanking fire, but the Norman architects ignored this design and chose to build in an inferior square style. King concluded that siege warfare must have been in its infancy at this time if builders could apparently disregard such obvious weaknesses. R. Allen Brown was also troubled by the fact that much of his own documentary research pointed to the conclusion that the majority of castles spent most of their time at peace and were badly prepared for conflict. It was the puzzles that presented themselves at this time that would ultimately be responsible for the change in attitude that would come later.

The Questioning of the Military Orthodoxy

The military interpretation of castles first began to be questioned in the 1960s when archaeological research began to address the problem of castle origins. As a result of systematic field survey, it was realised that many of the very earliest Norman castles were not of motte and bailey type but were ringworks (an oval enclosure with bank and ditch). In 1966 B. K. Davison pointed out that there seemed to be a lack of mottes in Normandy prior to 1066 and that the motte and bailey may have only developed during the course of the Norman conquest of England. In 1967 he went further and suggested (before a major series of archaeological excavations at a number of early Norman castles designed to test the point) that ringworks must have been known in pre-Conquest England and implied that if a castle was defined as a 'fortified residence of a lord' then, *de facto*, the idea of private fortification being new to England in 1066 was incorrect. This provoked a fierce backlash from R. Allen Brown who vigorously restated the case for the castle being a Norman import and suggested that Ella Armitage had answered all the major questions over origins a generation earlier. As it transpired, the series of excavations in the late 1970s did not come to any clear-cut conclusions on the issue but an important line of future enquiry had been put on the agenda.

An article by Charles Coulson entitled 'Structural Symbolism in Medieval Castle Architecture' (1979) was the starting point for much of the 'new thinking' on castles that has emerged over recent years. Coulson suggested that the 'military' architectural features of castles might not necessarily have served a utilitarian function, but instead some kind of symbolic purpose. While acknowledging the need for domestic protection, Coulson suggested that the construction of a crenellated building could be intended to stand as an emblem of lordly status, rather than a response to military insecurity. Moreover, it was suggested that one of the dominant themes of castle architecture was the element of nostalgia, and not the desire to build the most perfect military structure. Not only were castles aesthetically pleasing to the medieval eye, but also their construction embodied 'the *moeurs* of chivalry, the life-style of the great, and the legends of the past'. The idea that arrowloops, gunports and battlements might have been designed within these frames of reference was a major departure

from previous arguments. Perhaps surprisingly, the wider academic community largely ignored this article and the 1980s saw a steady stream of work but nothing which hinted at the turnaround in thinking that was to come later. Coulson continued the themes of his 1979 article, particularly on the topic of fortress customs. Platt's *The Medieval Castle* (1982) stuck to the traditional narrative but the chivalric elements to castle-building informed much of the discussion on the castles of the later medieval period. M. W. Thompson's *The Decline of the Castle* offered a valuable survey of later medieval building, but its title reflected the orthodox view of the period. King's *The Castle in England and Wales* (1988) was perhaps the last monograph that can be said to fit easily within the military mould.

By the late 1980s, although important elements of the military interpretation had been queried, it could not be said that a new orthodoxy had been developed or that the wider academic community had necessarily accepted any of the new thinking. In the early 1990s, however, the debate over the military role of the castle suddenly came to the fore and the debate crystallised over one castle in particular: Bodiam in Sussex.

The Battle for Bodiam

Bodiam has always been a well-known castle; it is remarkably well preserved and its watery setting makes it extremely photogenic. Although its description as 'an old soldier's dream house' was coined as early as the 1960s, the castle has traditionally been seen as one of the last military buildings of its kind, a final salute to a martial role that had diminished over the previous century. The purpose of Bodiam is seemingly evidence in the license to crenellate granted to Sir Edward Dallyngrigge in 1385 'to make into a castle his manor house of Bodiam, near the sea, in the county of Sussex, for the defence of the adjacent country'. The design of the castle itself also superficially displays a utilitarian, military purpose. The moat prevents anybody gaining access to the curtain walls, the symmetrical design allows flanking fire and it also contains early gunports - its up-to-date design even allows provision for the weapons that would ultimately make the castle obsolete.

