The Norman Aristocracy
Old or New?

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Since 1966 two contemporary syntheses of the history of pre-1066 Normandy, one by David Douglas and the other by David Bates. Douglas' William the Conqueror was first published in 1964 and remained the definitive volume on pre-Conquest Normandy until the publication in 1982 of Bates' book, Normandy Before 1066. As would be expected, much of Bates' book is revisionist in nature. The most obvious and important example of this is his assertion--in direct opposition to Douglas--that the Norman aristocracy is not new to the [illegible] century. This dispute over the newness or oldness of the aristocracy is critical to Norman studies, since all questions of the origin and evolution of Norman politics and society revolve around it. Because Bates' revisionism is now accepted as orthodoxy, it is necessary to carefully scrutinize his evidence and the controversy in general. Before grappling directly with the question it will aid the reader's understanding to present a brief overview in historical perspective.

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Europe. This post-Conquest Anglo-Norman kingdom of William and his successors is relatively well documented. Unfortunately, historians' understanding of the ancestors of William's aristocracy, and the pre-Conquest Duchy grows increasingly dim as we look back towards the tenth century. In fact, because almost all detail of late tenth and early eleventh century Normandy has been erased from our view, only a handful of mostly symbolic events can be sketched with certainty. Perhaps the earliest and most important is the 911 "Treaty of St-Claire-Sur-Epte". In this treaty, a certain Viking chieftain named Rollo was deeded some lands by the Frankish king, Charles The Simple. In exchange for the land, Rollo and his followers formally accepted Christianity and agreed to pay homage to Charles.[1]

By the mid-tenth century a group of the recently settled Vikings accepted Rollo's grandson Richard I as their chieftain; this was sealed by intermarriage and the acceptance of his adopted religion, Christianity.[2] Rollo, his son William Longsword, and his grandson Richard are the earliest leaders of the family line that we know as the Dukes of Normandy.[3] Richard I married another viking chieftain's daughter by the name of Gunnor.[4] It was through marriage to the ducal house, most notably to Gunnor's sisters and cousins that the rising men of late tenth and early eleventh century Normandy began forming themselves into the early Norman aristocracy.

Even a quick glance at a geneological chart in conjunction with the following paragraph demonstrates the prevalence and importance of these marriage and kin connections.[5] The first four counts were brothers or half brothers to Duke Richard I. William the Conqueror's two half brothers were the Bishop of Bayeux and the Count of Mortain. The counts of Evreux and Eu were his cousins. William Fitz Osbern was descended on both sides from the ducal house. His father, Osbern the ducal steward, was one of the Conqueror's closest companions. Osbern's uncle was bishop of Avranches; his son and son-in-law were both earls in post-Conquest England. Roger I of Montgomery's grandmother was probably a sister of Gunnor, wife of Duke Richard I. Roger II of Montgomery married Mabel of Belleme and they were appointed respectively the earl and duchess of Shrewsbury. Geoffrey, duke of Brittany, married Hawise, the daughter of Duke Richard I. Their son, Alan II, count of Brittany was guardian to young Duke William. Geoffrey had at least five grandsons, all of whom were counts; perhaps two fought at Hastings, and at least two were earls. Judith, a sister of Geoffrey, married Duke Richard II from which descended the subsequent ducal line.[6] Based on the preceeding information the Norman aristocracy can be described as a select group of families related to each other through intermarriage or other family connections. It can be added that this group was dominated by the ducal family and was augmented by a few comparatively recent outside arrivals.

The principle of political and social unification through marriage, though not exclusively Norman, achieved unsurpassed force in Normandy. The power and achievements of the Normans are rooted in the particular polity that developed between the Dukes and their aristocrats in the eleventh century. Thus, an understanding of the history of the Norman aristocracy is fundamental to an understanding of political and social development in Normandy, post-Conquest England, and throughout Europe. As mentioned earlier, our understanding of the history of this group is relatively limited. David Bates, an authority on pre-Conquest Normandy, goes so far as to describe the aristocracy as the most desperate of all topics.[7]

the limited understanding is not due to an absence of scholarship on the subject, but to the obscurity and complexity of the topic itself. Heirs to a scholarly tradition stretching back three centuries, David Bates and David Douglas offer the only comprehensive and modern treatments in their respective books, Normandy Before 1066, and William the Conqueror. Because of their mastery of the complex and difficult source material, any further understanding of the Norman aristocracy must rest upon their work.[8] Let us examine their major arguments.

DOUGLAS VERSUS BATES

Douglas presents four families as being illustrative of the

development of the Norman aristocracy: the house of Tosny, the Beaumont family, the family of Vernon, and the Montforts. He outlines the rise of each family, their acquisition of domainal lands, family name, titles and other notable details. He emphasises that "in all these cases the family only acquired the lands from which it took its feudal name during the earlier half of the eleventh century.[9] For Douglas, acquisition by these families of aristocratic prerogatives marks them as aristocrats. He notes their new found wealth and titles; couples this with his own inability to discern similar developments earlier than the eleventh century, and thus describes them as a "new aristocracy".

In contrast, Bates offers "negative" evidence that leads him to flatly state that "the supposed 'new aristocracy' of eleventh-century Normandy emerged out of well-established families.[10] He claims "that the impossibility of tracing any Norman geneology back much before c. 1000, and the fact that the same exercise usually defeated twelfth century historians, is no argument against the families' existence before that date."[11] Perhaps the more telling evidence Bates presents involves, the spread of toponymics,[12] circa 1040,[13] as a sign of the conception of a family's powers around one focal point. He suggests that the failure of memory and geneological research in the period from circa 1020 to circa 1050 points to the change from a cognatic to an agnatic family structure (primogeniture).[14] Thereafter, families were vertically based around the eldest male,

whose name and ancestry were thus important as family leader.

Bates, in effect, turns Douglas' arguments inside out by asserting that we find no pre-millenial evidence of aristocratic power or privilege, because prior to the change to primogeniture, there was no reason to develop and preserve geneologies. He believes that they are older families despite the fact that there is no positive evidence to prove it. Bates concludes by arguing that "no one has so far discovered the aristocracy who were superseded in the not so sparse records of Richard II's reign."[15] The obvious response to Bates' final statement is that there simply may not have been an aristocracy to supersede.

