

EUSTACE, SON OF KING STEPHEN:  
The Model Prince in Twelfth-Century England

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In 1152, King Stephen of England pressed Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury to crown his son, Eustace, as king of England during his life time.<sup>1</sup> This action was explicitly forbidden by the Pope in a letter, and served as the final rebuke to Eustace and his father, before Eustace's ultimate death in August, 1153. As the count of Boulogne and the elder son of King Stephen, Eustace has been unduly overlooked by historians. The historical significance attributed to the preceding and succeeding reigns of Henry I and Henry II have loomed very large in historical contexts, and have overshadowed Stephen's reign, helping to diminish Eustace's historical value.<sup>2</sup> Eustace does not need to be painted as a failure, but he can easily be described as someone who, like his father, ultimately ended on the bottom of the wheel of fortune. Unlike Eustace, his rival, Duke Henry of Normandy (Henry II), was able to have his own son, Henry the Young King, crowned during his lifetime at age 15 in 1170.<sup>3</sup> Stephen lacked the political capital to obtain this act for his own son. This can be attributed to the rival claim of Empress Matilda and her son – a political position some chroniclers and clergymen chose to support due to their distaste for Stephen or simply as an alternative to Stephen's lordship. Though he was not crowned and is not as historically significant as his father or their Plantagenet rival, Eustace is an undervalued figure whose life merits consideration since he can provide insight into larger historical trends.

This essay examines the deeds and assesses the life of Eustace. It considers the opinions of contemporary sources and offers a juxtaposition between Eustace and the princes of the

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<sup>1</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum: 1000-1154* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 92. Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, 2 vols. trans. William Stubbs, (London, UK: Longman & Co, 1879), 155.

<sup>2</sup> Heather J. Tanner, "Henry I's Administrative Legacy: The Significance of Place-Date Distribution in the Acta of King Stephen" in *Henry I and the Anglo-Norman World: Studies in Memory of C. Warren Hollister* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2007): 183-199; Emilie Amt, *The Accession of Henry II in England: Royal Government Restored 1149-1159* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 1993), 15.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Strickland, *Henry the Young King: 1155-1183* (London, UK: Yale University Press, 2016), 78-79.

succeeding and preceding reigns. Eustace is frequently cited by contemporary sources as an ignoble, irreligious figure.<sup>4</sup> Although Eustace did not display all the attributes of a model prince in the eyes of the clerical men who wrote the chronicles, these same men frequently described him as a man of valor and a magnificent warrior. He is portrayed with a similar likeness and as having similar character traits as his father. Both Stephen and Eustace were referred to as men lacking in civility and decency, but rarely were they said to be lacking in the areas of personal valor or attributes worthy of a King. This essay will argue – firstly through a survey of the life of Eustace, and secondly through closely analyzing and juxtaposing his most important deeds against those of his rivals – that Eustace, out of the three prematurely deceased princes of twelfth-century England, embodied the characteristics of a model prince most of all. The ideal princely characteristics assigned to Eustace allow us to use his life to contribute to larger historical queries such as: What were the chronicler's thoughts on princely anger? What is the role of a prince? What makes a good prince?

Remarkably, the twelfth century in England witnessed a situation whereby three princes died before they could ever become King. These three were William Atheling, the son of Henry I, Eustace, son of King Stephen, and Henry the Young King, son of Henry II.<sup>5</sup> Of these three princes, Eustace is the only one who can be characterized as a model prince. He indeed has his flaws, as is well documented by the chroniclers, but his overall image is most congruent with the

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<sup>4</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 92; William of Newburgh, *The History of English Affairs*, 2 vols. trans. P.G. Walsh and M.J. Kennedy (Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips, 1988), i. 125; Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works*, 155; John of Hexham, *The History of the Church of Hexham*, by John the Prior trans. Joseph Stevenson (Flinfach, Wales: Llanerch Publishers, 2000), 27-29.

<sup>5</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, Vol. vi, ed. and trans. Majorie Chibnall (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1978), 296; *The History of William Marshal* 3 vols. ed. A.J. Holden trans. S. Gregory (London, UK, 2002), i. 350-351. *Gesta Stephani*, ed. trans. K.R. Potter (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1976), 238-239.

princely ideals and characteristics of an aristocratic youth during this century.<sup>6</sup> In order to derive what is meant by princely characteristics, one must conclude that prince-hood is actually a preparatory process – a lord in training – for the position that is the ultimate goal of any prince: king. Thus, the characteristics of an ideal king and the tenets of kingship can be mutually employed in order to create a framework that is apt for the historical consideration of princely norms.

The thoughts on what qualifications make a king good were not very dissimilar from one chronicler to another during the twelfth century. Thanks to how frankly chroniclers wrote, their work can be analyzed while taking into account their personal biases, to construct a general overlapping framework of their ideas on what made a man suitable to be king.<sup>7</sup> By the dawn of the twelfth century, several components were almost universally employed by the chroniclers to measure the success of a king: justice, charity – specifically towards the church –, fiscal and governmental success, chivalrous personality, and the evidence of his divine favor.<sup>8</sup> While some

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<sup>6</sup> George Duby, “Youth in Aristocratic Society” in *The Chivalrous Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980), 112-122.

<sup>7</sup> Björn Weiler describes the qualities of good kingship in his article as “the rigorous pursuit of justice, generous endowment of religious houses, and meticulous handling of financial matters.” Heather Tanner follows a Carolingian Blessing called the *Prospice* to form her tenets of kingship, which she lists by saying that a “king must be the mightiest protector of his churches and monasteries, a staunch keeper of the peace, a magnificent benefactor of ecclesiastics, and a generous and loving patron to the magnates and faithful men of his realm.” I have decided, keeping their lists of attributes in mind, to form my own qualifiers which are not dissimilar but additionally include a sense of personal worthiness which I encapsulate through “chivalry” and through “divine favor.” See Björn Weiler, “William of Malmesbury, King Henry I, and the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*” *Anglo-Norman Studies XXXI: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2008*, (2009): 166; Heather J. Tanner, “Trial by Chronicle – Assessing the Failures of Three Rulers of England and Normandy: 1170-1300,” *Majestas* 4 (1996): 39-60. For information on the evolution of European medieval kingship see: Henry Allen Meyers, *Medieval Kingship* (Chicago, IL: Nelson Hall, 1982).

<sup>8</sup> While chivalry as a code of conduct was not fully formed by the twelfth century, it was undergoing drastic changes during this period. The tenets which became chivalry already existed, but did not form into the doctrine or code historians consider it as today until later in the thirteenth century. For information on the tenets of kingship see: Björn Weiler, “William of Malmesbury, King Henry I, and the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*” 165; Heather J. Tanner, “Trial by Chronicle – Assessing the Failures of Three Rulers of England and Normandy,” 40-41. For further reading into chivalry see: H.A Meyers, *Medieval Kingship*, 2, 18, 188; David Crouch, “Chivalry and Courtliness: Colliding Constructs” in *Soldiers Nobles and Gentlemen: Essays in Honour of Maurice Keen* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2009); David Crouch, “From *Preudommie* to *Chevalerie*” in *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in*

of these elements cannot be wholly applied to princes since they are not fully kings, most of these aspects can be entirely dissected, their rank notwithstanding. Eustace, for example, is frequently cited by hostile medieval chroniclers as lacking in his Christian moral obligations. However, arguments will be marshalled in this essay to challenge that seemingly ubiquitous claim. Henry the Young King, on the other hand, might seem to be a better model prince based on his elegance and temperament alone. That is, he might seem to be a model if he had not gone against his father and family, and had not in his attempts to subvert royal law and authority caused a civil war.<sup>9</sup> The comparison of Eustace and Henry the Young King, two princes who were equally unable to secure the long-term role as king for themselves, will prove extremely profitable for an expository review of the suitability of either one for the throne. Henry the Young King has a significant amount of both contemporary and modern writings which consider his aptitude, characteristics, and deeds, unlike Eustace, who has no sources considering these aspects of his life. Therefore, in order to more fully understand Eustace's placement and connection to the framework of kingship, the deeds of his life up until his premature death must be evaluated, and the best efforts to impartially grasp who he was as an individual must be made.