The scholarly assault on Bodiam came from two directions. Charles Coulson offered a critique of the documentary evidence for the castle and its architectural remains, while Paul Everson and

Christopher Taylor, as part of a survey of the castle for the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments, examined the landscape context of the site. Although working independently of each other, the conclusions theses scholars reached were remarkably similar.

The martial language of the licence is explicable given the aristocratic obsession with military culture that existed throughout the medieval period. When it comes to the building itself the defensive provision is in fact highly suspect. The gunports and murder holes are impractical and could never be militarily effective, the battlements are too small, the moat is shallow and easily drained, access around the parapets is difficult and the whole site is overlooked by higher ground.

Rather, the castle's architecture is deliberately nostalgic; it harks back to the thirteenth century and the perceived 'golden age' of castle-building during the reign of Edward I. Considerable effort went into improving the castle's external appearance; the provision of a moat ensures that the building looks larger than is actually the case, an impression heightened by the size of the windows and the battlements, which are proportioned to give the impression of strength. The relatively cramped domestic courtyard is something of an anticlimax: in reality, it is a medieval manor house. Confirmation of this analysis was suggested by a survey of the landscape context of the site. Rather than a defence against mining, it was suggested that the castle moat was an ornamental lake, setting the building off to maximum visual advantage. In addition to the moat, the castle was surrounded by a series of further ponds. Any visitor wishing to approach the castle did so via a circuitous route from which the aesthetic appeal of the building and its surroundings could be appreciated. This latter characteristic seemed confirmed by the re-interpretation of the earthworks on the rising ground above the castle as a viewing, rather than an artillery, platform. Taken together, the historical and architectural evidence suggested that Bodiam castle was a residence built in a martial style - its 'military' elements part of an architectural language of display - all standing at the centre of a contemporary 'designed landscape'. This is certainly a long way from the idea of a fortress intended to inhibit French raiding.

The 'Battle for Bodiam' was something of a *cause célèbre* within castle studies but, such has been the

pace of change, it is now something of a cliché. Nevertheless, it did kick-start a serious debate. Although the problems with the military orthodoxy had already been signalled some years before, Bodiam became the central focus of the discussion. A particularly influential review article by David Stocker, 'The Shadow of the General's Armchair', put Bodiam at centre stage and gave credence to the revisionist line; it was suggested that what had hindered the study of castles was the retrospective application of modern tactical thinking to a period where such ideas never existed.

Post Bodiam

The ten years or so since 'the battle for Bodiam' have been fruitful as far as publications on castles are concerned. A number of general narrative accounts and specialised monographs have appeared. J. Kenyon's *Medieval Fortifications* summarised much archaeological work on castles in England and Wales and this year also saw the publication of N.J.G. Pounds' *The Medieval Castle in England and Wales*, a massive study of castle-building largely based on documentary research. M.W. Thompson's *The Rise of the Castle* stuck closely to some older interpretations but included valuable chapters on castles as settlements. In 1992 T. McNeill's *Castles* rejected a traditional chronological approach in favour of the social and cultural dimensions of castle-building. The same year saw the publication of P. Barker and R. Higham's study *Timber Castles*, which was the first major survey of earth and timber castles and dispelled the idea that such fortifications were the poor relation of their masonry counterparts.

The 1990s also saw a progressive stream of publications all overtly contributing in some way to the debate kick-started by Bodiam. Indeed, such has been the pace of change that as early as 1996 warnings were sounded about a 'bandwagon effect', whereby 'status' replaced 'war' as a simplistic buzzword for the development of castles. Considerable analysis and re-interpretation of key buildings in the 'castle story' took place at this time. One of the most influential was T.A. Heslop's study of Orford castle in Suffolk where the traditional military rationale of Henry II's keep was rejected in favour of a more ideological explanation for the design of the building. Work by P. Dixon and P. Marshall has drawn attention to the elements of courtly chorography in the way guests entered and experienced the interior of castles and suggested new ideas for the function of

keeps. Bodiam generated a good deal of interest in the landscape context of castles and the number of 'designed landscapes' of medieval date identified has risen significantly. One of the most significant general advances has been the extension of the 'revisionist' arguments back chronologically from the later medieval to the Anglo-Norman period. Arguments made ten years ago about fourteenth-century castles such as Bodiam are now being applied to castles such as Dover, built two centuries earlier.

