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# Gendered Violence: Castration and Blinding as Punishment for Treason in Normandy and Anglo-Norman England

*Klaus van Eickels*

Here is set down what William, king of the English, established in consultation with his magnates after the conquest of England ... (10) I also forbid that anyone shall be slain or hanged for any fault, but let his eyes be put out and let him be castrated.<sup>1</sup>

Even though they were put down in writing more than a generation after 1066, the so-called ‘Laws of William the Conqueror’ nonetheless testify of the far-reaching changes English law had to undergo in order ‘to preserve peace and security between English and Normans’ in an Anglo-Saxon kingdom ruled by a king and aristocracy of Scandinavian origin.

The most strikingly improbable measure taken to achieve this goal was the decision to abolish the death penalty, the utmost paragon of royal power, only to replace it with blinding and castration. In all medieval realms, royal authority was established and continually re-enacted by rituals and symbolic acts that visualised the political order, with the king occupying the top of the hierarchy and thus providing a legitimising point of reference for any kind of public authority. Iconic kingship stabilised existing structures of power and secured peace, as long as it was respected. When the peace was broken, however, order had to be re-established by the use of physical force exercised either by the king himself or in his name.

Medieval chroniclers usually depict these acts of violence as legitimate punishments, as long as they seemed proportional. Whoever plotted against the king’s life, forfeited his own. As the claims of royal authority became more comprehensive in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the

notion of treason evolved accordingly to cover any infringement upon the order sanctioned by the king. Breaking the king's peace threatened the king's 'earthly honour', which constituted his political body, and therefore was punishable by death as much as any attack on his 'life and limbs'.<sup>2</sup>

How then is it conceivable that a powerful ruler, who had just won a kingdom by conquest and was generally feared and respected by his new subjects, would forgo an instrument of royal power, which his Anglo-Saxon predecessors had wielded without ever arousing resistance? It would be easy to dismiss the last of the 'Laws of William the Conqueror' altogether, by pointing out that its first clause remained ineffective. Offenders continued to be executed in England after 1066 as they were before.<sup>3</sup> The second clause, however, took effect: castration and blinding became a common penalty that had to be faced by all those who broke the king's peace. In Anglo-Norman England, the Anglo-Saxon death penalty was not abolished, but complemented by an equivalent, which spared a convicted man's life, but destroyed the very basis of his social existence by depriving him of two vital parts of his body: his eyes and his testicles.

Was such use of physical force regarded as violence? Medieval texts resist the application of this modern category, since they present secular and ecclesiastical history as part of the history of salvation. Unlike today, violence as such was perceived not as intrinsically evil, but as neutral. Pursuing a just cause by means of violence was considered legitimate, since such procedures were common practice in a judicial system which did not reserve the execution of justice to public officials, but left it to the party that had obtained the right in a trial or had otherwise been recognised as having a rightful claim. Chroniclers would be ready to criticise violent measures when describing the evil deeds of bad rulers, but would rarely criticise good rule as too severe. God had endowed the king with authority, because he wanted the order of the world maintained, and where God's cause was at stake no restriction to proportional means applied. When the crusaders conquered Jerusalem in 1099 reportedly all inhabitants regardless of age or sex were slain, and the surviving chronicles vie with one another in proudly exaggerating the depth of the streams of blood shed in honour of God.<sup>4</sup>

If we focus our reading of the 'Laws of William the Conqueror' on the question of violence alone, we would have to conclude that they merely substitute one form of royal violence for another. As their Anglo-Saxon predecessors, the Anglo-Norman kings of England made 'spectacular use of violence as humiliation or punishment' of their enemies. It is indeed telling that the 'Laws of William the Conqueror' did not succeed in stigmatising the up-to-then most valorised form of establishing royal authority by physical force: the death penalty.

As it seems, this was not the main purpose underlying the clause. Perhaps William the Conqueror (or whoever put it down in writing) indeed wanted to present Norman rule as more civilised and less brutal than Anglo-Saxon traditions. In fact, some chroniclers refer to punishment by blinding and castration as a mercy granted to persons who by law deserved the death penalty; their use of phrases such as, 'he was mercifully condemned' (*misericorditer damnatus est*) however, immediately raises the question of irony, which is almost impossible to decide.

If the 'Laws of William the Conqueror' aimed at reducing the scope and intensity of violence exercised in the king's name, they only did so moderately. The new punishment for treason did not diminish in any significant way the amount of violence applied to re-establish the king's authority. Its quality, however, changed: unlike their predecessors, the Anglo-Norman kings had the option to proceed against their political enemies by attacking their manhood. Wherever castration and/or blinding replaced the death penalty, royal violence became gendered.<sup>5</sup>

At first glance, Norman historiography does not resist the application of gender as a category – unlike violence. The honour of the Norman warrior is clearly gendered male. From Dudo of St Quentin's 'History of the First Norman Dukes' down to the twelfth century, manliness is constantly and explicitly referred to as a prerequisite of respect and authority in Norman texts.<sup>6</sup> To fight like a man (*viriliter*) is a standard exhortation in the stylised orations which Norman chroniclers ascribe to their dukes, and manly valour is the highest form of praise they confer.<sup>7</sup>