A careful re-analysis of the evidence makes clear that whatever aristocracy there may have been was replaced by the new aristocracy that arose in the eleventh century. Bates fails to take heed of a problem that he himself warned his reader about:

> Tenth century Normandy presents that paradox which troubles the historians of many medieval conquests: heavy institutional continuity combined with a drastic rupture in the personnel of the ruling classes.[16]

There was, indeed, institutional continuity as he shows. But Bates' thesis is reduced to speculation because there is no positive evidence that links the eleventh century aristocrats with the tenth century. He appears to take the year 911, with the signing of the Treaty of St-Claire-Sur-Epte, as the beginning of

aristocratic continuity. Since the Norman ducal house was continuously in power from that time, he assumes the same aristocracy was, too. In fact, nearly all important eleventh century aristocratic families can be shown to have risen to power during the eleventh century. As this paper demonstrates, only a very few began gathering power before the eleventh century and then only a decade or so earlier.

WHO EXACTLY WERE THE NORMAN ARISTOCRATS?

Before beginning any further analysis, the families and individuals who constituted the eleventh century aristocracy must be idendified. The failure of both Bates and Douglas to explicitly identify these people, is the most glaring ommission in their analyses of the question of the newness or oldness of the aristocracy. For the pre-Conquest period scholars normally rely simply on their intuition of the composition of the aristocracy. At best, they echo the vague language of the chroniclers with such categories as "closest lay counsellors", "companions" or "inner curia".[17] For the post-conquest period, scholars are often much more explicit since they can base their judgements on Domesday Book.[18] They also have more and better charters to work with.

Since title can only give a rough indication of power and wealth in pre-Conquest Normandy, it is necessary to definine 'aristocrat' in order to discover who they were.[19] In an attempt

to include the widest range of people and utilize the most evidence, I define aristocrat as anyone for whom there is indications of notable power, wealth, influence or title within Normandy.[20] With this definition as a guide, I gathered any mention of wealth, power of privilege I could find in primary and secondary material. This includes landed wealth, title, charter witnesses, those cited as foremost, illustrious etc., those with strategic lands, and those known to have fought on the Conqueror's side at the battle of Hastings. Taken together these form an unwieldy collection of material which were then converted into lists and analaysed individually, in order to judge their probable accuracy, weaknesses, strengths and relationship to each other. Finally, the evidence was consolidated into a useful form.[21] Though this paper relies on the very same evidence Bates and Douglas used, the advantage here is that it is a conscious attempt at methodically identifying and categorizing the aristocracy by ducal reign, while they made more casual, intuitive judgments. It should be added that because of limited evidence this paper attempts only to research the lay aristocracy. Upon cursory examination, the church aristocracy appears to have close kin ties to, and parallel the lay aristocrats.[22]

All of the lists but one pertain to William the Conqueror's reign. Therefore it is most logical to begin by determining who composed his aristocracy, then work backwards reign to reign,

until the earliest evidence for Norman aristocrats is found.[23] By the end of this process it will be clear that the eleventh century Norman aristocrats arose in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, not earlier as Bates asserts.

Membership in William's aristocracy is based for the most part on landed wealth in post-Conquest England, since this has been accurately measured in Domesday and is corroborated by frequency of attestation as seen in charters. The wealth lists are augmented by some old landed aristocrats who maintained much land and power as is reflected by the chroniclers.

1. Roger of Montgomery[24]
2. Osbern the Steward
3. Robert count of Evreux[25]
4. Roger of Beaumont
5. Robert count of Mortain
6. Richard count of Eu[25]
7. William of Warenne
8. Hugh of Grandmesnil
9. Ralph of Tosny
10. Richard of Clare
11. Richard vicount of Avranches
12. -Hugh vicount of Avranches[26]
13. Hugh II of Montfort[27]
14. Eustace count of Boulogne[28]
15. Walter Giffard[29]

16. Geoffrey bishop of Coutances[30]

17. Odo bishop of Bayeux[31]

18. Alan the Red[32]

19. Ralph the Staller[33]

20. Geoffrey of Mandeville[33]

21. William Warlenc[34]

22. William count of Arques.[34]

Because there is no primary source that clearly shows wealth or political and military power during Robert I's reign (1027-35), the following list was derived from sundry evidence.

1. Osbern the Steward[35]
2. Gilbert Count of Brionne[36]
3. Archbishop Robert of Rouen(d.c. 1038)[37]
4. William Count of Eu(d.c. 1040)[38]
5. Roger of Tosny(d.c. 1040)[39]
6. -Thurstan Goz vicount of the Avranches[40]
7. Roger of Montgomery Vicount of the Hiemois[41]
8. Humphrey of Vieilles[42]
9. -Hugh I of Montfort[43]
10. Nigel vicount of the Cotentin[44]

The one list on Chart C that does not pertain to William the Conqueror's reign is the list of the earliest Norman counts.[45]

It is the basis from which Richard II's (996-1026) aristocracy can be determined. I added vicomtes who are mentioned in secondary material as attestors or landowners. Thus Richard II's aristocracy certainly included:

1. Rodulf of Ivry[46]
2. Osbern Fitz Arfast the Steward[47]
3. William Count of Eu[38]
4. Godfrey Count of Eu[36]
5. Archbishop Robert of Rouen[37]
6. Ralph I or II Tosny[48]
7. Ansfrid the Dane[49]
8. Nigel Vicount of the Cotentin[43]
9. Hugh Bishop of Bayeux[50]

There is also evidence that indicates the existence of, but nothing more, of five obscure office holders who frequently attested Richard II's charters. They are: Odo the Constable, Chamberlain Berenger, Roscelin, Roger the butler and Baldric procurator. We also know of the existence of twelve vicounts who never appear in later evidence.[51]

Based upon this understanding of the persons who composed the eleventh century aristocracy--i.e. as elucidated in footnotes twenty five through fifty one--it is clear that as a whole they did not antedate the eleventh century. Though a few families began rising before the late tenth century, there certainly could not have been many. Even well into the eleventh century, the Norman

aristocracy appears to have been a limited and mostly family institution. For example, of the ten earliest known Norman counts up to the year 1050, one was a half brother to a duke, five were sons of a duke and four were grandsons.[52] Most significantly, of the seventeen major family groupings from the above lists for which I have solid evidence, six are ducal, five are non-Norman newcomers and two are certainly new families. That leaves only four possible older families out of this centrally important group.[53] As the next section will demonstrate, even these four do not appear to predate the eleventh century by an appreciable margin.