Very recently a series of books have emerged dealing with the revisionist theme directly. Oliver Creighton has produced a much welcome full-length study on the theme of castles and landscapes, Matthew Johnson a volume on the material role of castles in medieval society and Charles Coulson a massive historical study on the social character of fortifications in the Middle Ages. A significant body of literature now exists that details specifically with the 'revisionist' agenda and it is now possible for students not only to write about, but also to critique, the newer questions posed about castles and castle-building.

Teaching Topics

Introduction

The suggested teaching topics below offer a variety of themes all of which, in some way, relate to the broader historiographical questions outlined above. When it comes to the 'defence and defensibility' debate (something that in my experience students enjoy) several topics allow much scope for argument. Bodiam may well be old hat to many researchers in the field, but it provides and excellent introduction to the wider issues. These issues can be explored in greater detail with discussions of Norman keeps and the castles of Edward I. Other topics raise much broader issues over the nature of conflict and conquest during the medieval period. A discussion of castle warfare invites many cross-cultural comparisons (not just in the medieval period). The topics on the castle as residence and the castle as icon are hopefully more innovative in their use of source material. In these cases it is possible to offer new narratives to set up against the more traditional castle story.

1. The 'Battle for Bodiam'

In the 1990s Bodiam castle in Sussex became the 'touchstone' of the wider debate on the military role of the castle. The debate turns on whether the castle of Sir Edward Dallyngrigge was an up-to-date artillery fortification built to deter French raiders, or an 'old soldier's dream house'.

Sample Questions

- ❖ What is the 'military' case apropos Bodiam castle?
- ❖ What is the 'revisionist' approach to Bodiam and how is it different to earlier interpretations?
- ❖ To what extent is it possible to 'explain' the form of Bodiam?
- ❖ What are the implications of the study of Bodiam for wider issues in castle studies?
- ❖ How does Bodiam compare with contemporary use of castles in France?

Introductory

C. Coulson, 'Some Analysis of the Castle of Bodiam, East Sussex' in, *Medieval Knighthood,* 4 (ed). Christopher Harper-Bill and Ruth Harvey (Woodbridge, 1992) pp.51-107.

J. Goodall, 'The Battle for Bodiam Castle', *Country Life,* 16 (1998), pp.58-63.

M. Johnson, *Behind the Castle Gate: From Medieval to Renaissance* (2002) - chapter 2

C. Taylor, P. Everson, R. Wilson-North, 'Bodiam Castle, Sussex', *Medieval Archaeology,* 34 (1990) pp.155-57.

D. J. Turner, 'Bodiam, Sussex: True Castle or Old Soldier's Dream House?' in, *England in the Fourteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1985 Harlaxton Symposium,* (ed). W. M. Ormrod (Woodbridge, 1996) pp.267-77.

2. The Origins of the Castle in England

This issue has been one for debate for the last one hundred years. Did the Norman Conquest bring a new form of fortification to Anglo-Saxon England and, if not, what to what extent is it possible to talk of pre-Conquest 'castles'?

Sample Questions

- ❖ To what extent did Norman castles differ from Old English forms of fortification?
- ❖ Was the castle a 'Norman Import'?
- ❖ What factors governed the siting and distribution of early Norman castles?

Some Suggested Castles for Discussion

- ❖ Goltho (Lincolnshire)
- ❖ Sulgrave (Northamptonshire)
- ❖ Castle Acre (Norfolk)
- ❖ Richmond (Yorks)
- ❖ Norwich (Norfolk)

Introductory

E. Armitage, *Early Norman Castles of the British Isles* (London, 1912).

G. Beresford, *Goltho: The Development of an Early Medieval Manor* (1987) to be read in conjunction with Paul Everson, 'What's in a Name? Goltho, 'Goltho' and Bullington', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology,* 23 (1988) pp. 92-99.

R. Allen Brown, 'An Historian's Approach to the Origins of the Castle in England', *Archaeological Journal* 126 (1969) pp.131-148.

C. Coulson, 'Peaceable Power in Norman Castles', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 23 (2001), pp.69-95.