Yet, the focus of gender as a category of analysis shifts significantly compared to present-day usage when it is translated into the language of masculinity as it prevails in Norman and Anglo-Norman sources. The opposite of Norman manhood was not femininity, but effeminacy. Norman warriors defined their identity as men not so much in opposition to women, but in contrast to other men, whom they excluded from their own ranks as 'unmanly'.<sup>8</sup>

Effeminacy was the most severe charge that Norman chroniclers had at hand to denigrate the image of a king, duke, count or people. It was incurred by men who did not live up to any one of the generally accepted standards of masculinity: a duke could be called 'unmanly' if he granted his wife the freedom to send and receive messengers instead of exercising full control over her correspondence with her father, if he was reluctant to wage a war instead of negotiating a peace or if he prudently sought the assistance of Frankish allies instead of relying on the superior fighting skills of his Norman warriors alone.<sup>9</sup>

The Scandinavian bands of warriors that conquered Normandy in the tenth century had brought with them a conceptualisation of male honour and masculinity that differed profoundly from the patterns of perception that prevailed in the post-Carolingian realms and in Anglo-Saxon England. Norman usage defined masculinity as a comprehensive concept comprising physical integrity, sexual dominance and political power.<sup>10</sup> A Norman leader who relied on his marriage alliance with the Franks risked being derided as a sexually incapable husband. Rollo, the first Norman duke, was slandered by his own men for being 'infatuated with his wife and womanish' (*uxorius et effeminatus*) when he tolerated his wife receiving two envoys from her father's court without making them appear before her husband first; and they added that he 'had never known her as a lawful husband' (*eam non cognovisse maritali lege*).<sup>11</sup> Obviously, they construed physical and political impotence as two sides of the same coin.

In the Norman world, sex and gender were closely intertwined in a way that defies any attempt to analyse the social construction of masculinity without referring to its physical embodiment. In the eyes of Norman warriors, bodies definitely did matter. Slandering rivals and enemies as 'effeminate' commonly comprised underscoring the shame inflicted by depicting or even visualising it as a loss of manhood embodied. Scandinavian *nið* poetry by preference presents the reviled enemy with his gluteal region exposed unprotected. This was clearly meant to evoke the risk of being raped and 'used as a woman'.<sup>12</sup>

Some of the surviving *nið* verses explicitly refer to the possibility of punitive rape as a means of shaming another man. The Icelandic *Bjarnar saga*, put down in writing in the thirteenth century, even goes a step further and visualises the threat. The protagonist of the saga reviles his main opponent not only 'by composing a most debasing poem', but also by putting up on his enemy's land 'the effigies of two men standing bent over one behind the other'.<sup>13</sup>

Norman usage made no difference between the concrete and figurative use of the words 'manly' and 'unmanly'. This indifference created a close link between sex and gender in the conceptualisation of manliness. Royal, ducal and noble honour were only gendered male, but construed as masculine in a way that the boundaries between the physical and the social aspects of manhood collapsed. Claiming social respect and political authority required a fully functional male body. Precisely this embodiment, however, made the honour of the Norman warrior vulnerable in a way unknown outside the Norman world. As a prerequisite of power, masculinity was politically relevant. Punishing a political enemy by emasculating his body was therefore not perceived as unrelated violence, but as an appropriate form of royal revenge.<sup>14</sup>

When William Duke of Normandy conquered England in 1066, he claimed the traditional authority exercised by the Anglo-Saxon kings of England. In addition, he and his successors could rely on the right of conquest to justify any act of violence they deemed necessary. Yet, at the same time their scope of action was more limited than that of their predecessors, because they had to act within the boundaries of two diverging legal traditions. Anglo-Saxon and Norman patterns of perception constrained the royal power to punish the king's enemies, however in very different ways.

In Anglo-Saxon England and in post-Carolingian Europe maiming aristocrats was considered barbarian cruelty. Castration, in particular, remained a punishment for sexual offences. When reporting one of the rare cases of rulers and magnates emasculating captured enemies, chroniclers usually qualify these acts as severe misdemeanours. In 928, Bishop Benno of Metz was 'attacked, emasculated and blinded', yet Flodoard of Reims does not tell us by whom and under which pretext.<sup>15</sup> According to Thietmar of Merseburg, Duke Henry I of Bavaria (948–955) had the patriarch of Aquileia castrated and the archbishop of Salzburg blinded; on his deathbed, however, he sought remission for at least the former misdeed, while refusing to confess any guilt in the latter.<sup>16</sup>

In Carolingian and post-Carolingian Europe, castrating an enemy was considered an atrocity only likely to occur on the borders of Latin Christianity. The 'Annales Fuldenses' of the year 884 report that Duke Zwentibold of Moravia mistreated two noble captives 'by cutting off their right hands and their tongues and – as to make them look like a *monstrum* – also their genitals in a way that not even a trace of them remained.'<sup>17</sup> Liutprand of Cremona recounts how, in 935, Margrave Tetbald of Spoleto unmanned Greek prisoners of war and sent them back to their emperor as an adequate gift for a ruler who held eunuchs in high esteem (i.e. in order to make him look ridiculous).<sup>18</sup>