EXACTLY HOW OLD IS THE ARISTOCRACY?

Bates errs in making the aristocratic families older than they were. Douglas, on the other hand, focuses too rigidly on the importance of titular and domainal evidence and describes them as newer than they were. In light of the "comparatively recent" rise of the aristocracy after circa 1000, it is only reasonable to suspect that previous to this period these aristocrats had some importance and/or power that allowed them to attain their great positions. If they are not a tenth century aristocracy, one must at least suspect that they had an older history; and did not rise up suddenly, almost without background, as Douglas implies.

The following pages show that at least three important families, the Beaumonts, the Bellemes and the Montgomerys probably had connections to the ducal house previous to their domainal importance so emphasized by Douglas. In addition, the Tosny family had a landed and ecclesiastical importance prior to the close of the tenth century. This analysis will contribute to our understanding of the Norman aristocracy by revealing them as somewhat older than previously recognized, but does not support Bates, contention that they are a much older aristocracy.

In Douglas' opinion, "the authentic history"[54] of the Beaumont house begins with Humphrey de Vieilles who was the first to occupy Beaumont. Bates agrees by declaring that "On balance, it looks as if memory ended and myth began at Humphrey de Vieilles' generation."[55] Yet G.H. White, in his "Sisters and Nieces of Gunnor[56] shows that Humphrey's father, Thorold of Pont Audemer, married Aveline, a sister of Gunnor. My thesis is postulated on the assumption that since Gunnor was the wife of Duke Richard, anyone who married one of her relations must have had some importance at that time. The truth of this issue is unsettled depending on how much credence one puts in Robert of Torigny, the twelfth century writer who is our sole source for this connection.[57] Bates' and Douglas' opinion of the veracity of this connection is equivocal.[58] Though scanty, there is some evidence that the records of the early Beaumonts point in the direction of establishment during the

Scandinavian settlement period, and expansion after Richard II's reign.[59] If Thurold did marry Avelina and if she was a sister to Gunnor, then he must have had some importance at least one full generation before Humphrey, and before the time granted by Douglas and Bates.

The second example, the family of Montgomery, can also be traced back to the time of Gunnor. Professor G.H. White informs us of a genealogy of the Montgomery family given to Bishop Ivo of Chartres in circa 1113.[60] It demonstrates that Roger II's mother was Joscelina and her mother was Sofria of Sainfria, a sister of Gunnor. Both White[61] and Bates[62] apparently accept the credence of Ivo's geneology by informing us that Robert of Torigny misnamed Roger's grandmother as Wevie, a sister of both Gunnor and Sofria. The probability of the Montgomery connection to Gunnor is further increased by the corroborating evidence of the 1113 geneology added to Robert of Torigny's connection to an apparently misnamed sister. If the Montgomery family is connected to Sainfria, then their family probably had some importance, for the same reasons as the Beaumonts, two generations before either Douglas or Bates grants them.

The third example is the Belleme family. G.H. White in the "First House of Belleme"[63] traces the Belleme line to Yves de Creil, the <u>regis balistarius</u> to the King of France circa

945.[64] Both Douglas[65] and Bates[66] accept White's study though neither appears to grasp the significance of it. White accepts the likeliness of this connection though he does not state it as fact.[67] The probability of this marriage is increased by the fact that there is some evidence that the Bellemes are an older family; Douglas informs us that between 992 and 1055 three successive bishops of Le Mans were relations of the Belleme family, but attaches no importance to this.[68] Similarly, Bates states, though without evidence, that the Belleme family was expanding its territory from the later tenth century.[69] The lord of Belleme, Roger, who is the first real Belleme under the Douglas/Bates criteria, was the fourth generation after his possible ancestor Yves de Creil and the second generation after the earliest known Belleme related bishops.

The final example is the family of Tosny. This family is usually cited as one of the oldest; Douglas, Bates and others note that Ralph I (or II) was entrusted by Duke Richard II with the defense of Tillieres in 1013 or 1014. In fact, as early as 989 he was received into Normandy and given lands from the ducal demesne.[70] Also, his brother Hugh held the important position of Archbishop of Rouen. It would be reasonable to assume that since both these brothers have such importance, other and probably earlier family members might have also. It seems unlikely that two brothers could have made their way, contemporaneously, to such importance by work and merit alone. However, even if both these

brothers did rise from an obscure and unimportant family they still have a demonstrably important history fifteen years before acknowledged by either Bates of Douglas (i.e. 1013-14).

The previous pages contain the whole of any positive evidence I could find that links the eleventh century nobility with the tenth century. Not only is this evidence only to be found for four families, but even if absolutely reliable it only extends their history marginally into the tenth century. Further, the Belleme family, though holding the Norman bishopric of Sees, cannot be considered wholly Norman, but rather a nonaligned border family. Also, the Tosnys were not native Normans but recent immigrants.

Even if allowances are made for the possibility that other families, particularly vicecomital families from earlier established Norman areas such as the Cotentin and Bessin, may have begun rising earlier than circa 1000, it is still most accurate to side with Douglas and describe the aristocracy as "relatively new" to the eleventh century.[71] If the older aristocracy that Bates alludes to existed, it was replaced by new persons in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. One can also add that some, perhaps many, of the families began rising a generation or so earlier than is indicated by the titular and domainal evidence so stressed by Douglas.

GAPS AND WEAKNESSES IN CURRENT KNOWLEDGE

Much to their credit, Bates and Douglas have utilized the fragmentary collection of facts and commentary that make up pre-Conquest primary evidence, to artfully and convincingly explain events. But, because the quality and quantity of their evidence does not always support their conclusions, it will be useful to assess the quality of their evidence and understanding. The purpose of the following pages is to point out some of the gaps and weaknesses in both mine and their understanding of the Norman aristocracy, and thereby uncover new paths for future research.