O. H. Creighton, *Castles and Landscapes* (London, 2003).

B. K. Davison, 'The Origins of the Castle in England' *Archaeological Journal,* 124 (1967) pp.202-211.

B. K. Davison, 'Early Earthwork Castles: A New Model', *Chateau Gaillard*, 3 (1969) pp.37-47.

R. Eales, 'Royal Power and Castles in Norman England', in, *Medieval Knighthood* iii ed Christopher Harper-Bill and Ruth Harvey (Woodbridge, 1990) pp.49-78. (re-printed in Liddiard ed. 2003)

B. English, 'Towns, Mottes and Ring-Works of the Conquest', in A. Ayton and J. Price (eds.), *The Medieval Military Revolution* (London, 1995), pp.43-62.

R. Higham and P. Barker, *Timber Castles* (London, 1992).

E. Impey, 'The Seigneurial Residence in Normandy: An Anglo-Norman Tradition?', *Medieval Archaeology* xliii, (1999), pp. 45-73.

R. Morris, *Churches in the Landscape* (1989)

A. D. Saunders *et al*, *Five Castle Excavations: Reports on the Institute's Research Project into the Origins of the Castle in England* (Royal Archaeological Institute, 1978)

A. Williams, 'A bell-house and a burh-geat: English Lordly residences before the Conquest', *Medieval Knighthood* 4 (1992) pp.221-240. (re-printed in Liddiard ed. 2003)

3. The Castle Keep: A Place of Last Resort?

The castle keep has long been thought of as the 'building of last resort'. Re-interpretation of a number of buildings have suggested a more complex role for these enigmatic structures. Rather than simply representing the last bastion of defence, the *donjon* met more immediate social needs.

Sample Questions

- ❖ What issues are at stake in the definition of the word 'keep'?
- ❖ What was the purpose of the 'keep'?
- ❖ How have 'traditional' and 'revisionist' approaches dealt with the development of the keep? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

Some buildings for discussion:

- ❖ Castle Acre (Norfolk)
- ❖ Castle Hedingham (Essex)
- ❖ Orford (Suffolk)
- ❖ The White Tower (London)
- ❖ Colchester (Essex)
- ❖ Rochester (Kent)

Introductory

J. G. Coad and A. D. F. Streeton, 'Excavations at Castle Acre Castle, Norfolk, 1972-1977', *Archaeological Journal* 139 (1982), pp. 138-301

P. Dixon, 'The Myth of the Keep', in G. Meirion-Jones *et al*, *The Seigneurial Residence in Western Europe AD c800-1600* (BAR International Series 1088, 2002), pp.9-13.

P. Dixon and P. Marshall, 'The Great Tower at Hedingham Castle: A Reassessment', *Fortress*, 18 pp.16-23. (reprinted in Liddiard ed. 2003).

P. Dixon and P. Marshall, 'The Great Tower in the Twelfth Century: The Case of Norham Castle', *Archaeological Journal* 150 (1993), pp. 410-32.

P. J. Drury, 'Aspects of the Origins and Development of Colchester Castle', *Archaeological Journal* 139 (1982), pp. 302-419; P. J. Drury *et al*, 'The Temple of Claudius at Colchester Reconsidered', *Britannia* 15 (1984), pp. 7-50

E. Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England* (Oxford, 2000),

T. A. Heslop, 'Orford Castle: Nostalgia and Sophisticated Living', *Architectural History*, 34 (1991) pp.36-58. (reprinted in Liddiard ed. 2003)

T. A. Heslop, *Norwich Castle Keep: Romanesque Architecture and Social Context* (University of East Anglia, 1994).

E. Impey, and G. Parnell, *The Tower of London: The Official Illustrated History* (London, 2000).

J. Kenyon, and M. Thompson, 'The Origin of the Word 'keep'', *Medieval Archaeology*, 38, (1994), pp. 175-6.

P. Marshall, 'The Great Tower as Residence in the Territories of the Norman and Angevin Kings of England' in G. Meirion-Jones *et al*, *The Seigneurial Residence in Western Europe AD c800-1600* (BAR International Series 1088, 2002), pp.27-44.

4. The Castle as Residence

Castles spent most of their time at peace. As great residences castles were at the centre of complex economic networks and were the backdrop for elaborate set piece social events. Much can be learnt about social organisation in the Middle Ages by examining the architectural remains of castles and analysing their spatial arrangement.

Sample Questions

- ❖ How did the changing form of the castle reflect changes in the noble household?

