

SYMPOSIUM  
**THE FIRST GENERATIONS  
OF THE CONQUEST**  
NORMAN WORLDS,  
9TH-12TH CENTURY  
**1. DEPARTING**

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**Friday 22 – Saturday 23 September 2023**

Maison française d'Oxford

2-10 Norham Road

OX2 6SE Oxford | UK

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**abstracts**

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**THIS CONFERENCE IS PART OF THE *PAX NORMANNA*  
2022-2026 RESEARCH PROGRAMME OF THE ÉCOLE  
FRANÇAISE DE ROME.**

Pierre Bauduin  
UMR Craham · Université de Caen Normandie

Annick Peters-Custot  
UR Crhia · Nantes Université

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This conference will address the notion of “first generations” in relation to the medieval Norman conquests in England, Wales, Ireland, southern Italy, Sicily, and the Crusader states. Focusing on the conquerors’ departure from their places of origin, the papers will explore the rhythms, modalities, reasons and objectives for leaving.

The conference aims at:

1. Determining how relevant the notion of “first generations of the conquest” is. All these movements were phenomena that took place over several generations and featured different kind of protagonists – soldiers, mercenaries, pilgrims, merchants, clerics and monks.
2. Considering the horizons of those who departed, while avoiding teleological and unilinear assumptions. These horizons require an analysis of diverse dynamics and “push and pull” factors: political motivations, economic grounds, social mechanisms, acculturation processes, social and political creativity.
3. Exploring the documentation, approaches, and tools that help to answer these questions. Our documentation was often produced in the regions where the conquerors settled, and it focuses on their new status; it must be compared retroactively with sources from Normandy (and more broadly speaking from northern France) to enlighten the dynamics that led to the mobility of these people.

## Friday 22 September

13.30 Welcome

14.00 Pierre BAUDUIN (UMR Craham · Université de Caen Normandie),  
Annick PETERS-CUSTOT (UR Crhia · Nantes Université),  
*The first generations of the conquest. Departing: presentation*

14.30 Chris LEWIS (Institute of Historical Research · University of London),  
*Becoming a Baron in Early Norman England*

15.00 Mark HAGGER (Bangor University),  
*Chance, Kinship, and Claim: The Normans and Anglo-Normans in Wales after 1066*

15.30 Discussion

*Coffee and tea*

16.15 Stephen BAXTER (St Peter's College · Oxford),  
*The men who made Domesday: a revolutionary intelligentsia in early conquered England?*

16.45 Tom McAULIFFE (Wolfson College · University of Oxford),  
*Lost in Translation: textual reinterpretation and the St Augustine's historical tradition in the generation after the Conquest*

17.15 Discussion

18.00 Visit to the archives and manuscripts at Magdalen College (Emily Jennings)

*Conference dinner (speakers)*

## Saturday 23 September

9.00 Bastien MICHEL (UMR Craham · Université de Caen Normandie),  
*"The Number of Years". Youth and conquests in the medieval Norman worlds (11th - 12th centuries)*

9.30 Nathan WEBSDALE (Wolfson College · University of Oxford),  
*The Translatio of St Nicholas of Myra and the journeys of Norman-Greeks in the eleventh century*

10.00 Discussion

*Coffee and tea*

10.45 Marie-Agnès LUCAS-AVENEL (UMR Craham · Université de Caen Normandie),  
*The departure of the "Normans" to Southern Italy: from migration to conquest according to Italo-Norman historiography*

11.15 Guilhem DORANDEU (École française de Rome),  
*Reassessing Norman Emigrations in Southern Italy (11th-12th centuries)*

11.45 Victor RIVERA MAGOS (Università degli Studi di Foggia),  
*The Norman conquest of Apulia and the "first generation": for a working hypothesis*

12.15 Discussion

13.00 Concluding remarks

*Lunch at MFO (speakers)*

Friday 22 September

Chris LEWIS (Institute of Historical Research · University of London)

*Becoming a Baron in Early Norman England*

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The paper is an essay in the experiential history of conquest and settlement: an attempt to recover something of the texture of personal experience among the first generation of conquerors of England after 1066, and at a relatively modest social level. Why take part in the hazardous expedition to England? What was it like to be one of the conquerors? What opportunities presented themselves, and how were they taken? What were the priorities of newly settled landowners and lords of manors? In short, how did you become a baron in early Norman England? Its direction of approach accords with David Bates's suggestion for broadening the ways we understand "1066" by probing personal identities and experiences as lived out across the years of conquest and settlement. It proceeds from a case study, that of Gilbert de Bretteville, lord of Bincknoll in Wiltshire and sheriff of Berkshire under William II, but draws wider conclusions.

