

## Disaster on All Fronts 1202-4

The murder of Arthur & treatment of the prisoners at **Mirebeau** brought great trouble for John.

There was hardly a noble in Poitou who did not have a kinsman or friend amongst the knights taken at Mirebeau – so John managed to offend almost the entire aristocracy!

e.g. William des Roches & Aimeri of Thouars were angry that they were denied any say in the prisoners' fate – rebelled against John. Others joined them when they heard the rumours of Arthur's fate.

**“The manner in which John had exploited his victory at Mirebeau meant that 6 months later he had virtually no friends anywhere in Poitou, Anjou, Maine & Touraine.” John Gillingham**

Rebellion spread into southern Normandy & in the early summer of 1203 Philip resumed his attacks there.

John did attempt to counter this:

- ✓ Large sums of money were sent from England (at least £30,000 between 1201-3)
- ✓ John stayed in Normandy for almost the whole of 1203

BUT – he was not an inspiring leader

Egs June – fortress of **Vaudreuil** surrendered without a fight. John was nearby but made no effort to help

August – John laid siege to **Alencon** – but he retreated when Philip arrived unexpectedly

Fortress of **Chateau-Gaillard** was left to its own devices - John made no further attempts to relieve the castle or harass the blockading French troops. For over 5 months the castle stood firm while John stayed in the west of Normandy before leaving for England on 5 December 1203.

6 March the garrison of Chateau-Gaillard surrendered.

After that only **Rouen** & **Arques** were prepared to resist.  
.Everywhere else surrendered quickly.

May – Philip swept through **central Normandy** taking it in 3 weeks

**“In Normandy, as in Anjou, there was hardly anyone who would fight for John.” John Gillingham**

24 June 1204 - city of **Rouen** opened its gates to Philip

31 March 1204 – death of **Eleanor of Aquitaine**

Most of the lords of **Poitou** had been loyal to Eleanor not John – now rushed to pay homage to Philip.

August 1204 – Philip visited **Poitiers** in triumph.

Eleanor of Aquitaine's death also meant that **Gascony** went to Eleanor (her daughter) – but Eleanor's husband **Alfonso VIII of Castile** took it over & secured the support of the main Gascon lords.

**“By Christmas 1204 from the Pyrenees to the Channel coast the Angevin Empire was in ruins”. John Gillingham**

### **A small comeback 1205-6**

1205 John was forced to abandon a planned expedition to the continent – **Chinon** & **Loches** finally gave in to Philip.

But things did improve for John:

- ✓ Threatened French invasion of England didn't materialize
- ✓ Channel Islands were recaptured
- ✓ Archbishop of Bordeaux organised the resistance against Alfonso
- ✓ Summer of 1206 John returned to the continent
- ✓ Consolidated his hold over Angouleme
- ✓ Regained control of Gascony
- ✓ September – marched north & set his army to attack Anjou – but he retreated when he heard Philip was on his way
- ✓ October – 2 kings agreed on a 2-year truce.
- ✓ Normandy & the Loire Valley had been lost but Gascony & the S-W of Poitou were saved.

**“At least something had been salvaged from the wreckage.” John Gillingham**