A particularly instructive episode is handed down to us by Thietmar of Merseburg: when Boleslaw III of Bohemia feared that his brothers Jaromir and Udalrich had planned an uprising against him, he had Jaromir castrated and tried to have Udalrich killed.<sup>19</sup> It shows that in the eleventh century the motif of castration was still available as an illustration of 'Slav cruelty'. However, it also shows that castration alone did not destroy the ability to rule: in 1004, Jaromir was made Duke of Bohemia by Emperor Henry II, and it took eight years before his brother Udalrich could seize the throne. In 1033, Emperor Conrad II ordered that Jaromir and Udalrich should rule jointly, but Udalrich immediately had his brother blinded.<sup>20</sup> Although he had been castrated, Jaromir obviously still appeared to be a dangerous rival.

Only two sources show that castration might have been regarded as an acceptable punishment for political crimes outside the Norman world. When, in 1078, Emperor Henry IV tried to isolate his opponent Rudolf of Rheinfelden by arming 12,000 peasants, several of those captured were killed; most, however, 'received a more compassionate punishment and were turned into eunuchs'.<sup>21</sup> The case is exceptional in more than one respect: the peasants struggling against Henry IV are presented as a ruthless hoard of villains, who as servants of an excommunicate ruler deserved no Christian mercy and as peasants bearing arms could not expect to be treated according to the noble code of honour.

Even more difficult to assess is the action taken by Count Raymond of Toulouse against several Poitevin merchants in 1188. According to Roger of Howden, he captured them upon entering into war against Henry II and Richard the Lionheart, blinding and castrating some of them, while killing or imprisoning others.<sup>22</sup> Of course, this can be read as evidence for the assumption that blinding and castration were not unknown as an equivalent of the death penalty in the south of France, all the more so since the 'Coutumes de Toulouse' of 1296 contain one of the few medieval pictorial representations of castration as a legal punishment.<sup>23</sup> However the series of drawings illustrating various forms of corporal punishment in this manuscript is entirely unrelated to the text, in which penal prescriptions play no important part at all. Even Roger of Howden is not a completely reliable source in this case: writing for an Anglo-Norman audience, he wanted to point out that the Count of Toulouse treated the foreign merchants as spies, and we cannot exclude that he did so by enumerating all those varieties of legal action which his readers would expect in such cases.

While evidence for castration and blinding as an accepted judicial means of eliminating political enemies remains at best tenuous, the death penalty was recognised as a legitimate means of establishing royal power in most realms of Europe outside the Norman world. Thus, in the late ninth century King Alfred the Great had been able to decree: 'If anyone plot against the king's life, of himself, or by harboring of exiles, or of his men; let him be liable with his life and in all that he has'.<sup>24</sup>

On the contrary, Scandinavian kings usually refrained from putting their opponents to death, preferring the penalty of exile or resorting to corporal punishment when their authority was challenged. Cultural anthropology provides a plausible explanation: the widespread taboo against killing relatives. Scandinavian kingdoms of the high Middle Ages were inhabited by a limited number of free families, all bound to each other and to the royal dynasty by a dense network of marriage alliances. Not only did a Scandinavian nobleman know all of his fellow aristocrats but he could also safely assume that they all were in one way or another his kin.

Virtually unknown in France, Germany and Anglo-Saxon England, emasculation was therefore frequently employed in the Scandinavian north. Blinding and emasculation (and sometimes further mutilations) combined, served as a means of eliminating rivals who could not be killed because they were family. In 1134, King Harold of Norway blinded and unmanned his nephew Magnus, who ruled jointly with him. In 1146, Valdemar I of Denmark mistreated his cousin, Duke Magnus, in a similar way. In the *Sturlungasaga*, the same fate befalls the Icelandic noble Óroekja, when he falls into the hands of his cousin Sturla.<sup>25</sup>

The practice of castrating and blinding enemies and offenders, rather than having them killed or executed, was brought to Normandy by the Scandinavian settlers of the tenth century. Unlike other features, it survived the process of cultural and linguistic assimilation, which otherwise integrated them into post-Carolingian France within only three generations.

Anglo-Norman as well as French chroniclers recount a considerable number of cases, in which the sons of William the Conqueror had noblemen castrated and blinded because they had conspired against them. In 1095, William of Eu was publicly convicted of treason. According to Ordericus Vitalis, King William II 'deprived him of the sight of his eyes and emasculated him by cutting off his testicles'.<sup>26</sup> Suger of St Denis stresses that Henry I lived in constant fear of being murdered and therefore employed a great number of guards: 'One of these, however, was convicted of plotting such horrible treason; therefore he was mercifully sentenced not to be hanged, as he deserved, but to lose his eyes and testicles'.<sup>27</sup> Whether Suger employs the word *misericorditer* ironically here, we cannot tell; in any case, it is obvious that he describes a form of punishment his readers would not expect.