The larger study from which the paper is taken has much to say about Gilbert de Bretteville's landed estate and career as a middle-ranking baron, somewhere between the common knights and the greater landowners: what the king gave him; his acquisition of the farm of royal manors and a tenancy from Abingdon abbey; his creation of tenancies for his own men and some other Norman barons of greater wealth than his own; his property disputes with neighbours. It is possible to define quite closely how he shaped his own resources, creating a core around his modest new castle in Wiltshire, and a chain of demesne manors leading to Southampton and thence back home to Normandy.

The focus here is on Gilbert's origins and connections in Normandy (with the duke and especially with the family of the counts of Eu), how they might have propelled his participation in the expeditionary army, and how they shaped his experience as a first generation baron in conquered England.

Mark HAGGER (Bangor University)

*Chance, Kinship, and Claim: The Normans and Anglo-Normans in Wales after 1066*

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The settlement and conquest of Wales was undertaken by the Normans, Anglo-Normans, and English from just after the Norman conquest of England around 1066 until the end of the thirteenth century. It was a process that ebbed and flowed, with areas taken, lost, and then taken again. The idea of generations of conquest is thus particularly relevant to the experience of this region of Britain. Those who were involved in the process, who departed their homes to fight and settle in Wales (such as Osbern fitz Richard and Robert of Rhuddlan), were also motivated by a number of different factors – many of them shared with those involved in conquests elsewhere. This short paper will thus consider a number of specific individuals, who were active along the length of the Welsh frontier with England, to suggest reasons for their arrival, how those motives varied among the individuals concerned, and how their relative importance might have changed over time.

Stephen BAXTER (St Peter's College · Oxford)

*The men who made Domesday: a revolutionary intelligentsia in early conquered England?*

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This paper will explore how clerical elites found opportunities to prosper in early conquered England through service in royal government. As John Gillingham has observed, “the decades after 1066 witnessed a faster rate of mobility within the ruling elite than any other period in the entire history of England”. That was partly because more than ninety per cent of England’s landed wealth changed hands between 1066 and 1086, creating a frenzy of acquisitions for a relatively small circle of about 150 barons who enjoyed the Conqueror’s favour; and since they assigned roughly a third of their acquisitions in England to tenants, the first generation of conquered England was also a world of extraordinary opportunity for lesser landholders too. But as the dust from the first burst of acquisitions began to settle, it became apparent that the Conqueror and his sons were determined to control succession to baronial lands, and that the barons themselves were equally set on transmitting their honors intact; and consequently, primogeniture became the norm in England, threatening to slam the door shut on subsequent generation of younger sons and ambitious lesser landholders. However, the door was kept ajar for them by demand for talented administrators because the new regime created plentiful and profitable work for literate men who found innovative ways of managing the expanding scale and complexity of royal government. The making of Domesday created specific challenges for such men and, once complete, opened up new opportunities for them to shine by using the survey’s outputs for their intended purposes – in particular managing the revenues that flowed from a novel and intensive form of royal lordship.

Several of the men who organised the Domesday survey can be plausibly identified and their careers are instructive. Many of them had missed out on the initial phase of land taking in England, but the survey created tools for them to prey upon its principal beneficiaries, principally by making the fiscal exploitation of royal lordship more efficient – service that was so valuable that it was often rewarded with promotion to high office. In other words, the men who made Domesday weaponized pen and parchment to win their own share of the spoils of conquest. They therefore represent an early manifestation of what R. I. Moore has labelled Europe’s “revolutionary intelligentsia”: a cadre or class of clerical elites who used intelligence and reason to reshape society in their favour, creating new opportunities for educated men without inheritance prospects to enter elite circles.

*Lost in Translation: textual reinterpretation and the St Augustine's historical tradition in the generation after the Conquest*

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This paper will explore the dynamic textual environment of the abbey of St Augustine, Canterbury, in the generation after the Norman Conquest. The decades after 1066 saw a flurry of textual production occur at the abbey, as a new generation of writers and monks adapted to a newly demanding tenurial, cultural, and intellectual environment. This is exemplified by Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, whose hagiographical work has received a significant amount of attention over the last thirty years. His six Lives of the early archbishops of Canterbury, as well as his works on St Hadrian and St Augustine, have been discussed with respect to: their portrayal of liturgical practices (Sharpe, 1990); the musicology of the late-eleventh century (Sawicka-Sykes, 2019), their representation of architectural change (Sharpe, 1995); historical memory of the conversion of England at both St Augustine's abbey and Christ Church Cathedral (Lendinara, 2014); and those two churches' competing claims to pre-eminence in the English church (Hayward, 2003). Goscelin himself is well-known as the mercenary hagiographer *par excellence*, coming to England from the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Bertin, probably after 1066, and leading a peripatetic career over at least four decades during which he wrote saints' Lives for several of the leading religious houses of the day.