### The Deeds of Eustace, count of Boulogne and son of King Stephen

Eustace is presumed to have been born in 1130, but unfortunately there is no direct documentation or evidence dating his exact birth year. He came from illustrious families on both his maternal and paternal sides; he was a true aristocrat through and through. Though not yet king of England, Eustace's father, Stephen, was already both the count of Mortain, and the count

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*England and France, 900-1300* (London, UK: Routledge, 2014). John Gillingham, "Conquering the Barbarians: War and Chivalry in Twelfth-Century Britain" *The Haskins Society Journal* Vol. 4 (1992).

<sup>9</sup> See Matthew Strickland, *Henry the Young King*, 151-154.

of Boulogne, as well as being a member of the Thibaudien comital dynasty of Blois. Mortain was a county given to Stephen by his maternal uncle, King Henry I, from the king's personal demesne.<sup>10</sup> The county of Boulogne was obtained for Stephen through his marriage, which was also arranged by Henry I as personal favor for one of his favorite nephews. Eustace's mother, Mathilda of Boulogne, was the heiress to the county of Boulogne as she was the only child of Eustace III of Boulogne, and his wife, Mary (sister to Mathilda II, queen of Henry I).<sup>11</sup> Boulogne was a highly desirable county due to its wealth. Not only did it encompass the lucrative port city of Boulogne on the coast of Normandy, it also entailed significant landed estates in England, the so called "honor of Boulogne."<sup>12</sup> It is calculated that at the time of the creation of the Domesday Book, Boulogne and all its honors were valued at £770, making it the eleventh most valuable holding listed.<sup>13</sup> Although the value is estimated to have decreased by the mid-1120s, due to the destruction of property, the acquisition of Boulogne for Stephen was still able to propel him into a position of importance as a major landholder in England. Eustace, as the older of Stephen's two sons, would then benefit from this same title when in 1147, at the age of sixteen or seventeen, Eustace was granted the title of count of Boulogne.<sup>14</sup>

Eustace first appears on the scene in the written record in a major way in 1136, shortly after Stephen's coronation in December, 1135. Eustace attested to and signed a total of six

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<sup>10</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella* ed. Edmund King, trans. K. R. Potter (New York, NY: Oxford Press, 1998), 98-99.

<sup>11</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* vol. ii. ed. and trans. Elisabeth M. C. Van Houts (New York: NY: Oxford University Press, 1995), 262-263.

<sup>12</sup> For a record of land holdings see *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation* ed. and trans. Ann Williams and G. H. Martin (Bath, UK: Penguin Books, 1992).

<sup>13</sup> Edmund King, *King Stephen* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 20.

<sup>14</sup> Eustace was the oldest of Stephen's children, born in 1130c. William, Stephen's second son was born approximately four years later in 1134c. For information on Eustace becoming the count of Boulogne see *Gesta Stephani*, 208-209; For information on William, son of King Stephen, see Edmund King, *King Stephen*, 141; *Early Yorkshire Charters: The Honour of Warenne* vol. viii, ed. Charles Travis Clay (Wakefield, UK: The West Yorkshire Printing Co., 1949), 14-17. For information on the county of Boulogne see Heather J. Tanner, *Families, Friends, and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England, c. 879-1160* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2004).

charters at the young age of either five or six at the 1136 Easter court at Westminster.<sup>15</sup> It is significant that Stephen held his early courts at Westminster and not elsewhere, such as Winchester, the typical site for King Henry and the Anglo-Norman kings. Westminster's new role established the importance of London to Stephen's reign as the new center of his kingship, something that is well evidenced through the charters of both Stephen and Eustace.<sup>16</sup> Both Westminster and Eustace were on display through these early charters as prominent and permanent features of Stephen's newly formed government. There were many reasons which warranted Eustace's presence at court, in spite of his youth. Firstly, as a new king, Stephen took this moment to make more specific provisions of restorations and grants to important individuals during this time. These were in addition to his numerous charters from 1135, which provided the expected general confirmations.<sup>17</sup> No doubt a secondary objective for Stephen was to include Eustace in his kingship from an early date.<sup>18</sup> Stephen needed to firmly establish Eustace's status as heir and prince who was hopeful of succession – if only to help avoid the circumstances which Stephen himself had capitalized upon in order to become king. Having Eustace involved was a successful first step in this plan that Stephen hoped would ultimately lead Eustace to the throne. To his dismay, Eustace's path was continually blocked at every turn by church leadership and the Pope, Empress Matilda, and clergymen throughout England over the next decade and a half.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066-1154* vol. iii, ed. H.A. Cronne, R.H.C. Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), nos. 341, 204, 945, 946, 947, 948.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Stephen's Charters of Liberties* trans. Richard Barton, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> David Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen: 1135-1154* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), 42.

<sup>19</sup> John of Salisbury, *Historia Pontificalis*, ed. and trans. Majorie Chibnall (New York, NY: Thomas Nelson and Sons: 1956), 83-86; Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 88; Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works*, i. 150, ii. 75-76.

The real years of importance for Eustace of Boulogne began around 1140 with his betrothal to Constance, the daughter of Louis VI.<sup>20</sup> Henry of Huntingdon suggests that Stephen paid a dowry to the French King for Constance's hand in marriage with the money that he seized during the arrest of the bishops in 1139.<sup>21</sup> John of Worcester, the chronicler who sheds the most light on this particular event, does not mention this in any way. But, if it were true, it would be excellent grounds from which to begin to construct a "like father, like son" comparison between Eustace and Stephen. With the hand of a princess from a powerful ally betrothed to him before he even reached adolescence, Eustace was exactly on par with his counterparts William Atheling and Henry the Young King, who both were early on betrothed to Angevin and French royalty respectively.<sup>22</sup>

Eustace's wife, Constance, made him more legitimate as an heir to the throne. Constance was the prominent female in the line of succession for the French crown. If something were to happen to Louis VII, like the tragic death of his brother Philip, then Eustace and Constance would have had excellent bids for the French throne.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps out of newfound loyalty to Louis, but perhaps obligatorily for the English claim to the duchy of Normandy, Eustace would later fight for this part of his inheritance on the mainland.<sup>24</sup> Eustace had performed homage for Normandy to the King of France in 1137 on behalf of his father, even before his marriage to Constance.<sup>25</sup> This recognition of lordship, and the marriage between the two monarchs' children

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<sup>20</sup> John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester* 3 vols. ed. and trans. by P. McGurk (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1998), 284-285; Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 73; Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works*, i. 112.

<sup>21</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 73; David Crouch, *King Stephen's Reign* 97.

<sup>22</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, vi. 224; Robert de Torgini, *The Church Historians of England* ed. and trans. Joseph Stevenson (Llanerch, UK: Fleet Street, 1991), 116-117.

<sup>23</sup> Suger, *The Deeds of Louis the Fat*, trans. Richard Cusimano and John Moorhead (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 149-150.

<sup>24</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 69.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*; John of Hexham, *The History of the Church of Hexham*, 147; Orderic Vitalis, vi. 482-483.



were performed to the satisfaction of both the French and English crowns, as it united both large realms against the Angevin forces.<sup>26</sup>

Eustace played a major role in the raging conflicts during his father's difficult reign in England. Early on he served as a point of strength by his simple existence as a viable heir to the throne and as a rival claimant to Empress Matilda and the young Duke Henry. Already in 1141, he was considered a sufficiently significant political figure that he could be used as a hostage to enable the exchange of his father captured at Lincoln, and his father's enemy, Robert of Gloucester captured at Stockbridge.<sup>27</sup> It was during the period of Stephen's captivity that tensions between the Empress Matilda and Eustace were at their height. With Stephen in captivity and the future uncertain, Eustace, aided by his uncle, Bishop Henry of Winchester, attempted to secure for himself his father's inheritance. This would not have included the English throne, but rather the county of Mortain, and other estates which Stephen held independently of his kingship. Perhaps out of spite, or possibly coming from a position of confidence with Stephen imprisoned, the Empress "categorically refused and, it may be, even promised them to others."<sup>28</sup> This enraged Eustace, and stalled if not ended negotiations for peace, all of which were irrelevant once the Earl of Gloucester was captured, and once Stephen was eventually released.

