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HENRY II AND HIS SONS: THE MATURATION PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING ADULT MASCULINE STATUS IN THE ANGEVIN ROYAL FAMILY C. 1140 – C. 1200

My project aims to investigate the medieval concepts of masculinity within the framework of the Angevin royal family, concentrating on the processes involved in the transition from childhood through youth to masculine adulthood of six members of the Angevin royal family over two generations.



Some Key Questions:

- What mechanisms did Henry II and his sons use to establish fully adult male status?
- What kind of formal education did Henry II and his sons receive and how did this affect their transition from boys to men?
- How did Henry II's experience of establishing his own fully adult male status affect his treatment of his sons during their attempts to move from childhood into the adult world?
- Can fully adult male status be seen to be established in a single (often dramatic) event or was it more often established over a period of time via a series of events?

Educating Males



It was not customary for children of royal blood to be educated outside the home. Usually royal males would be educated alongside a few select 'companions', either siblings, other family members, any wards of their father's households or even noble males from other households who would be drafted in specifically to be company for the prince in question during his education.

Military Training

It was common for high-born males to be sent to another household to finish their education in their early to mid-teens with the martial and physical training for knighthood beginning around puberty, which would culminate in the dubbing ceremony that initiated full knight status between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one. However for royal males each of these stages could be brought forward significantly in regard to their ages.



Family Relationships

For a young man coming through the stage of 'youth' and attempting to establish himself as a fully adult male the influence of a parent on the process could either help or hinder their progress, and this was particularly true of the royal family, with mothers and fathers playing very different roles. Fathers, and especially royal fathers, had the ability and means to stand in the way of their sons' achieving fully adult male status. This appears to be the case for Henry II and his sons; despite Henry bestowing titles on his sons, often at quite early ages, and holding ceremonies of installation for them Henry in fact gave no real authority to them. The failure of Henry II to share power with his eldest son in the Angevin heartland aroused the youth's bitterness and in effect led to the Young King seeing his father as thwarting him from reaching full manhood.

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