Discussion Notes for 10/14

ASC 1066-1100

* How does the author feel about Harold and William? Harold is described as “our king”, presented as legitimate. Wm is presented as a divine punishment, harsh, greedy, violent, oppressive, but he establishes security in England
* What do kings spend most of their time doing? Fighting. Wm is constantly having to battle English rebellions and threats to his authority in Normandy; Harold has to defend himself against challenges from his brother Tostig, the Danes, and Wm.
* How does the ASC explain the defeat of the English at Hastings? (Wm attacks before Harold’s army is ready; God gave William victory because of the sins of the English people; the English also believe in a God who intervenes in human affairs and allowed Wm to win at Hastings so they rationalize their defeat by blaming it on their sinfulness)
* Wm P said Wm C restrained his men during the conquest and forbade pillaging, but the ASC said the Normans ravaged parts of England – why is this issue important and what should we make of the conflicting accounts?
* What role does Edgar’s sister Margaret play in the ASC? She marries Malcom the king of Scotladn against her will but is a positive force in that country; she has a daughter (Edith-Matilda, called Maud in the ASC) who carries the royal blood of Wessex and will marry Henry I, uniting the Normans with the Anglo-Saxon royal line p. 151-152
* Death of Edith 164 – what does Wm’s treatment of Edith tell us about how he presents himself as king? He honors her and makes efforts to connect himself to Edward the Confessor (the Normans consider Harold a usurper and Edward the last legitimate English king – Wm’s whole claim to the throne is based on his relationship to Edward)
* Domesday p. 168; oaths of allegiance (notice the repeated use of oaths to try to enforce loyalty, and the fact that they’re often broken)
* God’s justice/punishment for sins / complaints about Wm p. 169
* Wm’s death and obituary p. 170
* Who succeeds Wm? Robert Curthose succeeds as duke of Normandy, William Rufus as king of England p. 172
* What kind of a relationship do Wm’s sons have with each other? They are constantly fighting with each other
  + Rufus calls up the fyrd against Odo, et al p. 174; Rt. tries to invade; Odo gets banished
  + Rufus invades Normandy p. 175; truce btw Rt and Rufus p. 176
* Rebellion by earl of Northumbria in 1095; earl captured 180; accusation of treason against the king by one of his kin (trial by battle) p. 181
* First crusade; Rt. pawns Normandy to Rufus to raise money to go on crusade p. 181
* Archbishop Anselm goes into exile because of Rufus’ behavior p. 182 (the Church does not like Rufus)
* Omens (pool of blood, burning sky) surrounding Rufus’ death p. 183
* Rufus shot in the New Forest while hunting p. 183-4; Rufus’ obit (he was unjust and hateful) p. 184
* Election of Henry as king; Henry marries Edith (of the true royal family of England) p. 184
* Rt returns from crusade

Laws of Wm

* How are the laws established (in consultation with magnates)
* Purpose is to establish peace between English and French
* Oaths of loyalty to Wm
* Hundreds are made responsible for murders that occur within them (if the culprit can’t be found, the whole community must pay a fine)
* Different standards of proof for English (hot iron or battle) and French (oath); the laws are not the same for everyone
* All shall have and hold the law of King Edward (Wm links himself with his kinsman and skips over Harold entirely)
* Wm forbids capital punishment in favor of blinding and castration (attempt at mercy)

Penances

* Distinctions between greed/gain and public good or necessity
* These are for the men who served Wm during the conquest (why do they need penances if the pope gave his blessing and banner for the invasion? The Church still condemns violence)
* One year of penance for each man killed; 40 days for each man wounded; if you don’t know how many you wounded or killed, perform penance one day a week for the rest of your life or build a church
* Clergy who fought must do regular penance (the canons forbid the clergy from fighting, but many of them still do it); if you fought for gain, you owe penance for homicide
* Archers owe 120 days (3 lents) because they can’t know how many they killed or wounded
* Foraging vs plunder; allowance for self-defense
* No allowance for rape, adultery, and fornication, or violation of churches

Orderic

* How does Wm prepare for death? What is he concerned about? Orderic portrays him as concerned about all the bloodshed he committed, especially the Harrying of the North, which was horrific even by 11th c. standards (note that Orderic was not at Wm’s bedside and is largely inventing this whole scene – this was typical in ancient and medieval histories). Wm expects to face God and give account for his actions
* How does Orderic portray Wm? Harsh, violent, but pious
* How does he portray the Normans? Great warriors when they are ruled firmly, but treacherous and dangerous when they have a weak leader
* What’s going on between Wm and Rt? Rt. Is in open rebellion against his father because he wants to rule Normandy p. 311
* Who does Wm name as his heir to England? Technically, no one. He says he can’t name his heir because he won the country with so much bloodshed, but he wants Rufus to rule England if God allows it
* How does Orderic describe Wm’s right to the crown and his treatment of the English? Wm had no hereditary right to the country but won it with bloodshed, he was overly harsh
* What happens to Henry? He gets some money and a promise from his father that he will eventually eclipse his brothers (he was ruling both England and Normandy by the time Orderic was writing)
* Why doesn’t Wm want to release Odo from prison? He knows he’ll cause trouble
* How do the magnates and servants react once Wm has died? The magnates run off to protect their own interests and the servants plunder Wm’s corpse

Malmesbury, Death of Rufus

* The devil appeared to men, pool of blood (evil omens surrounding Rufus’ death reflect the low opinion the clergy had of Rufus)
* Hugh’s vision of Rufus being damned by God
* Rufus’s vision of having his blood let
* Foreign monk’s vision of Rufus chewing on a crucifix until it kicks him (Rufus oppressed the Church and fought with Archbishop Anslem until Anselm went into exile)
* How do people react to Rufus’ death? Everyone in the hunting party leaves and runs off to protect their own interest, the king’s corpse is left in the forest and some peasants take it to a nearby church
* How does Wm feel about Rufus? Was he a good king? Rufus is to be pitied (even the Church couldn’t save his soul). He was greedy, plundered the common people, and oppressed the Church and the clergy. His knights liked him though because he gave them lavish gifts. (Rufus was an excellent warrior, but he didn’t care much about the Church, unlike his father)