After this incident, Eustace was relatively quiet for the next half-decade or so in both the positively dated charters and especially in the chronicles. He did not even appear as a witness on any of his father's charters whose date can be positively identified, and only issued one single

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<sup>26</sup> David Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen*, 65.

<sup>27</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 80; William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 104-107.

<sup>28</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 98-99; John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, iii. 296-299; *Gesta Stephani*, 120-121.

charter of his own from the years of 1142-1147.<sup>29</sup> His next moment of significance was not until he was made a count in 1147. The noted absence of Eustace from the sources during the mid-1140s could be due to a combination of several factors. Eustace was still somewhat young during this period: between the ages of 11-17. This was also a relative lull in the fighting, and there was much less activity during this period than there was previously. An additional possibility to describe the hiatus could be the death of important individuals for the Empress, including Miles, Earl of Hereford in 1143, and the Empress's brother Robert, Earl of Gloucester in 1147.<sup>30</sup> The absence of Eustace from the records during this period could also be correlated with the end of some of the writers of this period, such as William of Malmesbury and John of Worcester. Both of the chronicles of these men ended somewhere between 1140-1141, due to the death of both William and John. Other reputable chronicles which continued, such as Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, had surprisingly little to say about these years. The *Gesta Stephani* seems to be the most detailed source of England during the mid-1140's but it does not mention Eustace even once from 1141-1149.<sup>31</sup> Instead, it focuses on the conflicts of the barons and earls, and both the King's and the Empress's roles in those conflicts.<sup>32</sup> Eustace, based on the charters and the accounts of the twelfth-century chronicles, began a major role in English politics in 1147 when

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<sup>29</sup> There are nine charters to which Eustace could have possibly attested that are not positively identified to an exact year, but are determined to have been issued between the years of 1142-1147. Four of these charters were potentially written during these years were issued by Eustace himself. It is simply unknown what year these were made, and therefore, it is not possible to argue about their temporal significance. However, those issued by Eustace himself would perhaps alter some conclusions if they were able to be positively dated to sometime during these years. For Eustace's one charter that he issued with his mother, Queen Matilda, see *Regesta Regum*, no. 195. For the charters that Eustace issued himself that were not positively dated, see *ibid*, nos. 196, 229a, 239e, 694a. For the charters which Eustace attested to from 1142-1147 see *ibid*, nos. 200, 446, 487, 508, 509, 662, 694, 694a, 844.

<sup>30</sup> David Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen*, 213.

<sup>31</sup> *Gesta Stephani*, 110-215.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*.

he was made a count. This year also marks the beginning of his active warring against his father's enemies, especially his cousin, Henry of Anjou.<sup>33</sup>

The title of count of Boulogne was of great importance to Eustace. With this new title he possessed not only the territory of Boulogne, but also the significant East Anglian honors, which were attached to the countship of Boulogne and undoubtedly were a source of revenue and a rise of prestige.<sup>34</sup> Unlike Henry II with his son Henry the Young King, Stephen seemed willing and ready to give Eustace as much power and political influence as Eustace seemed ready to handle.<sup>35</sup> Eustace, from the year 1149 until his death, was constantly active against his enemies. Often he was caught in real physical battles, and other times his presence alone would serve as a deterrent. The title of Boulogne and its honors, especially its revenue, were no doubt very important to Eustace in order to fund his military campaigns, but the territory itself can be seen as secondary in importance. Only twice is Eustace documented as being in Boulogne.<sup>36</sup> However, there does exist one charter issued by Eustace as the count of Boulogne in 1150. He issued it to provide for a new prebend in the church of Lens in Artois.<sup>37</sup> His independent creation of this charter not only shows the agency which Eustace by this time possessed, but it also served as a clear demonstration that his title of count gave him real tangible power and importance. Even though Eustace does not seem to spend much time in Boulogne, he is indeed in control of it

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 208-209.

<sup>34</sup> Heather Tanner, *Families, Friends, and Allies*, 181.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew Strickland, *Henry the Young King*, 132.

<sup>36</sup> Although only mentioned twice as being in Boulogne, Eustace is assumed to have spent some short time there. His two charters which list him as being in Boulogne come during the early-mid-1140s, and are jointly issued by him and his mother. See *Regesta Regum* no. 195, 196.

<sup>37</sup> This charter, while containing some clear and evident errors (i.e. dating it to 1250 instead of 1150) is very useful for serving as evidence of the importance of his title as count, and it can be used as a counterargument against nearly every other source which claims he was constantly at odds with the church and with clergy. See *Auberti Miraei opera diplomatica et historica*, 2nd edition, ed. Johannes Franciscus Foppens, trans. Richard Barton, (Louvain, 1723-1748), vol. 1, p. 583-584.

as a county, and is able to impose and exert his own governance over his territory from a relatively young age.

The author of the *Gesta Stephani* seems to be essentially the only chronicler who was interested in Eustace's militaristic exploits in England.<sup>38</sup> Eustace, on one occasion in 1149, is said to have been "left in charge" by his father to ambush Henry of Hereford, and also was left to lead those knights of his father's army who were there.<sup>39</sup> This type of great confidence in his young son is demonstrated by Stephen at this event, and at the conflicts at Bristol and at Devizes.<sup>40</sup> The attack on Devizes is described as a particularly brutal attack, which ended in defeat for Eustace and his many knights with him, but not before he inflicted a great deal of harm on the inhabitants there. Eustace is described as a devastating fighter and a ruthless leader against his enemies. Even at a battle which was lost by Eustace and the royalists, the ferocity with which he fought and instructed his men to fight against their enemy proved that "a day of grief and weeping was at hand" for all those who opposed him in battle.<sup>41</sup>

Eustace's battles in mainland Europe, mostly along the Norman frontier and French borderlands, were much more widely captured by writers of the chronicles. Based on the locations at which Eustace was mentioned in charters and in the chronicles, he spent most of his time from mid-summer 1150 until January of 1153 in France and Normandy.<sup>42</sup> Eustace spent this time aiding King Louis VII who was feuding with Geoffrey of Anjou, duke of Normandy. In 1150, Henry (Henry II) was made duke of Normandy by Geoffrey, propelling him to the

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<sup>38</sup> It is possible that whomever the author of the *Gesta Stephani* was had a much more involved role in Stephen and Eustace's militaristic endeavors, and possibly other chroniclers of the time were not aware or involved, or did not want to comment on hearsay or something they were less certain about. See *Gesta Stephani*, 218-219.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> *Gesta Stephani*, 222-225.

<sup>41</sup> *Gesta Stephani*, 222-223.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 226-227; Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 88; Robert de Torgini, *The Church Historians*, 66.

forefront of the conflict.<sup>43</sup> The French King was already unhappy and actively opposing Anjou, but in 1152, when Duke Henry married Eleanor of Aquitaine whom the French King had recently divorced, the conflict turned into a much more personal enmity.<sup>44</sup> Eustace is listed as being present when Louis attacked Arques in 1150, and also Neufmarché in 1152, likely shortly after Eleanor of Aquitaine's remarriage to Duke Henry. Neufmarché was conquered, and King Louis VII left it in Eustace's charge.<sup>45</sup> These conflicts between the count and duke proved several things. For Eustace, it was a first step in an attempt to solidify his role and presence in the mainland and assert his interest in regaining Normandy, which was something his father had lost and essentially abandoned during his cross-channel struggles. Secondly, it was indicative of the confidence which the French King had in his son-in-law. His role was not merely participatory, but was seen by Louis as advantageous. Eustace was entrusted by Louis with an important castle and was present at most major conflicts during his time in Normandy. This would make it seem highly probable that Louis thought he could trust Eustace, and that he had confidence in his militaristic abilities as well. Thirdly, as John of Hexham wrote, it demonstrated that "Between [Henry] and King Stephen's son Eustace there was a rivalry in excellence, for they both aimed at the sovereignty of the same kingdom."<sup>46</sup>

The presumed reason for the departure of Eustace for England in early 1153 is simple; Henry had left for England.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, from-Normandy-to-England had become a strange game for the count and his cousin. This was no doubt infuriating for Eustace. The constant and futile struggle for secured acquisition of the throne upon his father's eventual death during his

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 64.