Though limited, the listings in this paper are probably substantially accurate compilations of the higher levels of the aristocracy, particularly of William the Conqueror's reign. However, they should not be taken as comprehensive. Nothing is known about those who did not attest a charter nor made a contribution which was sufficiently unique to be mentioned by a chronicler. There are probably many families, such as the vicounts of the Bessin about whom I do not know enough about to place in any reign. Other important persons may remain completely unknown to us if charters signed by them were somehow lost or destroyed. Also, chroniclers tend to note only those who begin or end a trend or for whom they hold a personal dislike or affinity for.[72] There are persons as high as vicounts about whom precious little or nothing is known about.[73]

Another major limit to our understanding is that there is knowledge of the existence of many people but only fragments or nothing about their activities, importance, familial relationships, etc.. As one example, Bates describes a single charter from William the Conqueror's reign that is signed by 135 people.[74] From what I have gathered from both primary and secondary material there is only a moderately detailed understanding of at most 25 families throughout this period.[75] To give one more example, Douglas and Bates mention perhaps a hundred or more officials and nobles, from the greatest counts and vicounts, to the household officers and even urban officials.[76] Yet, they confine their main discussion and conclusions, particularly regarding the rise of the aristocracy, to a handful of the greatest counts and a few vicounts. Douglas concentrates on only four representative families.[77] Bates, in discussing the rise of the aristocracy uses only selected families for which he has substantial evidence. Similarly, Emma Mason, the only scholar that directly discusses the rise of the aristocracy, uses only three families to prove her thesis.[78]

their error does not lie in relying only on selected evidence, but in not always delineating the limited nature of their evidence, and thereby exaggerating the certainty of their assertions. In effect, it may appear that they base their theses on more substantial footings than the data allow. For example, Douglas underscores the "particularity" with which he can

illustrate the origin of the Vernon family and uses them as one of his four representative families.[79] His footnotes, however, reveal that the sum of his evidence is six references from charters that outline the families' land acquisitions and one further note by Ordericus. This information can only clearly mark the geographic boundaries and dates of the Vernon's lordship over certain lands, and indicates that they may have received part of it with the Duke's blessing. This is hardly comprehensive nor conclusive evidence.

However limited our understanding of the politically and monetarily powerful members of the aristocracy, it is considerably greater than our knowlege about the administrative officials. There is mention in documents and charters of such officials as gravitores, moneyers, the ducal swineherd and prepositus' (provosts).[80] A bit is known about the institutions such officials served in but almost nothing about the officials themselves.

The lack of any concrete comprehension of the members of the pre-Conquest aristocracy is detrimental to an understanding of their institutions and interrelationships. A clearer knowledge of those who composed the aristocracy would make it much easier to critique the value of evidence used in analyses. For example, Douglas uses the Vernon family as representative of "lesser houses."[81] His example would be more forceful if we knew

exactly what "lesser house" means; that is, who were their peers, how many lesser houses there were, how much power they possessed etc.

Though this analysis could be further developed, it serves its purposes by pointing out gaps in our knowledge, and by making clear the need for critical and comprehensive analyses. Still, there is much work to be done before the eleventh century Norman aristocracy can be fully understood: Aristocrats must be separated by relative power and wealth. The transition of The Conqueror's aristocracy from the pre- to the post-Conquest period needs much attention. Also, a thorough exploration of the various aristocrat's feudal versus curiale status is also necessary. Of even more importance, the role of, and rise of churchmen, vicounts and some of the lesser nobility must be comprehended.

The current knowledge of the pre-Conquest Norman nobility can be compared by analogy to some future historian who is generally familiar with our presidents and their actions, knows something about important cabinet members, has fragmentary knowlege about the prominent congressmen, knows that there are fifty governors and that states are probably subdivided into counties. From this information he tries to reconstruct our govermental, political and social system.

Despite these critical comments, much credit must be given to historians in light of the great progress that has been made with the limited evidence. Many of the conclusions of the more eminent Norman scholars can be taken as generally correct; or, at least the best that can be said with what was available. It is only natural and proper that after years of brilliant study a Bates or a Douglas should fill in some of the gaps intuitively, and that there should be many problems with seminal work. Others must seek out such weaknesses, search to find firmer proof and, when necessary, openly acknowledge the speculative nature of their understanding.

[1]Dudo of St. Quentin, De Moribus et Actis Primorum Normanniae Ducum, ed. J. Laire, (Caen,1865):168-169

[2]See Eleanor Searle, "Fact and Pattern in Heroic History: Dudo of Saint-Quentin," Viator, (Oakland, 1984):p.86.

[3]David Bates, Normandy Before 1066, (London, 1982):148-150. Bates tells us that at that time the title of Duke was not used, and was not in regular use until about the mid eleventh century. Hereafter Bates' book will be referred to as NB.

[4]See Searle, "Fact and Pattern...":84-85. Until this article was published, it was standard practice to accept Robert of Torigny's tale that Gunnor was of low born Frankish stock. Eleanor Searle convincingly demonstrates that Dudo was right in contending that she was the daughter of a Norse chieftan.

[5] The combined geneology, found in the apendix, was an important tool of mine; created by combining previously discovered geneologies and connections. It deserves and needs much more careful analysis and documentation.

[6]This list modeled after a similar one in WC:136.

[7]NB:33

[8]See appendix B for a short discussion of the most important primary sources for pre-Conquest Normandy.

[9]WC:88

[10]NB:35

[11]NB:34

[12]Toponymics is the study of the relationship of names to places. In the example, Rodulf of Ivry, Ivry is the toponynic.

[13]NB:115

[14]NB:112. In a cognatic system, land and title could be passed to any or many sons. Agnatic is the passing of such privileges to only the eldest son(primogeniture). Primogeniture may have predominated, but inheritance was apparently a decision reserved for individual families, and was thus irregular. This topic deserves further exploration.

[15]NB:134

[16]NB:16

[17]This term is from WC:286. Also see the titles of the categories in appendix C for other examples of vague descriptions.

[18]See for examples of post-conquest studies: Corbett, Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. 5:511. Also, C. Warren Hollister, "Magnates and "Curiales" in Early Norman England", Viator, (Berkeley, 1977), Vol. 8:65

[19]See note five in "Notes to Chart C" in the appendix.