In 1125, Henry I ordered the emasculation of all financiers in England, since they had collectively been accused of debasing the currency; in addition they had their right hands cut off as Anglo-Saxon law prescribed.<sup>28</sup> Contemporary and later chroniclers construed this procedure as an important detail of Henry's 'good rule'.<sup>29</sup> John of Worcester remained the only one to criticise the cruelty of the punishment inflicted.<sup>30</sup> Obviously, Henry's attempt to combine Norman and Anglo-Saxon traditions by superimposition, as announced in 1108, was widely, though not unanimously, accepted.

According to Ralph of Coggeshall, John Lackland's advisors recommended that he should have his nephew Arthur of Brittany blinded and castrated (*quatinus preciperet, ut nobilis adolescens oculis et genitalibus privaretur*), in order to render him unable to rule (*ad principandum inutilis*). From John's point of view, Arthur had committed treason since he had claimed that he himself rather than John was the legitimate heir



of Richard the Lionheart, even though he had acknowledged his royal status earlier by personally paying homage to him.<sup>31</sup>

Yet, although considered the adequate punishment of a traitor, maiming or execution was almost never inflicted upon members of the higher nobility in the Anglo-Angevin England. As the spheres of English and French rule overlapped on the continent, English barons opposing the king could always be sure to find safe haven at the French court, if the English king drove them out of the country by threatening them with death or mutilation.<sup>32</sup> It therefore probably was not so much the manner, but the fact that Arthur should be punished, which caused a sensation.

Instead, blinding and castration continued to be inflicted on common men who broke the king's peace. In 1160, the Pipe Rolls mention the moderate sum of twenty shillings as the monetary equivalent of the goods confiscated from a man who had been emasculated (*ementulatus*).<sup>33</sup> In the thirteenth century, travelling royal justices regularly imposed blinding and castration as a punishment.<sup>34</sup>

Hagiographical texts from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries show how the sentence was executed in public. According to the 'Miracles of St Wulfstan', Thomas of Elderfield is convicted for injuring another man (*de effusione sanguinis*). The judges decide that according to the law of the land he should be hanged, but grant him the mercy of being castrated and blinded by the neighbours and relatives of his opponent. They cut his eyes and testicles out, throwing them to a distant village where the local adolescents kick them about with their feet. Thomas, however, knows that he is innocent. Therefore he invokes the assistance of St Wulfstan and Mary, and his faith is rewarded by a complete recovery.<sup>35</sup>

We cannot exclude the possibility that the hagiographer of St Wulfstan somewhat exaggerated the details of the public castration and blinding, since the miracle of healing would seem trustworthy only if many witnesses could testify to the mutilation actually taking place. However his outline of his account seems reliable since it is confirmed by court records. The 'Pleas of the Crown for the County of Gloucester', which are extant for the year 1221, confirm that Thomas of Elderfield 'lost his eyes and hanging parts (*pendencia*)'. Moreover, it is hardly conceivable that the author of a saint's life would depict an almost contemporary miracle in a way that departed far from the common practice familiar to his audience.

A similar account can be found in the Miracles of Thomas Becket. Ailward of Westoning incurs a sentence of castration and blinding, because he broke into the house of a debtor in order to avail himself of a pawned item. He receives his punishment, but upon the intervention of St Thomas and Mary his integrity is partially restored: small eyes and testicles grow again and replace the lost parts of his body.

Again, the text stresses that many saw how the sentence was executed (*eductus ad locum suplicii oculis effossis et virilibus abscisis mutilatus est, quae multitudine vidente plebis terrae infossa sunt*). Obviously such a public procedure was not thought of as indecent. When Ailward realises that he has been healed, he sits down in a chapel and allows all those passing by to look at his eyes and to touch his testicles, 'which, however, only were as big as those of a rooster' (*genitalia vero, quae cuilibet palpanda praebebat, infra quantitatem testium galli poterant aestimari*).<sup>36</sup> The artists who designed the stained glass windows in the choir of Canterbury Cathedral represented Ailward's public castration as well as the evidence of his healing in two separate scenes and assigned them a place where all details would be visible to the pilgrims.

When subject to judicial intervention, a man's genitals were not perceived as organs of lust but as proof of his manhood, testifying to his gender, not to his sexual abilities. From a modern point of view, such subtle differentiation seems to stem from naive innocence. It would, however, appear obvious in a society which did not dispose of the concept 'sexuality' or any equivalent pattern of perception linking a person's gender to his sexual desires in a way that one could not be thought of without the other.

Castration continued to serve as punishment for treason and political disobedience in Normandy as in Anglo-Norman England. In 1144, Geoffrey of Anjou ordered the bishop of Séez and several of his clerics to be castrated because they had elected the bishop without ducal consent. Geoffrey had just won in his struggle with Stephen of Blois and he was therefore particularly intent on demonstrating his ducal authority. Allegedly, he even had the amputated members of the emasculated prelates brought before him on a platter.<sup>37</sup>

In 1198, a papal legate demanded that Richard the Lionheart should release a bishop taken captive when bearing full armour. The king became so infuriated that the legate fled in haste, 'because he feared that he would lose his testicles'.<sup>38</sup> It is remarkable that the author of the 'History of William Marshall' assumed as self-evident that the threat of being castrated would come to the papal legate's mind when the king called him a 'traitor, liar, fraud and simoniac'.