- ❖ What has spatial analysis added to our knowledge of the castle?
- ❖ How and why did the domestic arrangements of castles reflect medieval notions of authority?
- ❖ To what extent was their 'feminine space' within medieval castles?

Some Suggested Buildings for Discussion:
- ❖ Knaresborough (Yorkshire)
- ❖ Bolton (Yorkshire)
- ❖ Castle Rising (Norfolk)
- ❖ Goodrich (Herefordshire)
- ❖ Warwick (Warwickshire)
- ❖ Warkworth (Northumberland)

Introductory

Dixon, P., 'The Donjon of Knaresborough: the Castle as Theatre', *Château-Gaillard* 14 (1990) pp.121-39.

Dixon, P., 'Design in Castle-Building: The Control of Access to the Lord', *Château-Gaillard* 18 (1998), 47-57.

G. Fairclough, 'Meaningful Constructions - spatial and functional analysis of medieval buildings', *Antiquity* 66 (1992) pp.348-66.

P. A. Faulkner, 'Castle Planning in the Fourteenth Century', *Archaeological Journal*, 120 (1963) pp.215-235.

R. Gilchrist, *Gender and Archaeology: Contesting the Past* (London, 1999).

M. Johnson, *Behind the Castle Gate: From Medieval to Renaissance* (Routledge, 2002)

J. R. Mathieu, 'New Methods on Old Castles: Generating New Ways of Seeing', *Medieval Archaeology* 43 (1999) pp.115-142.

C. M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Medieval England* (New Haven and London, 1999).

5. Castle Landscapes

Castles influenced the landscape and visa versa. The impact of castle-building on the natural environment manifested itself in a number of ways, but distinctly regional landscapes also affected the nature of the castle. One fruitful avenue of recent research has been the recognition that at some castles the surrounding landscape had been modified for aesthetic purposes.

Sample Questions
- ❖ What were the main characteristics of medieval designed landscapes?
- ❖ Why did medieval elites take so much care over the visual appearance of their residences and what did these landscapes represent?
- ❖ To what extent were castle landscapes similar in function to those of post-medieval country houses?

Some Suggested Buildings for Discussion
- ❖ Kenilworth (Warwickshire)
- ❖ Castle Rising (Norfolk)
- ❖ Ludgershall (Wiltshire)
- ❖ Launceston (Cornwall)

Introductory

O. Creighton, *Castles and Landscapes* (2002) – esp. chapters 4+8

P. Everson, "Delightfully Surrounded with Woods and Ponds': Field Evidence for Medieval Gardens in Britain" in, *There by Design: Field Archaeology in Parks and Gardens*, (ed). Paul Patterson (BAR British Series 267 1998) pp.32-38.

P. Everson, G. Brown and D. Stocker, 'The Castle Earthworks and Landscape Context' *Ludgershall Castle, Excavations by P. Addyman 1964-72* ed. P. Ellis (Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Monograph Series ii 2000), pp. 97-119

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C. Taylor, *Parks and Gardens of Britain: A Landscape History from the Air* (Edinburgh, 1998).

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6. The Castle at War

The image of the castle under siege is one of the most powerful symbols of the Middle Ages. While

sieges were dramatic events, most military encounters at castles were far removed from the Hollywood image of battering rams and boiling oil. The political context of the siege, rather than men at arms and siege engines, was usually decisive in whether a castle would stand or fall. Moreover, sieges themselves were often not a free for all but rather followed a set of conventions.

Sample Questions
❖ To what extent was there a strategic pattern of castles in England? Was this different on the Scottish/Welsh borders?
❖ To what extent did political considerations affect the course of a medieval siege?
❖ Were medieval sieges 'ritual' encounters?

Some Suggested Sieges for Discussion
❖ Château-Gaillard, 1204
❖ Dover, 1216
❖ Rochester, 1215
❖ Dover 1261-1217
❖ Bedford, 1224

Introductory
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P. Contamine, (ed. and trans. M. Jones), *War in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1984).

Eales, R., 'Castles and Politics in England, 1215-1224', *Thirteenth-Century England* 2 (1989), pp.23-4.

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K. Norgate, *England under the Angevin Kings* vol. 2 (London, 1887) – a classic account of the siege of Chateau-Gaillard.

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S. Speight, 'Castle Warfare in the *Gesta Stephani*', *Château-Gaillard*, 19 (1998), pp.269-74.