[20]In practice membership in the Norman aristocracy was not based on any rigid qualifications. For example, such families as the Belleme and the Counts of Brittany were not technically from within Normandy. However, they had power and/or influence and/or wealth within Normandy and can therefore be considered Norman aristocrats.

[21]Refer to the consolidated chart in appendix C and the corresponding notes and discussion.

[22]See WC:118-119.

[23]The dukes of interest are, in chronological order: Richard II (996-1026), Robert I (1027-35) and William II (1035-87)The Conqueror). I do not have enough evidence for a study of the earlier dukes reigns. There was another post eleventh century duke, Richard III (1026-27), but his reign was so short that it is of no consequence to this study.

[24]The first eleven aristocrats on this list correspond to the first eleven men on Chart C. Richard who became vicount of the Avranchin during William the Conqueror's reign (c.1046), is exchanged for his father Hugh. See WC:93.

[25]There is a contradiction in that Douglas places the counts of Evreux and Eu in his "lavishly endowed" category(WC:269); but Corbett does not even list them in his third rank of wealth.

[26]The person following a dash in all these lists is the son of the preceeding man.

[27]Hugh II was a vicount until at least 1066; see NB:117. Also see lists three and eight in Chart C

[28]See lists three and eight in Chart C for Eustace count of Boulogne.

[29]See lists three and five in Chart C for Walter Giffard. Apparently he had large landholdings and power by the later years of Robert the I's reign; See NB:102

[30]See lists six and seven in Chart C for Geoffrey bp. of Coutances.

[31]See lists six, seven and eight for Odo Bishop of Bayeux.

[32]Though non Norman, Alan the Red is included because he was granted lands and status similar to the greatest magnates; see lists six, seven and WC:268. Further, his honor of Richmond passed successively, upon his death, to his brother Alan II 'The Black' and Stephen. If his Breton blood precludes his from being an aristocrat in some specific sense of the word, he was certainly loyal, depended upon and generously rewarded by the king.

[33]These men are on the list because William II gave them much land in England, making them among the wealthiest landowners. I could find almost no other information about them. See list six.

[34]Both of these men were dispossesed by William II: William Warlenc, apparently on a flimsy exscuse (WC:138) in favor of William II's half brother Robert. Alan of Arques was dispossessed for challenging Williams supremecy as duke.

[35]Osbern was Robert I's Steward. He received a large part of his extensive landholdings from Count Rodulf through marriage to Emma. See WC:90.

[36]Gilbert was the son of Godfrey count of Eu, and is designated count in several of Duke Robert I's charters. See Earliest Norman Counts...:134.

[37]This paper focuses on laymen, so I only included churchmen who acted in the manner of laymen. Robert archbishop of Rouen is included because of his political clout, his large landholdings and the fact that he claimed to be vicount of Evreux. Further, his sons inherited his lands in Evreux and became counts. He makes the list by living through Robert I's reign. See Earliest Norman Counts...:132-133.

[38]William was perhaps Count by 1015 and lived

through Robert I's reign. See Earliest Norman Counts...:137-138.

[39]I do not know what Roger's status was in relation to the Duke. The Tosnys were often somewhat surly and rebellious of duke's control; see Emma Mason, "Magnates, Curiales and the wheel of Fortune...:122-126. Roger was, however, a powerful aristocrat and lived through Robert II's reign. He died in a private war with Roger Beaumont on or about 1040; see WC:85.

[40]According to WC:93, Thurstan's son Richard was 'established' by 1046. I have no solid evidence, but assume that Thurstan would have held the position early enough to have served in Duke Robert I's reign.

[41]Roger appears on a charter as vicount of the Hiemois by 1033. See WC:33.

[42]It is thought that Humphrey appropriated Bernay with the connivance of Duke Robert I. See Emma Mason, "Magnates, Curiales and the Wheel of Fortune":125.

[43]Hugh I of Montfort is the father of Hugh II who appears in the list of William the Conqueror's aristocracy. Hugh I was a vicount by 1023 or 33 according to NB:117. I do not know whether the lists in Chart C refer to Hugh I or II.

[44]Nigel is known to have guarded the castle of Tillieres-sur-Avre in c. 1014 and is described as hearing pleas from the 1030's, and is therefore one of the earliest established aristocrats of whom we have evidence for. See NB:158.

[45]See David Douglas, "The Earliest Norman Counts":129-159.

[46]Rodulf subscribed a charter as count in 1011; see "Earliest Norman Counts":131. He was the Half brother of Duke Richard I (WC:89).

[47]Arfast of Herfast was a man of small means according to WC:90. Though perhaps he does not belong in a list among such eminent men, he is left in to show him as the first of a very important and rising family.

[48]Ralph was was entrusted by Duke Richard II with the defense of Tiellierse in 1013-14 (WC:85).

[49]Ansfrid is listed in many charters between 1015 and 1040, and may be the father of Thurstan Goz. See

WC:93.

[50]Though Hugh is a churchman, he makes the list because Bates names him as one of the great charter attestors (NB:159).

[51]See NB:159 for all seventeen of these men.

[52]These numbers were derived from an analysis of David Douglas, "The Earliest Norman Counts", English Historical Review, Vol. 61, (1946):129-156

[53] See appendix D for these families.

[54]WC:88

[55]NB:112

[56]G.H. White, "The Sisters and Nieces of Gunnor", Geneologists, New Series, ed. Forsyth-Harwood, Vol. xxxvii, (London, 1921):57-65

[57]I believe the Torigny connections mentioned in this paper are correct, but like G.H. White, would not state them as fact.

[58]WC:89; NB:112

[59]NB:112

[60]G.H. White "The Sisters and Nieces...":60

[61]Ibid.:60

[62]NB.:112

[63]G.H. White, "The First House of Belleme", Royal Historical Society Transactions, fourth series, Vol. xxii, (1939):67-69

[64]Ibid:68

[65]WC:58

[66]NB:69

[67]G.H. White, "The First House...":70-71

[68]WC:58

[69]NB:69

[70] WC:35

[71] Flodoard informs us that the Bessin was added to the Norman lands in 924. From David Douglas, "Rollo of Normandy, Time and the Hour, (London, 1977):130

[72] Emma Mason, "Magnates, Curiales and the Wheel of Fortune",: 140

[73] For instance we know of the existence of four otherwise unknown vicecomital families in Robert II's reign; see NB:117. Also note the 12 vicecounts and four ofice holders of Richard II's reign whom we know nothing about except that they existed; see NB:159.