<sup>44</sup> William of Newburgh, *The History of English Affairs*, i. 128-131.

<sup>45</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 88.

<sup>46</sup> John of Hexham, *The History of the Church of Hexham*, 28.

<sup>47</sup> *Gesta Stephani*, 230-231.

childhood, and the ever-present conflict of his father's reign could both have helped to instill this deep-seated anger.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, though he had been described as a great warrior, Eustace frequently seemed to be one step slower than Henry. This could simply be because Eustace certainly acted in England more as a defender than as an attacker; therefore his efforts were more reactionary and only infrequently offensive. Either way, Eustace's task – to resist Henry – proved challenging.

During the last year of his life, Eustace was left fighting an uphill battle alongside Stephen. Although the actual fighting between the royal forces and those of the now Duke Henry of Normandy had already greatly declined from the so-called state of anarchy that existed earlier in Stephen's reign, it was a constant struggle to maintain authority over the barons. This resulted in Eustace regularly fighting against and dealing with those wayward lords.<sup>49</sup> All attempts to have Eustace crowned and officially put into the line of succession by Stephen, Eustace, and the papal legate Bishop Henry of Winchester, Stephen's brother, had been complete failures.<sup>50</sup> With no help from outside forces to come to the aid of Stephen and Eustace, Stephen decided to pursue peace. This could have been because the magnates and those knights in Stephen's charge were very apathetic and tired of fighting, or possibly because Stephen himself felt this way. Eustace, evidently, did not feel this way, and upon learning of his father's intentions, he left angrily and devastated the lands of Cambridge, the abbey Bury of St. Edmunds. That very same

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<sup>48</sup> This deep seated anger culminated in Eustace becoming enraged with Stephen's decision to pursue peace with Henry. For more on Eustace's anger, see Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works*, ii. 75-76.

<sup>49</sup> For information on a decline in the severity of the fighting see David Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen*, 270-271. For information on Duke Henry's rise to the title of Duke of Normandy, see *Ibid*, 248-249; Aelred Rievaulx, *The Historical Works*, ed. Marsha L. Dutton, trans. Jane Patricia Freeland (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008), 41-41n; Robert de Torgini, *The Church Historians of England*, 64.

<sup>50</sup> John of Salisbury, *Historia Pontificalis*, 83-86.

day, he died suddenly of what can be assumed was a seizure, while he sat eating dinner on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August, 1153.<sup>51</sup>

It has been theorized and seems likely that Eustace's death was due to some type of poison and that foul play was involved. Foul play would be one of the logical conclusions, given that the death of Eustace was not the only suspicious death; there were several high-profile royalist deaths during the last half of 1153.<sup>52</sup> Regardless of the means of his death, this was the end of the political line for Stephen. Unlike Stephen's predecessor Henry I, Stephen had another son, William. William's existence is often glossed over, and the propagandistic narrative of Henry II that is conveyed by the late twelfth-century chroniclers suggested that Henry succeeded almost immediately after the death of Eustace.<sup>53</sup> While this was not true, it did effectively end up this way in time. Whether due to the modest ambitions of William, or perhaps because a more realistic outlook was eventuated, William and Stephen both conceded fully the succession of the throne upon Stephen's death to Duke Henry on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 1153.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> *Gesta Stephani*, 239; Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works*, i. 155, ii. 76; Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 92; Robert de Torgini, *The Church Historians of England*, 73; William of Newburgh, *The History of English Affairs*, i. 125.

<sup>52</sup> Both Callahan and Crouch buy into the thought that Eustace was likely poisoned. A bacterial infection is also another theorized culprit, and would explain not only Eustace's death, but the string of high-profile deaths that occurred during a short period beginning in late summer 1153. For information on Eustace's death see T. Callahan Jr. "Sinners and Saintly Retribution: The Timely Death of King Stephen's Son Eustace, 1153," *Studia Monastica* 18 (1976): 109-117; David Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen*, 270.

<sup>53</sup> Emilie Amt, *The Accession of Henry II in England*, 15.

<sup>54</sup> Robert de Torgini, *The Church Historians of England*, 73; Emilie Amt, *The Accession of Henry II in England*, 16.





## Divine Justice or Righteous Anger?

Eustace is described by the chroniclers almost universally as being a very angry person. The only contemporary source which would defend the temperament of Eustace would be the *Gesta Stephani*, when it says that he was “of settled character,” and also that he “showed himself extremely gentle and courteous.”<sup>55</sup> The validity of this assessment must be questioned. While it is quite possible for an individual to be angry sometimes, and also pleasant and “of settled character” at other times, the number of times which Eustace is described as angry seems to call into question this typically good disposition the *Gesta Stephani* would espouse. As one of the few sources of the century which is written with a generally positive outlook on Stephen, it is not illogical to presume that the unknown author of the *Gesta Stephani* would want to look as favorably as possible upon Stephen’s son. Nor is it surprising that the chronicles, which were written by previous supporters of Henry I who were still living during Stephen’s reign, or those written by the supporters of Henry II who were looking back, would want to delegitimize or defame Eustace.<sup>56</sup>

One of the most heinous crimes with which Eustace is charged by the chroniclers, resulting from his anger, are his crimes against the church and against the goods and people of God. Gervase of Canterbury wrote that just before Eustace’s death he “vowed (*proposuerat*) heatedly that he would spare neither the holy places nor the treasures of the saints.”<sup>57</sup> Henry of Huntingdon similarly wrote that Eustace was “obdurate against the things of God, very harsh towards the incumbents of the church, very loyal towards those who persecute the church.”<sup>58</sup> He

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<sup>55</sup> *Gesta Stephani*, 209.

<sup>56</sup> For information on the writing and on the potential candidates for author of the *Gesta Stephani*, see R.H.C. Davis, “The Authorship of the *Gesta Stephani*,” *The English Historical Review* vol. 77, no. 303 (1962): 209-232.

<sup>57</sup> Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works*, i. 155.

<sup>58</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 92.

continued by stating that God was protecting his realm by “having removed the strongest enemies of His beloved, Henry (II).”<sup>59</sup> While it is indeed hard to reconcile these claims of great wrong doings by Eustace, he is not without his redeeming qualities, nor without his own counterargument to the claims of his disrespect for Christianity.

As noted above, Eustace’s one charter which he produced by himself, using his authority as the count of Boulogne, is a testament to the duality of man and the impossibility of restricting human nature to the strictest of confines. Eustace asserted in his charter that, “We also establish the same prebend to the use of the priest living in the church of St. Vulgan of Lens and ministering to God there according to the sacerdotal office and especially praying for the salvation of me and my predecessors and successors.”<sup>60</sup> There are several ways which this can be interpreted. Henry of Huntingdon and Gervase of Canterbury would likely see this claim as a hollow promise or a futile attempt at bribing God to ignore his wrong doings. However, it can also be seen as a genuine gesture to provide for a church or for certain people which were important to Eustace. This side of Eustace, including his spirituality and generosity towards the church, were both things which are entirely contrary to the picture of an angry young man that is painted of him by the contemporary chroniclers.

Many of the chronicles frame Eustace’s death as a result of his anger, or as an act of divine justice. William of Newburgh wrote that Eustace “suffered the early death which God willed.”<sup>61</sup> Robert de Torgini writes more bluntly that Eustace died “because (as some say) he had

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> As was mentioned previously, the original Latin of this charter is not completely intact. It is likely a faulty copy of the original manuscript which hinders a correct rendering. Even so, the general meaning which is being utilized by this essay in order to display the generosity performed by Eustace and to provide a counterargument to the twelfth century’s greatest chroniclers, is not affected by the small errors which exist with the only remaining copy of this charter. See *Auberti Miraei opera diplomatica et historica*, vol. 1, p. 583-584.