The Anglo-Norman combination of blinding and castration as an equivalent of death also appears in the 'Chanson de Guillaume' written in Normandy in the mid-twelfth century and extant in an English manuscript of the early thirteenth century. Guy, nephew and heir of William of Barcelona, justifies that he had killed the wounded Deramed (Abder-Rahman), king of the Saracens, although such treatment of a defenceless enemy conflicted with the knightly code of honour, saying: 'Although he did not have feet to walk on anymore, he had eyes to look and testicles to sire children'.<sup>39</sup>

Even in Norman Sicily, castration occurs in a political context. When Emperor Henry VI had conquered the kingdom in 1197, he immediately ordered that William III, his rival, be blinded and unmanned. William was still a minor but he had the support of the barons and therefore could at any time become the figurehead of an uprising against Henry and his wife, who considered herself the legitimate heiress of Sicily. A few months later, Margarito, the commander of the fleet, also suffered castration. Both events are only recorded in one English and one Italian source. It is telling that German chroniclers, and many German historians to date, did not believe that their emperor would have threatened his chief enemies with so strange a punishment.<sup>40</sup>

Further examples of castration employed as a symbolic act to humble social or political enemies in the Norman world – in Normandy and England in particular – could easily be added.<sup>41</sup> Unmanning was considered an appropriate punishment for treason because its connotations were not necessarily sexual.<sup>42</sup> A nobleman's genitals were signifiers of his gender and being male was a prerequisite for the warrior status he claimed. Of course, masculinity was an important element in the conceptualisation of noble honour all over Europe. The central part manliness played in the Norman world is, however, exceptional and it even outlasted the otherwise almost complete cultural assimilation of the Scandinavians in Normandy. Emasculation was widespread and generally accepted as a political punishment in Scandinavia, Normandy, Anglo-Norman England and Norman Sicily, but not elsewhere. In the Norman world, it was not restricted to the rare cases of aristocrats plotting against the king's life, but also inflicted on commoners who had broken the king's peace by some act of violence. It therefore constituted a constantly renewed frame of reference for the close coupling of lordship and masculinity.

## Notes

I wish to thank the editors of the present volume as well as the readers who reviewed the manuscript for their advice, which helped me to develop the argument of this article with a focus on gender and violence.

1. *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (ed.), Liebermann, vol. 1, pp. 486–488, p. 488, with vol. 3, pp. 277–279 [Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores ('Rolls Series') 51.2, pp. CI ff]: 10. *Interdico etiam, ne quis occidatur aus suspendatur pro aliqua culpa, sed eruantur oculi et testiculi abscindantur*; tr: *English Historical Documents*, vol. 2, p. 431 ff.
2. The duty to preserve the lord's 'life, limbs and earthly honour' was considered the core obligation of any vassal as defined in the oath of fealty: Klaus van Eickels, *Vom inszenierten Konsens zum systematisierten Konflikt. Die englisch-französischen Beziehungen und ihre Wahrnehmung an der Wende vom Hoch- zum Spätmittelalter* (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2002), p. 299 ff.
3. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle mentions the death penalty as well as blinding and castration as punishment for theft when describing the court of justice held at Huncut in Leicestershire between 30 November and Christmas 1124: 'There so many thieves were hanged as