[74] NB:158.

[75] the men in the short biography and perhaps several more.

[76] The hierarchy from high to low is king, duke, count, vicount. There were also the duke's household officials, such as Steward, who are usually very eminent men due to proximity, and favor of the duke.

[77] WC:85-88

[78] Emma Mason, "Magnates, Curiales and the Wheel of Fortune: 1066-1145", Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo Norman Studies, ed. R. Allen Brown, (England, 1979):118-140

[79] WC:87-88.

[80] NB:161.

[81] WC:87-88

APPENDIX B:

Literary evidence for pre-Conquest(1066) Normandy is fairly abundant, though difficult and of uneven quality. The following are only the most important primary sources; other types of evidence are not accesible to me. There are the 230 pre-Conquest ducal charters assembled in a single edition by Marie Faroux. These are available only in Latin. I relied on secondary analysis of them since it would be necessary to begin a rigorous and comprehensive analysis to derive more than can be gotten from secondary material. In fact, the lack of a thorough analysis of these charters is perhaps the most obvious weakness in pre-Conquest studies.

Second, there is 'The Deeds of the Norman Dukes' (Gesta Normannorum Ducum) by William, a monk of the abbey of Jumieges. It was written in the early 1070's. William of Poitiers, Archdeacon of Liseaux Cathedral wrote the related history, "Deeds of William, Duke of the Normans and King of the English' (Gesta Guillelelmi Ducis Normannorum et Regis Anglorum), compiled in circa 1077. These two sources are available in their entirety only in Latin. Translations of specific passages of the two works are available in the series of English Historical Documents, edited by David Douglas.

The above histories are very useful, but overshadowed by the most important of all sources; the 'Ecclesiastical History' (Historia Ecclesiastica), composed by the monk, Ordericus Vitalis in the first half of the twelfth century. Though translated, it is

notoriously long, ill organized, biased, somewhat removed in time (written up to 100 years after the event), and therefore most difficult to use.

Since I am not facile in Latin and can do no more than scan the original sources, I have been forced to work almost exclusively from secondary material, except for Ordericus' history. Fortunately, most matters of fact are agreed upon and can be found in secondary material. Where there is no agreement, the conflict is noted, unless one argument is thoroughly discredited. Only analysis and interpretations vary; I have found no facts which are so divergent as to contradict another's thesis, except by ommission.

APPENDIX C:

Chart C is the primary tool used in this paper to determine who composed the eleventh century Norman aristocracy. Pre-Conquest categories are toward the left and post-Conquest ones are toward the right. Notice the very strong corroboration given to the first five or ten men; They are clearly the most important pre-Conquest magnates. The close similarities between lists one, two and three are also notable, and are indicative of the relationship between William of Potier's and Ordericus' histories. Also note the otherwise uncorroborated group of men in William of Poitiers listing of ten great men at Hastings.

In the post-Conquest period the comparative weakness of evidence for the Duchy is apparent in the blank spaces of some very notable families such as the Evreux, Beaumont, Eu, Grandmesnil and Tosny; their respective status must be judged by more subjective evidence. I am not sure whether or not the blank spaces are indicative of declining power of these families. Perhaps it only suggests that their power was concentrated in Normandy for which less evidence is available. The group of new men in the lower right corner, implied by lists six and seven is also interesting.

Perhaps most notable is the solidity of evidence for Roger of Montgomery and William Fitz Osbern through both the pre- and post-Conquest periods. The preeminence of these two men shows the power of William the Conqueror to reward and raise up men who loyally supported him.

CHART C

	#1 The foremost laity pre-to the invasion O.V. ii.	#2 Illustrious laymen under Will C according to Will of Poitiers	#3 Listing of ten great men in William's army at Hastings. By William of poit.[3]	#4 Counts installed before 1066[5]	#5 Most constant preconquest lay witnesses. WC[6]	#6 Wealthiest magnates in England ca. 1087[7,8]	#7 Most frequent post-Conquest lay attestors	#8 Group of intimate barons left by Will II to consolidate his hold...[9]
Roger of Montgomery[1]								
William Fitz Osbern[1]								
Richard ct. of Evreux								
Roger of Beaumont								
Robert II ct. of Mortain								
Robert ct. of Eu								
William of Warenne								
Hugh of Grandmesnil								
Rodulf of Tosny								
Baldwin & Richard (Gilbert)								
Roger Mowbray								
Hugh the Vicount (Avranches)								
Rodulf of Ivry								
William ct. of Arques								
Ralph Tesson								
Hugh of Montfort Sur-Risle								
Eustace ct. of Boulogne								
Walter Giffard								
Haimo vct. of Thouyars								
Geoffrey ct of Mortagne								
Odo bp. of Bayeux[2]								
Geoffrey bp. of Coutance[2]								
Alan of Richmond								
Ralph the Staller								
Geoffrey of Mandeville								

[4]

|William|

|Archbp. Robert|

|counts of|

|1/2 bro William|

|Robt& Will War.

|counts of|

|& William|

|& Hugh Pincerna|

|& Ralph Conches|

|Ralph|

|Godfrey/Gilbert

|Richard|

|Earl Chester

|marcher|

|marcher|

|Marcher|

NOTES TO CHART C:

[1]William Fitz Osbern and Roger of Montgomery were also chosen by William II for his special confidence according to William of Poitiers. Gesta Guillelmi Ducis Normannorum et Regis Anglorum, ed. R. Foreville (1952):38.

[2]Though this is a listing of lay magnates, Odo bp. of Bayeux and Geoffrey bp. of Coutances are included because they acted in the manner of lay magnates.

[3] Interestingly, Poitiers excepts Robert count of Mortain and Odo bp of Bayeux from this list though he knew they were there(?). He also cites Rodulf of Tosny as being there; Douglas, without mentioning the anomoly, declares it was Ralph of Tosny. See Douglas, "Companions of the Conqueror.