<sup>61</sup> William of Newburgh, *The History of English Affairs*, i. 125.

plundered the land belonging to St. Edmund.”<sup>62</sup> The author of the *Gesta Stephani* says that upon his death, Eustace was “Greatly vexed and angry” because Stephen and Henry had agreed to a peace, and the war between the two “had reached no proper conclusion.”<sup>63</sup> Gervase described Eustace’s death in the greatest detail. He wrote that Eustace was eating and as soon as he ate “having been driven mad by the first taste of food” that he died.<sup>64</sup> Divine justice was served, so believed the chroniclers, especially since his demise was so direct and immediate after his perceived wrong doings and evil. The anger which Eustace possessed would not be that of a righteous anger expressed by those whom the chroniclers would have been apt to compare him to, such as David from the Bible.<sup>65</sup> Instead, Eustace’s anger was thought to have cost him his life, like the Biblical character Saul. Saul was given great political power, like Eustace, but used it to cause great harm and was too frequently swayed by his anger, causing him to come to a miserable end.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Robert de Torgini, *The Church Historians of England*, 73.

<sup>63</sup> *Gesta Stephani*, 239.

<sup>64</sup> Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works*, i. 155.

<sup>65</sup> Psalm 139:19-22.

<sup>66</sup> Saul of the Bible was, in the end, the enemy of David and one of the best biblical example of someone who can be used to help express this idea of unrighteous anger. For an example of Saul’s unrighteous anger, see: 1 Samuel 18:8.

## He Whom the Gods Love Dies Young

During the first century of what is considered the high Middle Ages, the concept of primogeniture had been becoming increasingly wide-spread in its adoption.<sup>67</sup> By the twelfth century, both the importance of direct patrilineal descent and the role of the eldest son as the successor to the family had become hardened and immovable fixtures in Anglo-Norman hierarchy. An aristocrat's first-born son was understood to have a predefined right to succeed his father. The twelfth-century case of Henry I and the loss of his only son, William Atheling, and the turmoil which followed during Stephen's reign, is an example of what can happen when the system is interrupted. With William Atheling's death on the White Ship in 1120, two things were proven in England.<sup>68</sup> First, it was demonstrated through the rough succession of Stephen and the period which resulted following his ascension which is often referred to as the anarchy, that Anglo-Norman England was not ready to accept a female ruler.<sup>69</sup> Rather than following the explicit wishes of Henry I by having his daughter Matilda succeed him as ruler, which Stephen and many of the magnates swore oaths to uphold, Stephen with relative ease was able to secure

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<sup>67</sup> Seeing that family estates were becoming less powerful and more dispersed, royal families began to consistently give the estates of the family to the eldest son in order to maintain overall power. For considerations on primogeniture in Anglo-Norman England see: Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Strong of Body, Brave and Noble: Chivalry and Society in Medieval France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 86; Robert M. Stein, "Royaumes sans frontières: The Place of England in the Long Twelfth Century" in *The French of Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Jocelyn Wogan-Browne*, Ed. Thelma Fenster, Carolyn P. Collette (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 2017), 273.

<sup>68</sup> For the Death of William Atheling, see: Orderic Vitalis *The Ecclesiastical History* vi. 296-304.

<sup>69</sup> The reign of Stephen was at the least a bit chaotic, at the most it has been described as anarchic. The first to describe it as such as William Stubbs, but numerous historians since then have published works considering the events of the period in question and the validity of the term "anarchy." For information on the period of the anarchy, see Paul Daulton, "The Reign of Stephen" in *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 145-195. For discussion on the topic of the anarchy, see: Hugh Thomas, "Violent Disorder in King Stephen's England: A Maximum Argument", in *King Stephen's Reign* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008); H. W. C. Davis, "The Anarchy of Stephen's Reign." *The English Historical Review* 18, no. 72 (1903); Grame J. White, "The Myth of the Anarchy." *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference* 22 (2000).

the kingship for himself instead.<sup>70</sup> This would seem to reflect a sense of distrust towards, or a lack of desire for the Empress Matilda, or perhaps for women in general during this period. A second thing that this difficult transfer of powers suggested is that the prince is the second most important position in any given kingdom. While the king is no doubt exactly what his title would explicitly suggest, in twelfth-century Anglo-Norman England, a male heir was the key to having any chance at stability and power within a ruler's own kingdom.

To the detriment of the Anglo-Norman kings of England during the twelfth century, they did not have good luck with their princes. There were three fully legitimate Anglo-Norman English princes who were their fathers' first born sons from the years of 1100-1199. All three of these princes died before their fathers, and before the age of thirty. Though falling to similar demises, the character of each of these three is very different. Henry the Young King was certainly the most popular of the three throughout the kingdom. He was an avid tournament participant who had a stupendous reputation which was promoted through his relationship with William Marshal.<sup>71</sup> Eustace had the most tangible military influence of the three, and he also had the greatest amount of real political power and influence bestowed on him by his father.<sup>72</sup> William Atheling is by far the least well known, and died the youngest of the three. He had not yet had time to make much of a significant mark upon the kingdom, but some of his deeds and some bits of his character are recorded.<sup>73</sup> Eustace lands right in the middle of this trio, both chronologically and by the age at which he died. Eustace, however, can be considered a better

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<sup>70</sup> For Henry of Huntingdon's opinion on Stephen and those who had taken an oath, see: Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 67.

<sup>71</sup> *The History of William Marshal*, i. 138-139.

<sup>72</sup> *Gesta Stephani*, 208-209.

<sup>73</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 56; Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History* vi. 224-225, 240-243.

prince than these two based on his deeds, and of the three available options, he is most certainly the model Anglo-Norman prince of the century.

There are many characteristics upon which to base the comparison of Eustace against the other two princes, or upon which to begin to examine a prince or a noble in general. This study will utilize the traditional elements of kingship, using the criteria that is imposed upon kings or lords to also consider princes; in an attempt to remove superimposed barriers which would hamper study and for the purpose of creating a level field of assessment. As has been mentioned before, there are five general tenets of kingship that serve well to evaluate kings and also princes. These five are: justice, charity, economic and political success, chivalry, and divine favor. These attributes seem to have been used contemporaneously by authors of the chronicles, and also can be used today to determine the quality of an aristocrat, king, or prince.

The disbursement of justice in a kingdom is perhaps the most evident way to measure the king himself. “For a king or great noble to act properly, that is, with justice, vigour, and piety, was thus a matter not merely of private salvation, but of public welfare.”<sup>74</sup> Extant literary works such as seventh-century Einhard’s *The Life of Charles the Great*, paint a picture of kingship and the king’s role in justice as the law-giver as being a smooth process.<sup>75</sup> Charlemagne is deemed by H.A. Meyers as “a quite perfect model of kingship” for this very reason.<sup>76</sup> Despite the general confidence that is held by historians in Einhard’s overall honesty, the way he depicts Charlemagne effortlessly handling justice and all other matters in his kingdom is no doubt an exaggeration. In reality, being king was a difficult process and a tiresome occupation, during

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<sup>74</sup> Björn Weiler, “William of Malmesbury, King Henry I, and the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*,” 170-171.

<sup>75</sup> Einhard, *Early Lives of Charlemagne* ed. and trans. A.J. Grant (London, UK: Chatto & Windus 1926), 19.

<sup>76</sup> H. A. Meyers, *Medieval Kingship*, 131.

which conflicts would constantly occur. Henry I, Stephen, and Henry II, are all apt twelfth-century examples of this.