In the same period, the abbey became a hotbed of textual collation, conflation, and outright confection, as its new occupants worked to reconcile the institution's documentary heritage with the demands of its new surroundings. This activity has attracted some attention (Levison, 1946; Kelly, 1988) but has never been put fully into conversation with the abbey's equally well-known hagiographical tradition. This paper will answer that desideratum by exploring both the abbey's hagiographical tradition and its legal-documentary production in the context of the earliest manuscript witness of both: London, British Library, Cotton MS. Vespasian B. xx. This manuscript, which has been described as a "manuscript in transition" (Ker, 1960) reflects an institution also in transition. It was the product of collaboration between several different scribes, some of whom were trained in England and others on the Continent. Vespasian B. xx contains the earliest copies of the so-called "Canterbury Forgeries", a group of charters and papal letters which reflect the efforts of St Augustine's new inhabitants to rework an Old English textual past for a Norman tenurial present. Finally, it is a unique witness to Goscelin's cycle of saint's lives, which are themselves reworked versions of passages of Bede's *History of the English People* for the first generation of the abbey's monks after 1066. This paper therefore asks: how did the first generation of St Augustine's brethren after the Conquest interact with their textual environment, and re-shape it to suit their own needs? One assessment of St Augustine's textual tradition in the central Middle Ages decried the abbey's memorials as "narrow, parochial and dull" (John, 1957); by re-examining the texts produced at the abbey in the generation after the Conquest, it is eminently clear that this was far from true.

Saturday 23 September

Bastien MICHEL (UMR Craham · Université de Caen Normandie)

*"The Number of Years". Youth and conquests in the medieval Norman worlds (11th - 12th centuries)*

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Since Georges Duby's pioneering study on young people in feudal society, many works have come to underline the importance of intergenerational relations within the aristocratic group, by inserting them, most often, in an anthropological reflection. I would therefore like, from this perspective, to study the links between age and conquests in the medieval Norman worlds (11th-12th centuries), in order to know if youth could have been one of the motives of the expansion of Normans outside the duchy. In other words, is young age part of the push and pull effects at the origin of the Norman conquests? The approach is resolutely comparative in order to identify similarities between the situations encountered across the Channel and in the Mediterranean space.

This communication has three objectives:

- Understand how the documentation depicts the relationship between age and conquest. If Wace or the chronicle of Sainte-Barbe-en-Auge, for example, insist on the youth of some conquerors, the sources of the medieval Norman worlds – narrative and more rarely diplomatic – do not always have a positive perception of their young age. Basically, how is the couple age-conquest perceived? Is conquest a way to send young warriors away? On the contrary, following Bernard de Clairvaux in his *Éloge de la nouvelle chevalerie*, is it not considered as a loss of vital forces which could have been better employed?
- Highlight the different age groups that participated in the conquests. Indeed, the databases available today, as well as older prosopographic projects, make it possible to formulate hypotheses on the age of the conquerors and thus to establish statistical series. Based on this observation, I will try to understand which generations participated in the conquest, highlighting the contribution of the youngest individuals. Are there similarities or differences depending on the theater of operations? What is the social status of these young people? Do they take the lead in these military campaigns or do they provide the bulk of the troops? Do they have a particular function among the conquerors?
- Identify, based on case studies, the strategies implemented by young people to leave. Do they resort to specific emigration channels? Do they fit into specific networks, seeking dependence on a boss who can redistribute land, women and offices? Two examples can be explored further, almost contemporary: Odon de Bayeux, on the one hand, and Robert Guiscard, on the other hand, to note the presence of young warriors at their sides.

Nathan WEBSDALE (Wolfson College · University of Oxford)

*The Translatio of St Nicholas of Myra and the journeys of Norman-Greeks  
in the eleventh century*

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Despite peace being established in 1085 after the collapse of Robert Guiscard's invasion the Normans continued to ravage the coasts of Asia Minor. In 1087 a naval expedition departed comprised of a mixed crew of merchants from both the Norman and hellenophone Southern Italian populations. Famously, by either accident or design the merchants seized the sarcophagus of St Nicholas of Myra from the Byzantine population and transferred the relics to their current position in Bari. The anonymous surviving account of the expedition, written in Greek, details an account of dialogues opened between the opposing sides as the tradition imagined in the thirteenth century.

Within the *translatio* lays a surprisingly nuanced view to an interconnected world of peoples in the ascendance and decline. The ethnotypes of the Norman conqueror, hellenophone Barese collaborator, and Byzantine victim offer a sympathetic view of an ageing Byzantine world and a triumphant Italian one. It allows for a discussion both of the reasons behind launching the expedition to Myra and for the necessity of expanding a saintly cult that appealed to both peoples of Norman Bari.