- never before, altogether forty four men within such a short period of time; moreover, six men were robbed of their eyes and testicles'; *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel* (ed.), Plummer/Earle, p. 254.
4. The most impressive account is given by Raymond of Aguilers who writes that the Christians 'rode in blood (of the unbelievers) up to their knees and bridle reins': August C. Krey, *The First Crusade, The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1921), p. 261  
<<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/cde-jlem.html>>; cf. Beate Schuster, 'Comment comprendre les récits de la première croisade?', *Médiévales: langue, textes, histoire* 39 (2000), pp. 153–68; Guy Lobrichon, *1099 – Jérusalem conquise* (Paris: Seuil, 1998).
  5. Klaus van Eickels, *Vom inszenierten Konsens zum systematisierten Konflikt. Die englisch-französischen Beziehungen und ihre Wahrnehmung an der Wende vom Hoch- zum Spätmittelalter* (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2002), pp. 261–63. Cutting off the genitals was a punishment that could only be conveniently inflicted on men. The closest female equivalent consisted in cutting off the nose. Based on the assumption that a woman – unlike a man – could not force sexual intercourse but had to rely on her physical attractiveness in order to procreate, disfiguring a woman's face could be considered tantamount to castrating her: when Duke Magnus of Denmark was castrated and blinded by King Waldemar, against whom he had conspired, his wife had her nose cut off at the same time; Albert of Stade, *Annales Stadenses*, [Monumenta Germaniae historica Scriptorum in folio, 16], p. 327. When, in 1165, the Welsh princes broke the peace, which they had sworn to Henry II, the king took revenge by mutilating Welsh hostages, castrating and blinding them, if they were male, cutting off their ears and noses if they were female: Paul Latimer, 'Henry II's Campaign Against the Welsh in 1165', *The Welsh Historical Review*, 14 (1989), pp. 523–52, n. 67 <<http://www.deremilitari.org/resources/sources/latimer.htm>>. In late medieval towns in Southern Germany, cutting off a male enemy's nose was considered a particularly shameful mutilation, since it was a punishment usually inflicted on women and closely associated with castration, when inflicted on men; Valentin Groebner, 'Das Gesicht wahren. Abgeschnittene Nasen, abgeschnittene Ehre in der spätmittelalterlichen Stadt', in Klaus Schreiner and Gerd Schwerhoff (eds), *Verletzte Ehre. Ehrkonflikte in Gesellschaften des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Köln: Böhlau, 1995), pp. 361–80; cf. also Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex, Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 35 and 122 (*denasatio* as a punishment for passive sodomitical youths).
  7. The opposition 'manliness/unmanliness' is particularly prominent in the exhortative speeches attributed to Norman commanders before major battles in many chronicles cf. John R. E. Bliese, 'Rhetoric and Morale: A Study of Battle Orations from the Central Middle Ages', *Journal of Medieval History* 15 (1989), pp. 201–26, esp. pp. 204 and 208.
  8. Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of Sexual Defamation in Early Northern Society* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1983).
  9. Dudo of St Quentin, *History of the Normans*, tr. Eric Christiansen (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), pp. 53 and 67.
  10. Carol J. Clover, 'Regardless of Sex: Men, Women, and Power in Early Northern Europe', *Speculum* 68 (1993), pp. 363–87.
  11. Dudo of St Quentin, *History of the Normans*, tr. Eric Christiansen (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), p. 53 (with n. 220).
  12. Kari E. Gade, 'Homosexuality and Rape of Males in Old Norse Law and Literature', *Scandinavian Studies* 58 (1986), pp. 124–41; for a gendered analysis of *nið* cf. Karen Swenson, *Performing Definitions: Two Genres of Insult in Old Norse Literature* (Columbia: Camden House, 1991) with the critical review by Marvin Taylor, *alvissmál* 2 (1993), pp. 112–17.
  13. Bjarnar saga Hítðælakappa [Íslenzk fornrit 3; (ed.), Nordal/Jónsson], pp. 159sq.; cf. Alison Finlay, 'Nið, Adultery and Feud in Bjarnar sage Hítðælakappa', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society* 23 (1990–1993), pp. 158–73; Kari E. Gade, 'Homosexuality and Rape

- of Males in Old Norse Law and Literature', *Scandinavian Studies* 58 (1986), pp. 133–5; Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of Sexual Defamation in Early Northern Society* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1983), pp. 51 ff, esp. 56 and 107.
14. The particular importance of emasculation as a political punishment in the Norman world has hitherto been overlooked in survey studies of castration in world history: Piotr O. Scholz, *Eunuchs and Castrati: A Cultural History* (Princeton: Wiener, 2001); Gary Taylor, *Castratio: An Abbreviated History of Western Manhood* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Peter Browe, *Zur Geschichte der Entmannung. Eine religions- und rechtsgeschichtliche Studie* (Breslau: Müller & Seiffert, 1936). It has also escaped the attention of authors of monographs on castration in the Middle Ages: Susan Tüchel, *Kastration im Mittelalter* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1998); Maurizio Virdis, *L'immagine della castrazione. Un tema ricorrente nella letteratura francese del Medioevo* (Cagliari: Litografie Coop CUEC, 1983). English-language studies of corporal punishment in a political context usually focus on other aspects than castration: Matthew Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066–1217* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 240–7: 'The Punishment of Rebellion' deals extensively with blinding and maiming, but does not mention castration; W. R. J. Barron, 'The Penalties for Treason in Medieval Life and Literature', *Journal of Medieval History* 7 (1981), pp. 187–202 is mainly interested in flaying; C. W. Hollister, 'Royal Acts of Mutilation: The Case against Henry I', in *Monarchy, Magnates, and Institutions in the Anglo-Norman World* (London: Hambledon, 1986), pp. 291–301 and John Gillingham, 'Killing and Mutilating Political Enemies in the British Isles from the Late Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Century: A Comparative Study', in Brendan Smith (ed.), *Britain and Ireland. 900–1300: Insular Responses to Medieval European Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 114–34, discuss the political context, but do not intend a systematic analysis of the forms of punishment and their significance.
  15. Flodoard of Reims, *Annales* [Collection de textes pour servir à l'étude et à l'enseignement d'histoire 39; (ed.), Lauer], p. 43; cf. Hugo of Flavigny, *Monumenta Germaniae historica Scriptores in folio* 8, p. 359.
  16. Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* [Monumenta Germaniae historica Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi N.S. 9; (ed.), Holtzmann], p. 89.
  17. *Annales Fuldenses* [Monumenta Germaniae historica Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi 7; (ed.), Kurze], pp. 111 and 113; cf. Susan Tüchel, *Kastration im Mittelalter* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1998), pp. 95 ff; Charles R. Bowlus, *Franks, Moravians and Magyars: The Struggle for the Middle Danube 788 – 907* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), appendix 1.
  18. Liutprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis* [Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio medievalis 156; (ed.), Chiesa], p. 101; cf. Susan Tüchel, *Kastration im Mittelalter* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1998), pp. 92–4. As for Byzantine attitudes to eunuchs and castration see Kathryn M. Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender in Byzantium* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Shaun Tougher and Ra'anan Abusch (eds), *Eunuchs in Antiquity and Beyond* (London: Classical Press of Wales, 2002); Matthew S. Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
  19. Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* [Monumenta Germaniae historica Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi N.S. 9; (ed.), Holtzmann], p. 247; cf. Susan Tüchel, *Kastration im Mittelalter* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1998), pp. 96–100.
  20. Jörg K. Hoensch, *Geschichte Böhmens* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1987), pp. 52 ff.
  21. Bernold of Constance, [Monumenta Germaniae historica Scriptores in folio 5, p. 435], l. 25: *misericordius castigando eunuchizaverunt*: Berthold of Constance [Monumenta Germaniae historica Scriptores in folio 5, p. 312], ll. 5 and 49 stresses that the knights were taken captive, whereas 'a part of the peasants were castrated'. For Bernold and