It is not only the pursuit of justice itself, but the way in which a king goes about seeking it that is important. Though not yet kings in their own right, William, Eustace, and Henry, all had ways which they could display the practice of justice as young aristocrats. Of the three princes, Henry the Young King had the greatest capacity to carry out justice, or so his title would have suggested. Henry's influence and ability to carry out justice was actually a diminished role for someone who was supposedly a king. As Björn Weiler explained when he considered his rebellion, "Young Henry was denied what was rightfully his –the exercise of his functions as a king."<sup>77</sup> Young Henry's formal rebellions against his father cannot help but be seen as opposing justice, and supporting lawlessness. Though no doubt Henry the Young King considered his own rebellion to be just, it subverted the authority of Henry II to whom he was still technically subject. Failure to obey his father was not only a difficult family matter, but it also hindered the royal dispensation of justice and incited countless acts kingdom-wide which broke "the king's peace."<sup>78</sup> The poet Jordan Fantosme described the situation as very tense. He vividly described Henry the Young King's attitude towards his father and wrote, "To destroy the father the son

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<sup>77</sup> Björn Weiler, "Kings and Sons: Princely Rebellions and the Structures of Revolt in Western Europe, c. 1170-c. 1280" *Historical Research* vol. 82 no. 215 (2009): 20. See also, Matthew Strickland, *Henry the Young King*, 123.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 108, 153. For further reading on "the king's peace" and on royal justice, see Henry Allen Meyers, *Medieval Kingship*, 187-197. Additional comment is necessary on the reasons as to why Young Henry decided to revolt. The contemporary sources plainly stated that it was first and foremost due to his desire to have tangible power and a realm of his own to rule. Ralph V. Turner suggested that "Archbishop Thomas Beckett's murder in December 1170 had already inflamed the Young King's hostility towards his father." Strickland does not seem to agree with this assessment, even though it is noted Young Henry had great affection for Beckett and saw him as a father figure. Even though as Emilie Amt points out, that Henry II was able to restore order to England following Stephen's reign, he never was able to recover the swiftness he previously exercised in his dispensation of justice after the slaying of Thomas Beckett. For that reason, Young Henry and his supporters may have used Beckett's death to try to persuade the barons and magnates that Henry II was no longer a just king because as Björn Weiler points out, "Henry had failed to punish the killers of Thomas Beckett." See Emilie Amt, *The Accession of Henry II in England*, 26-30; Björn Weiler, "Kings and Sons," 21; Ralph V. Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen of France, Queen of England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 214; Roger of Wendover, *Flowers of History* (London, UK: Henry G. Bohn, 1849), 2.

takes very great pains. When he has conquered and taken him in war he will lead him to Saint-Denis.”<sup>79</sup> These were not the sentiments of someone interested in or participating in the promotion of justice.

Perhaps the only reason why William Atheling did not rebel was that he did not live long enough to have a chance to do so. It is impossible to know the exact role William Atheling played in the royal justice of his father, but he generally was shown by the chronicles as being a virtuous individual.<sup>80</sup> He is described by Wace as someone who “gave and spent generously and dwelt with his father, who loved him very much. He did what his father asked and avoided what his father forbade.”<sup>81</sup> William was not a king in his own right upon the time of his death like Young Henry, but he was the titled duke of Normandy, and was also his father’s designated successor.<sup>82</sup> While he was technically the duke of Normandy, the written record does not give any reason to suggest that he was able to exercise any real influence associated with that title. Therefore, his handling of royal justice cannot be fully considered. Instances during his personal endeavors which mentioned him, like that of William Atheling taking specific measures to ensure the return of the palfrey to his rival cousin, William Clito, after he had lost at the battle of Brémule, do give historians the impression that he was indeed interested in justice on a personal level. But the fact that he never really had the chance to exercise this justice as a lord or even as a prince prior to his death makes him unable to be considered in a more complete way.

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<sup>79</sup> Matthew Strickland, *Henry the Young King*, 151; Jordan Fantosme, *The Chronicle of the War between the English and the Scots, (1173-1174)* trans. Joseph Stevenson (Felinfach, WA: Llanerch Publishers, 2000), 246.

<sup>80</sup> That is of course, excluding his death, which neither Henry of Huntingdon, Orderic Vitalis, nor John of Worcester see as an honorable death, but rather the death of a fool and a drunkard. See Henry of Huntingdon *Historia Anglorum*, 56; John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester iii*. 148-149; Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History vi*, 296-304.

<sup>81</sup> Wace, *The Roman de Rou* trans. Glyn S. Burgess (Yorkshire, UK: Smith Settle, 2002) 313.

<sup>82</sup> For information on Henry I making William the duke of Normandy and William’s homage for Normandy to the French king, see: John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester iii*. 144-145.



For Eustace, his affiliation with royal justice was more direct; his justice was more consistent and more complete than either Henry's or William's. Eustace was a count, and did have tangible authority over his county of Boulogne as was evidenced through his charter and was described during the section of this essay on his career regarding his countship. On one occasion, Eustace himself issued a charter demanding that Baldwin de Builli let St. John's abbey have its land at Tey.<sup>83</sup> This could be characterized as charity, but can also be seen as Eustace ruling and participating in dispensing of what he thought to be justice. There are also tangible examples of Eustace exacting justice against those whom both his father the King, and he the prince, deemed as enemies. The *Gesta Stephani* records that "Eustace busied himself eagerly in harassing the people of Salisbury or the other enemies of the king's peace."<sup>84</sup> Although clearly an experienced fighter, Eustace was also predisposed to justice. He was not only mentioned as a warrior, but he also is mentioned twice as being in the pursuit of peace as well. He was said to be "entirely devoted to establishing pacts of peace" and "as occasion required, he accepted pacts of peace and friendship from his adversaries."<sup>85</sup> Perhaps Eustace was only too busy fighting off domestic enemies during his years of activity so that "the norm" of princely rebellion was not able to be achieved.<sup>86</sup> Regardless of why, he simply never rebelled against his father. He was also shown to have actively participated in ensuring justice. Eustace's interest in justice as a prince as compared to Henry and William would put him closer to this idealized version of the perfect model prince that was so desired among twelfth century writers.

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<sup>83</sup> Björn Weiler, "William of Malmesbury, King Henry I," 166; *Regesta Regum* iii. no. 239e.

<sup>84</sup> *Gesta Stephani*, 218-219.

<sup>85</sup> Unfortunately only the *Gesta Stephani* mention the instances of peace making which Eustace is described as performing, so we have no way of dismissing this as flattery and hyperbole or of furthering its validity with cross sourcing. *Ibid.*, 209, 226.

<sup>86</sup> Björn Weiler, "*Kings and Sons*," 38.

Twelfth-century writers agreed that a king or a ruler's relationship with the church, and specifically his charity towards it, in addition to a strong visible personal spirituality, were a fundamental aspects of kingship. It was the desire of every chronicler to write that their good king had a great respect for God and that they lived and ruled according to His precepts. Often they went so far as to bend the truth or to invent stories in order to establish this.<sup>87</sup> By considering who was painted as godly, one can usually begin to understand exactly who the chroniclers liked and disliked. In a manner similar to that which is utilized by the chronicles to glaze over history, for example, preferring to claim that William I was always the god-sent rightful heir, chroniclers also often shamelessly promoted those who were either in power or who they liked better.<sup>88</sup> This would often include attempts to explain away their misdeeds as necessary –since after all they were the chosen one. Overall, according to the chroniclers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, all three of these young princes failed to recognize God or the church in a manner befitting princes and those in authority.

Eustace, likely the chief offender based on the number of chroniclers who criticized him, has been characterized as a man who liked bloodshed more than the things of God. Henry of Huntingdon, described him as “obdurate against the things of God.”<sup>89</sup> Gervase of Canterbury was the most outspoken in his dislike for Eustace. Upon his being knighted and made a count, Gervase saw this as only further enablement for cruelty, and he wrote that, “Eustace [then] inflicted many evils on the lands of the earls and magnates who favored the party of Henry.”<sup>90</sup> The accounts of Eustace's clerical relations do not end there, however. In the one charter in

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<sup>87</sup> Emily A. Winkler, “England's Defending Kings in Twelfth-Century Historical Writing” *The Haskins Society Journal: Studies in Medieval History* vol. 25 (2013): 1-19.

<sup>88</sup> John Spence, “Representations of the Norman Conquest in Anglo-Norman Prose Chronicles” in *Reimagining History in Anglo-Norman Prose Chronicles* (Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewer, 2013), 105-140.

<sup>89</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 92.

<sup>90</sup> Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works*, i. 141.

existence which was issued by Eustace as the count of Boulogne, he confirmed a recurring financial gift to the church.