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S. Turnball, *Samurai Warfare* (London, 1996).

7. The Decline of the Castle?
The period following the Black Death has often been characterised by historians as a time when the castle went into decline. By the early sixteenth century purpose-built artillery forts had supplanted the castle's military function and the fortified residence evolved into the country house. Recent years have seen a re-evaluation of this period as one of decline however, and instead emphasised the continuing vitality of noble building at the end of the Middle Ages. Is 'decline' a suitable term for the changes we see in the period 1350-1550?

Sample Questions
❖ What was the essential form of the later medieval castle?
❖ How did the late medieval 'castle' differ to the Tudor 'mansion'?
❖ To what extent is the term 'decline' applicable to noble building in the period *c.1400-c.1600*?

Some Suggested Buildings for Discussion
❖ Bolton Castle (Yorkshire)
❖ Raglan (Gwent)
❖ Tattershall (Lincolnshire)
❖ Haddon Hall (Derbyshire)
❖ Hardwick Hall (Derbyshire)
❖ Lulworth Castle (Dorset)
❖ Deal (Kent)

Introductory
R. A. Brown, *English Castles* 3rd. ed. (London, 1976).

C. Coulson, 'Structural Symbolism in Medieval Castle Architecture', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 132 (1979) pp.73-90.

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M. Johnson, *Behind the Castle Gate: From Medieval to Renaissance* (Routledge, 2002).

P. Dixon and B. Lott, 'Tower and Court', *Archaeological Journal* (1992?)

P. A. Faulkner, 'Castle Planning in the Fourteenth Century', *Archaeological Journal*, 120 (1963) pp.215-235.

G. Fairclough, 'Meaningful Constructions – Spatial and Functional Analysis of Medieval Buildings', *Antiquity* 66 (1992) pp.348-66.

M. Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House* (London, 1983).

J. Goodall, 'Lulworth Castle, Dorset', *Country Life* 194 (2000), pp.34-9.

J. R. Mathieu, 'New Methods on Old Castles: Generating New Ways of Seeing', *Medieval Archaeology* 43 (1999) pp.115-142.

A. Saunders, *Fortress Britain* (Liphook, 1989).

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8. Castles of Chivalry

Castles were potent icons of lordly status. Castles were not just expressions of military power but also of lifestyle, lineage and chivalric virtue. This is not only be seen in castle architecture, but also in the depiction of castles in literature. A useful case study of cultural expression by castle-building are the castles raised by Edward I in North Wales. Often seen as the cutting age of medieval 'military architecture', Edward's 'ring of stone' also embodied complex chivalric iconography.

Sample Questions
❖ To what extent can Edward I's castles in North Wales be defined as 'castles of chivalry'?
❖ What characteristics do literary sources suggest can be found in the 'ideal castle'?

Introductory

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A. Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2004).

M. A. Whitaker, 'Otherworld Castles in Middle English Arthurian Romance', in *The Medieval Castle, Romance and Reality* (Dubuque, Iowa, 1984), pp.27-46.

W. Van Emden, 'The Castle in Some Works of Medieval French Literature', in K. Reyerson and F. Powe (eds.), *The Medieval Castle, Romance and Reality* (Dubuque, Iowa, 1984), pp.1-36.

9. The Castle in Scotland

Scotland has some of Britain's most famous castles and some played important roles in national politics. The castles of Scotland also underwent something of a Renaissance at the end of the Middle Ages: to what extent was Scotland different from elsewhere?

Sample Questions
❖ Were Scottish castles more 'militarised' than their Irish, Welsh or English counterparts?
❖ What was the Scottish contribution to castle design in medieval Europe?
❖ To what extent did were the changes in late medieval Scottish castles unique?

Introductory

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C. Tabraham, *Scotland's Castles* (London, 1997).

Some useful websites

The Castle Studies Group have an excellent website and anyone interested in castles is well advised to become a member of this organisation: http://www.castlestudiesgroup.org.uk

Other useful websites include:
http://www.castlewales.com/home.html
http://www.rampantscotland.com/castles/
http://www.casteland.com/

National Heritage Agencies:
http://www.englishheritage.org.uk/default.ap
http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/
http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/
http://www.heritageireland.ie/
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Dr Robert Liddiard
rob.liddiard@uea.ac.uk