[4]According to Douglas, WC:185-188, the men marked by the superscript were explicitly left behind by William to aid the Duchess in the governance of the Duchy. They are added to the list because, had they not been given this duty, they almost certainly would have fought at Hastings and appeared on this list. In other words they are included to make it clear that they were directly aiding the conquest.

[5]Note that this list includes both the men on the list to the far left of the chart and those named within the boxes. Because this title was limited to so few families, is therefore limited as an indication of wealth or power.

[6]It is not clear exactly how Douglas compiled this list, though he tells us it is from R.A.D.N.. This is yet another example of Douglas habit of making assertions based on his masterful and intuitive command of the source material, without giving hard evidence. It can be accepted as substantially accurate based on his reputation and some corroborating evidence: First, it corresponds to William of Poitiers list of illustrious men with the exception that Douglas does not list Hugh Vicomte of the Avranches, and he adds Ralph Tesson and Walter Giffard. Second, Marjorie Chibnall tell us that the three greatest pre-Conquest lay attestors were Will Fitz Osbern, 56 attestations; Roger of Montgomery, 39; Roger of Beaumont,24.

[7]This list is composed primarily from a chart by C. Warren Hollister in "Magnates and "Curiales" in Early Norman England", Viator, Vol. 8 (Berkeley, 1977):65. It identifies wealth of both enfeoffed and demesne land held in 1087. A similar list by Robin Fleming, based on demesne lands only, is identical to Hollister's in membership though not order, with the exception of not containing Geoffrey bp. of Coutance. The only other similar listing of post-Conquest wealth is by Corbett(CMH, 5:511). It is again identical in membership though not order;

the exception being that Hollister adds Robert of Mortain, Odo bp. of Bayeux and Alan of Richmond. Corbett neglected Alan of Richmond for unknown reasons. He left Robert of Mortain and Odo of Bayeux because he considered their wealth with that of the royal family. I follow Hollister in including them since they acted independently of the Royal house and the closeness of kinship of their families decreased in ensuing years. William Fitz Osbern and Ralph the Staller are added to Hollisters list since they are within Corbett's A category of wealth.

[8]I agree with Corbett's opinion "that there are no well marked groups in the list corresponding to definite grades of rank; nor is there any indication that the Conqueror distributed his rewards in accordance with any pre-arranged scheme.(CMH, 5:510)" Thus, strictly based on landed wealth, this whole group can be considered peers.

[9]The grantees of the three border marches are merged with this list since they were entrusted with similar resposibility as the others. They are indicated by the word 'marcher'.

[10]The often noted ship list is not useful for much more than is already covered. However, it is interesting as a list of those who gave a notable amount of ships or knights but were not companions of the Conqueror or specifically left behind to guard the duchy. The following men are neither known companions nor were specifically left to guard the Duchy:

Roger Mortimer 120 ships
Robert count of Eu 60 ships
Roger of Montgomery 60 ships
Fulk of Aunoy 40 ships
Gerald the Steward 40 ships
Nicholas abbt. of St. Ouen 15 ships, 100 knights.

It would be interesting to discover where these men were and what they were doing? Perhaps, they were trying to invest in the possible success of the invasion without risking their lives; while at the same time consolidating their gains within the Duchy. It also perhaps shows the solidarity of the Norman aristocracy, or the strength of William II; that is, nearly all were expected to contribute and did.

CHART C INDICATORS:

The following are the sources of and name for each of the indicators used to determine aristocratic power, wealth or importance. These were condensed into the consolidated chart (appendix C). They are listed in roughly chronological order.

[1]Counts installed before 1050. From David Douglas, "The Earliest Norman Counts", English Historical Review, Vol. 61, (1946):129-156.

[2]Ordericus' Ship List. Scriptorus Rerum Gestorum Willelmi Conquestorus, ed. Giles:21-22.

[3]Two Men chosen for William II's special confidence. William of Poitiers, Gesta Guillelmi Ducis Normannorum et Regis Anglorum, ed. R Foreville, (1952):38.

[4]Foremost pre-conquest laity. Ordericus Vitalis, Historia Ecclesiastica, ed. A. Le Prevost and L. Delisle, Vol. II (Paris, 1855):121-122.

[5]Most constant pre-Conquest lay charter witnesses. David Douglas, William the Conqueror, (Berkeley, 1964):144.

[6]Most frequent pre-Conquest Attestors, Ordericus Vitalis, Historia Ecclesiastica, ed, Marjorie Chibnall, Vol. ii, (Oxforde, 1969):220.

[7]Listing of ten great men in Williams army at Hastings. William of Poitiers. Found in David Douglas, English Historical Documents, Vol ii, (second ed., 1981):272.

[8]Companions of the Conqueror at Hastings. David Douglas, "Companions of the Conqueror", History, Vol. xxvii, (1963):147.

[9]Men made prominent members of the Duchy. David Douglas, William the Conqueror,:185-186.

[10]Group of Intimate Barons left by William II to consolidate his hold on south and East England and extend it while he was in Normandy. Ordericus Vitalis, Ecclesiastical History, ed. Le Prevost, Vol. ii:167

[11]List of wealthiest magnates based on demesne

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[10]Group of Intimate Barons left by William II to consolidate his hold on south and East England and extend it while he was in Normandy. Ordericus Vitalis, Ecclesiastical History, ed. Le Prevost, Vol. ii:167

[11]List of wealthiest magnates based on demesne

lands in England. Robin Fleming, "Before and After: Monarchy and Aristocracy in Conquest England", Unpublished paper, (U.C.S.B., 1982).

[12]List of wealthiest magnates, based on Revenue of alloted baronies. Corbertt, Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. v:511.

[13]List of wealthiest magnates based on gross revenues of lands, both demesne and enfeoffments, held of the king in 1087. C. Warren Hollister, "Magnates and "Curiales" in Early Norman England", Viator, Vol. 8 (Berkeley, 1977):65.

[14]Illustrious laymen of William the Conquerors's reign. William of Poitiers, EHD, Vol. ii, (first ed., 1952):218-219.