Lastly, the paper will attempt to define the position of the author in the thirteenth century, when the Norman's themselves were facing their own existential threats. For, as the text wrote, "his [Nicholas'] will is to give light to the western world" and having been possessors of it for a time, it shall now move on. With this semantic overarching, the translation is an interesting text of the coming and going of peoples and cultures.

Marie-Agnès LUCAS-AVENEL (UMR Craham · Université de Caen Normandie)

*The departure of the "Normans" to Southern Italy: from migration to conquest according to Italo-Norman historiography*

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The three major narratives written in southern Italy that bear witness to the conquest of southern Italy by the "Normans" and in particular by the Hautevilles – the works of Amatus of Monte Cassino, William of Puglia and Geoffrey Malaterra – provide both concordant and complementary information on the circumstances of the departure of the first migrants to southern Italy in the 11th century. The reasons for the departure are almost exclusively dealt with at the beginning of the narrative: the Norman knights are called by the local populations and motivated by the lure of Italian wealth, but they are also pushed to leave the duchy either because they are condemned to exile by the duke, or because the smallness of their father's land is not enough to satisfy all the heirs. The information that can thus be gathered on the dynamics of this "push and pull" is presented as that of the general history of the Normans, even if it is soon illustrated, at the beginning of these works, by the account of the adventures of a few families, especially the Drengots and the Hautevilles. Moreover, while Orderic Vital follows the fate of certain Normans who leave and return, Amatus, William and Geoffrey only rarely take up these motifs in the rest of their narrative, despite the arrival of new immigrants, including women and clerics, to the point that the patria – Norman or Frankish – is very quickly forgotten. We shall briefly return to these motives, which have already been well studied and highlighted by several specialists in the history of the "Normans" in Italy, in order to show both the importance that the evocation of the homeland plays at the beginning of the work (by underlining, for example, the concern of the Hautevilles to preserve their paternal heritage), and the lack of concern that it arouses in the following years. We shall see how the story of the departure of some Normans is integrated into the story of a Norman migration or diaspora, and how it is transformed, but only gradually and at different rates, into the story of the conquest.

Guilhem DORANDEU (École française de Rome)

*Reassessing Norman Emigrations in Southern Italy (11th-12th centuries)*

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Explanatory models of Norman infiltration in Southern Italy have emphasized the wide variety of motives that drove individuals from Northern France to leave their homelands and settle in territories under Byzantine, Lombard or Islamic control. The attention paid by historiography to narrative sources has revealed the existence of two main factors that initially guided this movement. One concerns the strengthening of Norman ducal authority in the eleventh century, which led to an increase of the sanctions of exile taken against rebellious or criminal lords. The second is linked to the attraction that the Mezzogiorno exerted on the Northern military elites, who saw it as an ideal context for enrichment and social ascension. Within this paper, I revisit this interpretative dichotomy, which is based on a unidirectional model that essentially takes into account the political context of the early eleventh century. Through a new examination of written and material sources produced in France and Italy in the High Middle Ages, I argue for the existence of two-way patterns of mobility and exchanges between these two spaces, going beyond matters of constraint and opportunity. Moreover, these dynamics do not appear to be limited to the moment of the conquest of South Italy: they pre-existed and continued well after the foundation of the kingdom of Sicily by Roger II of Hauteville, in 1130.

Victor RIVERA MAGOS (Università degli Studi di Foggia)

*The Norman conquest of Apulia and the "first generation": for a working hypothesis*

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The word "conquest", long used by contemporary historiography to discuss and analyze the phenomenon of Norman infiltration in southern Italy in the eleventh century, is today at the center of a debate that intends to discuss the meaning and main characteristics.

Apulia is one of the regions of the Mezzogiorno where it is possible to observe more clearly the main phases of the Norman penetration: narrow between Byzantium and the Tyrrhenian-Lombard area, the region was the theater in which the conquest took place, starting from 1042. The intervention, through the analysis of the documentation preserved in the territorial archives, intends to try to reread some of the main phases of Norman penetration through the isolation of some particular cases: the Norman settlement in the Irpinia area (Melfi) and in the south-east of Bari (Conversano), the arrival and sedimentation in the Ofanto area (Trani, Canosa, Canne) and in Capitanata (Troia), the political and military relations that characterized the Norman intervention in a political and institutional with and in local urban communities. We will try to isolate the action of some of the most famous lords, trying to analyze the way they related both with their subjects and with the local populations, mostly of Lombard or Byzantine culture. The aim of the work is to try to understand if, through a rereading of the documentary sources, it is possible to answer some questions proposed in the questionnaire of the conference, in particular concerning the reasons which led some of these groups to settle in certain areas of the region, their political action and their perception by urban communities, until the modalities that led to their acceptance and sedimentation on the territory.

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