“[We establish it] in this way, namely, so that after the death of the aforesaid Arnulf, we or our heirs shall faithfully substitute by election another deserving priest, suitable to the aforesaid office; and when this one dies, we shall install another, and so shall faithfully maintain this succession for eternity.”<sup>91</sup>

Clearly Eustace was not only a blood thirsty brute. While he may very well have been “obdurate,” he was certainly not incapable of considering or attempting to provide for the church, one of the mainstays of the attribute charity – and thus kingship.

About Henry the Young King, it was said that “God assembled every kind of goodness and virtues and gifts...”<sup>92</sup> Matthew Strickland deemed these words as “flattering hyperbole.”<sup>93</sup> Instead, he sees Henry as being more aptly described as a second Absalom – a biblical character and reference that poignantly describes him as someone who was not a close friend of the church. There are no such charters written by Young Henry like the one that was issued by Eustace, nor is there any real evidence of charitability of a religious nature. His only acts of charity are focused on his closest followers and those among his retinue. The only possibly redeeming feature that Henry the Young King can be credited with concerning his charity and his faith, is his death-bed repentance. *The History of William Marshal* tells about his “seemly act of repentance before he reached the point of death.”<sup>94</sup> Young Henry was able before his death to

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<sup>91</sup> *Auberti Miraei opera diplomatica*, 583-584.

<sup>92</sup> Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia* ed. and trans. S. E. Banks and J. W. Binns (New York, NY: Clarendon Press, 2002), 486-487; Matthew Strickland, *Henry the Young King*, 2.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *The History of William Marshal*, i. 350-353.

confess his sins to present clergymen and to receive absolution – something that neither Eustace, nor William Atheling, likely ever received before their deaths. Though perhaps he died in better religious standing, during his lifetime, Henry the Young King was not as charitable as Eustace. Ultimately, Henry met the same end as Eustace; being struck down on the very day that he had committed his final offense. It was written by Walter Map that, “[Henry] took an oath against his father at Martel, and on that same day smitten with the hammer of death by the all-righteous avenging hand, he was not, and riot was turned to quiet.”<sup>95</sup>

For William Atheling, there are no written accounts of any acts of charity or any dealings whatsoever, which he might have had with the church. The only times which an opinion about his religiosity appear are within the context of his death in 1120. John of Worcester wrote about the wreck of the White Ship, and he noted that all who heard the news of the disaster were “struck in awe at the hidden judgements of a just God.”<sup>96</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, someone who clearly did love King Henry I, did not seem to have much regret for the death of his son, William Atheling. He wrote that all those on board the vessel “were said to be tainted with sodomy and they were snared and caught. Behold the glittering vengeance of God!”<sup>97</sup> None of these three princes would be considered by the chroniclers to be godly men, but then again, no ruler is ever universally liked by all. For the chroniclers, the outcomes of situations could be directly correlated as proof of whether or not God was pleased with the individuals involved. Writers such as John, Henry, and Orderic, would agree that all three felt the hand of divine justice as a

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<sup>95</sup> Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium* ed. and trans. M.R. James (New York, NY: Clarendon Press, 1983), 280-281; Matthew Strickland, *Henry the Young King*, 307.

<sup>96</sup> John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, iii. 148-149.

<sup>97</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 56.

direct result of their wrong doings, and that this is why they were cut down and blown by the wind; “What is the chaff to the wheat? Saith the LORD.”<sup>98</sup>

The success of these three princes as rulers is the most incompatible marker of kingship by which to evaluate these aristocrats, and will not prove to be of much use. Since princes do not have kingdoms to rule, it is hard to judge their performance when they never really had a chance to demonstrate their capacities. Though Henry was crowned king, he had no kingdom to rule.<sup>99</sup> Even though Eustace was a count, and Henry was a duke, there is no explicit existing record demonstrating that either one had any real means of exercising economic or political muscle in either of these regions which they were technically enfeoffed with by their fathers. It is unfair to use the records of their fathers, even in the case of Young Henry who was co-king, to judge these princes’ political and economic successes. The simple fact is, that they had none of their own to show, and thus this characteristic of kingship cannot apply to any of them as princes.

Chivalry is a complex topic, and one that cannot nearly be tackled fully in the scope of this essay. However, it is a characteristic, a standard, and a model, in and of itself. It is also a definable term, unlike what some would suggest. The late thirteenth-century work entitled *The Book of the Order of Chivalry* states at its beginning, “There once was no charity, loyalty, justice or truth in the world. Enmity, disloyalty, injustice and falsehood came into being, and because of this error and confusion amongst the people of God...”<sup>100</sup> This would suggest that the prescribed tenets according to this contemporary author’s definition would be that chivalry is: charity, loyalty, justice, and truth. It is in direct opposition to enmity, disloyalty, injustice, and falsehood.

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<sup>98</sup> Jeremiah 23:28.

<sup>99</sup> William of Newburgh, *The History of English Affairs*, ii. 117.

<sup>100</sup> Ramon Llull, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry* trans. Noel Fallows (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 40-41.

These cover the mainstays of chivalry, and do a good job describing it, lacking only the concept of prowess. Prowess, or personal ability, is inseparably tied to loyalty, for “prowess without the rudder of loyalty might as well simply be undirected violence.”<sup>101</sup> For reasons of simplicity, chivalry will be left to be described by these terms – even though this is not nearly the end of the discussion.<sup>102</sup> The other consideration for determining the chivalric nature of the three princes at hand, would be the time period in question. It is generally agreed upon that chivalry as a terminology did not evolve into a doctrine until the late twelfth-century at the earliest. However, this does not mean that the elements which composed chivalry were not visible in the eleventh and earlier twelfth centuries.<sup>103</sup>

Was Eustace, son of King Stephen of England, a chivalric figure in Anglo-Norman history? As a whole, yes. Eustace is recorded on multiple occasions as being a charitable person, which has already been mentioned during the consideration of his career and through his relations with the church. Eustace certainly was considered loyal and was frequently said to have prowess. His loyalty is best displayed through his devotion to his father. While his own upward aspirations were intrinsically connected with his father’s retention of the throne, Eustace could have simply sat back and done very little to assist if he had so chosen. It is hard to picture Eustace’s younger brother William doing nearly as much to support Stephen as Eustace was able to accomplish in his short 22-23 years.<sup>104</sup> According to David Crouch, *The Gesta Stephani* would suggest that Eustace was chivalric in nature when it described him as virtuous, and said he was of “noble nature” and that he was “notable.” Both of which are character traits which predate, but

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<sup>101</sup> R.W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 185; David Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, 56.

<sup>102</sup> For more information on chivalry, see David Crouch, “Chivalry and Courtliness”; Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven, CT: 1984).

<sup>103</sup> David Crouch, “Chivalry and Courtliness,” 33.

<sup>104</sup> Emilie Amt, *The Accession of Henry II*, 15.

indicate, what would later be known as chivalry.<sup>105</sup> Chroniclers other than the author of the *Gesta Stephani* would argue that Eustace was neither just nor true. Once again, this brings into question the validity of the primary sources, and the necessity for understanding their personal biases. Instances like those when Stephen and Eustace “despoiled all [the] possessions” of the Archbishop of Canterbury, or when Eustace according to Gervase needlessly “ravaged the entire territory of Cambridge” would argue against his “noble nature” or chivalry.<sup>106</sup> It seems unlikely that Eustace’s duality which is constructed by conflicting sources can ever be fully resolved. Both the positive and negative chroniclers do agree on one certain instance, at his death, which would not be very chivalric. However, *The Gesta Stephani* holds out hope for Eustace, whom it said had “a great deal of [Stephen’s] disposition,” another figure whom the chronicle ultimately attempts to describe as chivalric as well.<sup>107</sup>

Similar to Eustace, Henry the Young King is said to have displayed chivalry brilliantly, but had his moments in which he was shown to be much less noble. The most useful source for considering the Young King’s chivalric nature is *The History of William Marshal* – a book which highly values the concepts which later became chivalry, and even uses the term “chevalerie.” In *The History of William Marshal*, it is said:

“Because of the prowess and valour of the Young King, and because of his reputation, every man had undertaken, for his part, to uphold the ideals of chivalry, which is now very close to extinction. For hunting with hounds and

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<sup>105</sup> *Gesta Stephani*, 208-209; David Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, 31.