[15]Counsellors of the Duke, both lay and ecclesiastical. William of Poitiers, Gesta Guillelmi.., ed, Foreville:135,149; Ordericus Vitalis, Historia Eccleciastica, ed. Le Prevost, Vol. ii:121

APPENDIX D: ORIGINS OF ARISTOCRATIC FAMILIES

	DUCAL	FROM OUTSIDE	NEW	POSSIBLY OLDER	UNKNOWN
Avranches				X[1]	
Beaumont				X[2]	
Belleme		X[3]			
Bp. Geoffrey of Countances					X[4]
Bishop Odo of Bayeux	X				
Counts of Brittany		X[5]			
Cts. of Eu under Godfrey	X				
Cts. of Eu under William	X				
Ct. Eustace of Boulogne		X[6]			
Counts of Evreux	X				
Geoffrey of Mandeville					X
Hugh of Grandmesnil			X[7]		
Montfort		X[8]			
Montgommery				X[9]	
Mortain	X				
Osbern	X[10]				
Tosny		X[11]			
Vicount Nigel of/Cotentin				X[12]	
Walter Giffard					X
Warenne			X[13]		

[1]Because of their reputed ancestor Ansfrid the Dane who is a signatory in many charters as early as 1015. See WC:93

[2]See argument on Beaumonts; pages thirteen and fourteen.

[3]See G.H. White, "The First House of Belleme," Royal Historical Society Transactions, fourth series, Vol xxii (1939).

[4]Geoffrey is from an unknown family, the Mowbray. He was very prominent in the post-Conquest period.

[5]See note twenty eight within main footnotes for reasons I include Counts of Brittany.

[6]From Bolougne which is outside of Normandy.

[7]He was only a knight during the battle of Val-es-Dunes in 1047; see Barbara Walker, The Grandmesnils: A Study in Norman Baronial Enterprise, U.C.S.B. dissertation, (Nov. 1968):22. Further, he does not appear in a charter until 1055; Dissertation:10.

[8]I assume they are from outside normandy, i.e. Montfort-sur-Risle. However they may have been in Normandy long enough to be considered a 'possibly older' family since Thurstan of Bastembourg is shown holding land in a ducal charter of 1027. However it was not until two generations later that the family made their real fortunes. See WC:88.

[9]See my arguments for the Montgommery's on page fourteen of this paper. Evidence for them extends into the late tenth century and is therefore about as old as it gets for anyone.

[10]I consider the Osbern's ducal because they are descended on both sides from the ducal family.

[11]Guardian of the castle of Tillieres-sur-Avre in 1014; see NB:158. He seems to have faded away by Duke Williams time.

[12]See WC:92.

[13]The Warenne's were of small account at the opening of Williams reign circa 1030; see WC:99

Rognvald

Rollo (Rolf)

William Longsword 925-945

Duke Richard I 942-996

Count Robert of Mortain

(I)William Warlenc gained comital title, later disposessed

GUNNOR b.c.950 d.c.1031

HERFAST (ARFEST), brother of Gunnor

Osbern the Steward — Emma

William Fitz Osbern — Adeliza

Count Rodulf, I/2 brother of Duke Richard I — Aubrey

(1)Hugh bp. of Bayeux die 1047

(2)John bp. of Avranches, Archbp. of Rouen

Ralph I or II of Tosny

Roger I — Godehildis, later married Count Richard of Evreux

Ralph IV of Tosny

Torf

Aveline (perhaps sister of Gunnor)

Thorold of Pont-Audemer

Humphrey of Vieilles

(I) Roger of Beaumont

Robert of Beaumont, fought at Hastings, Earl of Leicestershire

Ives of Creil Perhaps Regis Balistarius to King of France c. 945

Sofria or Sainfria, sister of Gunnor

Ives of Bellesme

(1)son

(2)son

(3)son

(4)son

(5)William Talvas — Mabel of Bellesme — Roger II of Montgomery

(6)son

Roger I of Montgomery — Joscelina

NOTE: NOT ALL CONNECTIONS ARE PROVEN.

SIGNIFIES DIRECT DUCAL LINE

SIGNIFIES ILLEGITIMATE OFFSPRING

SIGNIFIES SIBLING OF GUNNOR

Judith, daughter of Duke Geoffrey of Brittany

Count Alan III of Brittany, guardian of Duke William in his minority

Count Eudo

Duke Richard II

(1)Mauger archbp. of Rouen

(2)William count of Arques, dispossessed c. 1053

Duke Geoffrey of Brittany d.1008 — Hawisa

Emma, married into English royal family

Robert archbp. of Rouen, claimed to be count of Evreux, born c. 970

Richard count of Evreux — Godehildis, Widow of Roger I of Tosny

William count of Evreux

Godfrey

Gilbert count of Brionne

Baldwin of Meules great english land-holder, d. 1090

Richard Fitz Gilbert of Clare, d.1090

Count William of Eu d.c. 1090

Count Robert of Eu, fought at Hastings, d.c. 1090

Hugh bp. of Lisieux

William Bursac

Duke Richard III

Daughter connected the house of the Vicounts of Avranches and Vicount Anschitil's family

Count Geoffrey

Count Brian, perhaps fought at Hastings, perhaps Earl of Cornwall

Count Alan the Black, posessed possessed Richmond after 1093

Count Alan the Red, one of the wealthiest landowners in England

Count Stephen, possessed Richmond

Duke Robert I — Herleve, daughter of a tanner — Herluin vicount of Conteville

Odo bp. of Bayeux

Count Robert of Mortain

Eleanor — Baldwin IV of Flanders

related through the Ghent family and the Luxembourgs

Thurstan of Bastembourg (1)... (2)Hugh of Montfort

Hugh II of Montfort Sur Risle

Baldwin V of Flanders

Matilda of Flanders

DUKE WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

FUTURE KINGS OF ENGLAND AND NORMANDY

GENEALOGY

To: President's scholarship
committee

Re: The scholarship for
Martin Rauch

In fall of 1983 I was awarded a sum of money by the committee towards completion of my senior honor thesis in History. On June 1, 1983 I completed and submitted my paper "The Norman Aristocracy, Old or New?" It examines the controversy on the newness or oldness of the eleventh century Norman aristocracy. The thesis concurs with David Douglas that they were a relatively new aristocracy, but goes on to demonstrate that they were a couple of generations older than previously proven. Thank you very much. I would not have had the resources to complete this paper without your aid.

Again, thanks

Martin Rauch

Martin Rauch