- Berthold the peasants struggling against Henry IV are a 'mass of villains' who as servants of an excommunicate ruler deserved no Christian mercy and as peasants bearing arms against noblemen could not expect to be treated according to the noble code of honour.
22. Roger of Howden, *Gesta Henrici II* [Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores ('Rolls Series') 49.2], p. 34; cf. Richard Benjamin, 'A Forty Years War: Toulouse and the Plantagenets, 1156–96', *Historical Research* 61 (1988), pp. 270–85.
  23. Susan Tüchel, *Kastration im Mittelalter* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1998), p. 84 (Bibliothèque nationale de France Paris Ms. lat. 9187, p. 64); cf. Henri Gilles, *Les coutumes de Toulouse (1286) et leur premier commentaire* (1296) (Toulouse: Recueil de l'Académie de législation, 1969), p. 57.
  24. Laws of King Alfred and Ine [Early English Text Society. Publications Original Series 208]; (ed.), Flower/Smith, pp. 13–42; translation: <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/560-975dooms.html#The%20Laws%20of%20King%20Alfred>> (number 4).
  25. Susan Tüchel, *Kastration im Mittelalter* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1998), p. 101 n. 31 and p. 102; Sverre Bagge, *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 112 ff; Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of Sexual Defamation in Early Northern Society* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1983), pp. 68 and 81–84.
  26. Ordericus Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica* [Oxford Medieval Texts; (ed.), Chibnall], vol. 4, p. 284 (with n. 5). Ordericus Vitalis adds a sexual reference by pointing out that William's brother-in-law was the driving force behind the trial because William had neglected his wife and taken a concubine. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum* [Oxford Medieval Texts; (ed.), Mynors/Thomson/Winterbottom], vol. 1: IV. 319, p. 564 (cf. vol. 2, p. 281), however, deems no such explanation necessary.
  27. Suger of St Denis, *Vita Ludovici VI Grossi* [Les Classiques de l'histoire de France au Moyen Âge 11; (ed.), Waquet], p. 190; see William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum* [Oxford Medieval Texts; (ed.), Mynors/Thomson/Winterbottom], p. 744; C. W. Hollister, 'Royal Acts of Mutilation. The Case against Henry I', in *Monarchy, Magnates, and -Institutions in the Anglo-Norman World* (London: Hambledon, 1986), 1 pp. 214 ff.
  28. Eadmer of Canterbury, *Historia novorum in Anglia* [Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores ('Rolls Series') 81; (ed.), Rule], p. 193 (ad 1108); John of Worcester, *Chronicon ex chronicis* [Oxford Medieval Texts; (ed.), Darlington/McGurk], vol. 3: p. 112; William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum* [Oxford Medieval Texts; (ed.), Mynors/Thomson/Winterbottom], vol. 1, p. 724; cf. Judith A. Green, *The Government of England under Henry I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 89 ff.
  29. Mark Blackburn, 'Coinage and Currency under Henry I: A Review', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 13 (1991), pp. 49–81, esp. pp. 62–68 (with a full discussion of the relevant sources).
  30. John of Worcester, *Chronicon ex chronicis* [Oxford Medieval Texts; (ed.), Darlington/McGurk], vol. 3: p. 156, stresses the 'wildness' of the royal decree, that the moneyers should have their right hands and 'the lower parts of their bodies' cut off: *Monetarii per Angliam cum falsa moneta capti, truncatis dextris manibus et abscisis inferioribus corporis partibus, regis ferele subeunt edictum*.
  31. Ralph of Coggeshall, *Chronicon anglicanum* [Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores ('Rolls Series') 66; (ed.), Stevenson], p. 139; cf. Susan Tüchel, *Kastration im Mittelalter* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1998), pp. 100 sq.; Alexander Cartellieri, *Philipp II. August, König von Frankreich (Leipzig, 1899–1922)*, vol. 4, pp. 136–139.
  32. John Gillingham, 'Killing and Mutilating Political Enemies in the British Isles from the Late Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Century. A Comparative Study', in Brendan Smith (ed.), *Britain and Ireland. 900–1300. Insular Responses to Medieval European Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 114–34.
  33. Pipe Roll 6 Henry II (Publications of the Pipe Roll Society 1–38), p. 35: *de XX s pro em(en)tulato*.