<sup>106</sup> Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works*, i. 150-151 i. 155.

<sup>107</sup> *The Gesta Stephani*, 208-209.

hawks and formal jousting are so much the order of the day that chivalry is helpless to defend itself.”<sup>108</sup>

This would not only potentially suggest the earlier formation of ideas about chivalry, but it would also stand to demonstrate that Henry the Young King did display some characteristics of chivalry – even if it was only the more physical attributes. Although *The History* paints a very positive picture of Young Henry’s life overall, its author would have had no choice, but through deceit or omission, to include the lack of loyalty which haunted *le giemble rei*. The Young King’s disturbing lack of charity has already been presented by this essay, but his justness and his trustworthiness will also be questioned along with his loyalty. Once again, the pages of *The History of William Marshal* are able to shed some light on this matter. “Chivalry gave way to indolence, inaction; Largesse was abandoned; Fortune cast the whole world into shadow.”<sup>109</sup>

This is as close as the author of *The History* gets to criticizing young Henry about anything other than his lavishness. It always seems to come back to Young Henry’s rebellion against his father. In this case once again, it could not be more apt. Henry was disloyal to his father, and thus was not wholly chivalric. For how can one be both just and true if they are not loyal? Henry the Young King’s rebellions against his father and family were the ultimate acts of disloyalty, and would lead one to believe that he was not really chivalric in nature, as is so boldly proclaimed.

What about William Atheling? Was he more chivalric? As the prince born earliest of the three, one would expect to find the least written about his chivalry, but rather only terms which later formed chivalry. Surprisingly, in *The Roman de Rou*, Wace described the prospect and aspirations for William Atheling’s life by saying, “The flower of chivalry (le flor de la

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<sup>108</sup> *The History of William Marshal*, i. 219.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 99.



chevalerie) from England and Normandy set about serving him and had great hopes of him.”<sup>110</sup> “Le chevalerie” in this case likely refers to the knights or to the men of the kingdom, but it is still an interesting use of the word.<sup>111</sup> At the least, from this text, it can be implied that those men who would certainly in later times be qualified as chivalrous were excited to serve William Atheling – which would suggest that he himself was also indeed chivalrous. In Orderic, William is described, like Eustace, as of “the highest nobility.”<sup>112</sup> Unlike in the cases of Henry and Eustace, there are not any counts which would argue against the chivalry of William Atheling. Only in his death was he ever criticized by contemporary writers. Orderic speaks of the confidence which his father and the people had in him, but then blasted William for his foolhardy mistake.

“But indeed sinners in their guilty blindness cannot see or understand the things which the heavenly king rightly ordains for his creation, until sinful man is captured like a fish on a hook or a bird in a net and entangled in suffering beyond hope of escape.”<sup>113</sup>

Though Orderic, perhaps rightly, blamed him for his own death, this was not necessarily unchivalric, and William is quite possibly able to be considered the most chivalric of the three Anglo-Norman princes of twelfth-century England.

The final trait of kingship, which deals with individuals on a much more personal level, is that of divine favor. Divine favor has historically been described by many other terms, one such term is *heil*, which was used to classify kings or leaders of the Germanic tribes.<sup>114</sup> At the essence

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<sup>110</sup> Wace, *The Roman de Rou*, 313.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History* vi. 300-301.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 302-303.

<sup>114</sup> H.A. Meyers, *Medieval Kingship*, 3-5.

of *heil* is the concept of “doing well’ for the people.”<sup>115</sup> This is similarly described as luck in English, but with deeper connotations such as fortune and destiny all intertwined within the ruler’s personal abilities.<sup>116</sup> By the twelfth century, *heil* was not a term that would be used, nor was it necessarily ever used in England. But the concepts it encompassed were still present. Instead of *heil*, divine favor, stemming from biblical concepts would be more apt for capturing the accurate meaning. The Christian idea of divine favor was first shown to Abraham when God said to him, “I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.”<sup>117</sup> The idea that divine guidance and blessing came upon certain individuals was a concept which was employed by the chroniclers in England. It has been applied to kings, and considered something that was necessary to possess in order to be a good king – or prince.

It could be said, based upon how early all three twelfth-century Anglo-Norman English princes died, that they must have lacked divine favor. For, indeed, the real verification of true divine favor can only be evidenced through real life situations and their outcomes. However, during the lives of each prince, it could be argued that they were divinely favored. Divine favor is something that is wholly subjective; the perceptions of the chroniclers determined whether or not they had divine favor. The author of the *History of William Marshal* writes that “[Henry the Young King] was reckoned to be the finest of all the princes on earth, be they pagan or Christian.”<sup>118</sup> Eustace, without doubt was thought, at least by the author of the *Gesta Stephani*, to have possessed this intangible quality of favor from above as well. Eustace was said to have been “notable for inborn merit, [and he] gained the highest honours of fame and glory at the very

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Genesis 12:2.

<sup>118</sup> History of William Marshal, i. 101.

outset of his career as a knight.”<sup>119</sup> The successes of these individuals and the earthly favor, honor, and glory, which they found were directly correlated with the divine favor that they were no doubt thought to be receiving.

For William Atheling, it is a bit more difficult to assess the status of his divine favor since he had significantly less written about him. However, by the age of sixteen, Henry I had already granted William the title of duke of Normandy, and had made him his official designated heir.<sup>120</sup> Henry I had already had the magnates perform homage to William, as well as having blessed his son with a marriage to a well-born lady, Matilda of Anjou.<sup>121</sup> The time of his death was the only moment that William Atheling was ever indicated as being out of divine favor, and no real sin, other than drunkenness, was ever attributed to him.<sup>122</sup> Unfortunately, this is the closest one can get to assessing whether or not the chroniclers believed that William had divine favor upon him. It is possible that William was not seen as having divine favor, but that he was merely spared up until the age of 17 for the sake of his father, Henry I. Indeed, Henry I was thought to have had divine favor, but the death of his son was the turning point in his fortune and favor. Suger wrote, “The king of England had been enjoying very good luck after a long and wonderful run of successes, but he now found himself disturbed by a different and luckless turn of events, like someone falling from the top of the wheel of fortune.”<sup>123</sup> Some may have called William Atheling’s death bad luck, others might have labeled it as divine favor, or in this case, the lack thereof. As a whole, the three princes can be said to have enjoyed divine favor, up until

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<sup>119</sup> *Gesta Stephani*, 208-209.

<sup>120</sup> John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, iii. 138-139.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 138-145; Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, vi. 223-224; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Dorothy Whitelock, (London, UK: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961), 185.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Suger, *The Deeds of Louis the Fat*, 113-114; C. Warren Hollister, *Henry I* ed. Amanda Clark Frost (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 234.

their final sin, – their deadly sins – after which all three of them perished hastily and were thus out of divine favor eternally.

Though Eustace was not chivalric on occasion, and sometimes did not conduct himself in a Christian fashion to the degree desired by the chroniclers, he was overall a better model prince than either Henry or William. Eustace was more chivalric than Henry. He was also certainly able to deliver more justice than Young Henry was in his diminished role, and more than William ever had the chance during his short lifespan. Even though it is not possible to know who was a more successful ruler, it is possible to argue that Eustace was more charitable in a Christian sense, even if he did not always get along with the church, and even if the ecclesiastical writers of the chronicles did not think that this was the case.

This essay has focused on three princes in order to hone in upon some elements of a specific nature. Simultaneously, it has weighed in on topics which relate to meta-arguments, queries that span the entirety of the twelfth-century, and potentially the whole of the medieval period in Europe. Princes were considered, including their roles in the kingdom, and what constituted a good prince. Eustace has been shown to be the best candidate as the model prince among the three Anglo-Norman princes during the twelfth century. The lack of scholarship on Eustace has been combated by a solid first step in resolving this issue through the preliminary consideration of his life and his deeds. This essay has successfully, and as succinctly as is appropriate, demonstrated how and why Eustace is indeed the model among the three dead princes of England.

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