34. Pleas of the Crown for the County of Gloucester before the Abbot of Reading and His Fellows Justices Itinerant in the Fifth Year of the Reign of King Henry the Third and the Year of Grace 1221 (ed.), Maitland, p. 40; cf. *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (ed.), Liebermann), vol. 2.1: p. 388 (s.v. 'Entmannung').
35. William of Malmesbury, *Vita Wulfstani* [Camden Third Series 40; (ed.), Darlington], chap. 16, pp. 168–175, here p. 171.
36. William of Canterbury, *Miracula sancti Thomae Cantuariensis* [Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores ('Rolls Series') 67.1; (ed.), Robertson], pp. 156–158; cf. Susan Tichel, *Kastration im Mittelalter* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1998), pp. 106 et seq. A more elaborate version of the same account (ending with Ailwards's complete healing) can be found in Benedictus Petriburgensis, *Miracula sancti Thomae Cantuariensis* [Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores ('Rolls Series') 67.2; (ed.), Robertson], pp. 173–182, here pp. 177 and 180.
37. William FitzStephen, *Vita Sancti Thomae Cantuariensis* [Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores ('Rolls Series') 67.3; (ed.), Robertson], p. 65; Gerald of Wales, *De principis instructione* (Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores ('Rolls Series') 21.8; ed. Warner), p. 301 (cf. also pp. 160 and 309); Arnulf of Lisieux, *Letters* (Camden Third Series 61; (ed.); Barlow), p. XXXIV and no. 3, p. 5; cf. Marjorie Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda. Queen Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 140. Despite the emasculation he had suffered, Gerald was restored to his see by Pope Eugenius III in 1146; Radulfus de Diceto, *Ymagines historiarum* [Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores ('Rolls Series') 68.1/2; (ed.), Stubbs], p. 256.
38. *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* [Société d'histoire de France. Publications 255/268/304; (ed.), Meyer], vol. 2, ll. 11623–11626 (= vol. 3, p. 155); cf. John Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1978), p. 274; David Crouch, *William Marshal* (London: Longman, 1990), pp. 72–77. For a very similar episode, see Girart de Roussillon, *Chanson de geste* (Société des anciens textes français (ed.), Hackett), ll. 6692, 6699, 6703, 6732, 6748; translation: *La chanson de Girart de Roussillon* [Lettres gothiques; (ed.), Combarieu du Grès], pp. 505–11.
39. Jeanne Wathelet-Willem, *Recherches sur la Chanson de Guillaume. Etudes accompagnées d'une édition* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1975), vol. 2: ll. 1969–1971: *s'il n'aveit pié dunt il peüst aller, / il aveit oilz dunt il poeit garder, / si aveit coilz pur enfanz engendrer*.
40. Roger of Howden, *Chronica* [Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores ('Rolls Series') 51; (ed.), Stubbs], vol. 4, p. 27; Thomas de Papia, *Gesta imperatorum et pontificum* [Monumenta Germaniae historica Scriptores in folio 22; (ed.), Ehrenfeuchter], p. 499; cf. Susan Tichel, *Kastration im Mittelalter* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1998), pp. 98–100 (and cover illustration); Edward Lucie-Smith, *Sexuality in Western Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1991), p. 36; Burchard of Ursperg, *Chronicon* [Monumenta Germaniae historica Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi 16; (ed.), Holder-Egger/Simson], pp. 72 (l. 25) and 78 (ll. 4 and 9), and other German chroniclers only report the blinding, because they are not familiar with castration as a punishment for treason.
41. Ordericus Vitalis, *Historia ecclesiastica* [Oxford Medieval Texts; (ed.), Chibnall], vol. 2, p. 14, reports that in the mid-eleventh century, the Norman nobleman William Talvas invited another Norman lord to his wedding, captured him and robbed him of his eyes and dishonoured him by cutting of his genitals and the tips of his ears. According to John of Worcester, *Chronicon ex chronicis* [Oxford Medieval Texts; (ed.), Darlington/McGurk], vol. 3, p. 86 (ad 1098), Earl Hugh of Leicester and Earl Hugh of Shrewsbury either killed or blinded and castrated their Welsh captives, in addition maiming their hand and feet. In 1263 the soldiers of Henry III unmanned the corpse of the dead Simon of Montfort, leader of the baronial opposition: Thomas Wykes, *Chronicon* [Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores ('Rolls Series') 36.4; (ed.), Luard], pp. 173–5; *Grandes chroniques de France* [Société d'histoire de France. Publications; (ed.), Viard], vol. 7, p. 232; cf. Olivier de Laborderie, John R. Maddicott, David A. Carpenter, 'The Last Hours of Simon de

Montfort: A New Account', *English Historical Review* 115 (2000), pp. 378–412; John R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 342 (illustration).

42. In the fifteenth century even the genitals of Christ could be represented as a mark of his full human nature; see Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* (2nd edition; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 219–392, esp. pp. 318–22.