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**THE VOCABULARY OF EMPIRE:
GERALD OF WALES AND THE “ANGEVIN EMPIRE”**

MA Thesis in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies

Central European University

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Maria Paula Rey

(Argentina)

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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Abstract

Since the late nineteenth century, historiography has applied the expression “Angevin Empire” to Henry II’s assemblage of lands, later inherited by his sons Richard and John. Since the 1960s, however, the expression has been largely debated. Many historians consider the use of the concept of *empire* as anachronistic or not consistent with the documentation. Recent works on the ‘Angevin Empire’ show how the emphasis today is on the semantics of the concept of ‘empire’ and on the need to reassess the language of the sources with a more critical approach. My research aims to establish whether there is or not an association between the Angevin Kings and imperial vocabulary, by focusing on Gerald of Wales’s late work *De Principis Instructione*. By analysing the imperial vocabulary he uses and also the alternative terminology applied when he is referring to the territories or power of the Angevin rulers, I intend to see if the vocabulary is in fact channelling imperial ideas about them.

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Table of contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: The “Angevin Empire” and historiography	4
Introduction.....	4
The debate on the “Angevin Empire”	6
The “Angevin Empire” in present-day historiography	14
Conclusion	16
Chapter 2: The concept of empire in the Middle Ages. A historical and semantic overview .	17
Introduction.....	17
<i>Imperium</i> during Roman times	18
The concept of empire from the early Middle Ages to the twelfth century.....	22
Other concepts of empire: Spain and the British Isles	31
Conclusion: a semantic map of <i>imperium</i> in the central Middle Ages	36
Chapter 3: Gerald of Wales and the “Angevin Empire”	39
Why Gerald of Wales?.....	39
A brief account of Gerald’s biographical background and works	41
Gerald of Wales’s conceptualization of the Angevin dominions	51
The imperial vocabulary in Book 1	52
<i>Imperium</i> and the Angevins: Books 2 and 3.....	56
The “alternative vocabulary”: <i>terra, regnum, terrae transmarinae</i>	63
Conclusion	67
Conclusion	68
Bibliography	71
Primary Sources	71
Secondary Literature	71

Appendices.....	80
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List of Abbreviations

- De Principis* Gerald of Wales *Instruction for a Rule (De Principis Instructione)*, edited and translated by Robert Bartlett. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Autobiography* *The Autobiography of Gerald of Wales*, edited by H.E. Butler. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005 [1937].
- Topographia* *Topographia Hibernica*. In *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera* 8/5, edited by J.F. Dimock. London, 1867.
- Expugnatio* *Expugnatio Hibernica*. In *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera* 8/5, edited by J.F. Dimock. London, 1867.

Introduction

This thesis deals with a debate that has long been present in the field of medieval British and French studies: the accuracy or not of the expression “Angevin Empire”. Coined in the late nineteenth century by the British historian Kate Norgate, the idea of an “Angevin Empire” survived in the historiography of the twentieth century to the point that it became a common term. This expression is usually used to define the territorial possessions ruled by Henry II and his heirs, which extended from the Anglo-Scottish border to the Pyrenees, including England, the Duchy of Normandy, Anjou, Maine, Touraine and the vast territories of the Duchy of Aquitaine, between the years 1154-1224.¹

The cases in which *imperium* appears in administrative sources related to the Angevins are debatable: neither Henry II nor his heirs ever used the concept to describe their dominions and it cannot be sure that they ever thought of them as a unified political and territorial entity.² However, the word *imperium* or even the display of imperial imagery seems to appear more frequently in narrative accounts, although the conclusion that can be drawn from these cases is highly debatable.³

There is a tension between the historiographical usage of “empire” and the language of the sources: our idea of what an “empire” is does not automatically equal the medieval understanding of *imperium*. That is why, to a large extent, historians who have either sustained or contested the idea of an “Angevin Empire” have been debating or applying

¹ Cf. Daniel Power, “Angevin (Plantagenet) Empire,” *The Encyclopedia of Empire*, ed. John MacKenzie (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016). The date of the extinction of the Angevin Empire might differ from one author to the other. Generally, most historians acknowledge its end in 1224, when under the reign of Henry III the Angevin dynasty lost Poitou and La Rochelle to the king of France. Other historians choose, as for example Daniel Power, the date of 1204, after Philip Augustus annexed Normandy, Maine, Anjou and Touraine. The year 1216, when King John died, is also used.

² The official records point into this direction. See on this matter Nicholas Vincent, “Regional Variations in the Charters of King Henry II (1154-1189),” in *Charters and Charter Scholarship in Britain and Ireland*, ed. M.T. Flanagan and J. Green (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 70-106.

³ Fanny Madeline, “The Idea of ‘empire’ as hegemonic power under the Norman and Plantagenet Kings (1066-1204),” in *Anglo-Norman Studies XL*, ed. by Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2018), 179-182.

different ideas associated with the concept of empire. Recent works, however, show a tendency to focus on the vocabulary of the sources with a more critical approach towards the complex semantics of “empire”. These works have the benefit to re-centre the debate over the “Angevin Empire” on the specific representations in contemporary sources, through an analysis of the specific vocabulary, the symbolic references or even the imperial imagery.⁴

The aim of this thesis is to test the language used by contemporaries to depict the territorial dominions of the Angevin dynasty, emphasising the need to develop an analysis centred on the specific vocabulary of the sources. This research will centre specifically on the work of Gerald of Wales (c. 1146-1223), because focusing on the overall perspective of an author has the benefit of allowing us to trace more deeply the conceptual elements used to address the Angevin dominions. Although the alternative of combining multiple brief examples from different sources has the advantage of providing a seemingly “global” idea of the phenomenon, it nevertheless runs the risk of taking the examples out of context, which can be misleading.

As a man who was related to royal, aristocratic, and ecclesiastical circles, Gerald’s works have allowed historians to deepen into the views of a contemporary of Henry II on the political and territorial situation within the British Isles.⁵ However, Gerald’s views on the totality of the Angevin dominions have been slightly overlooked. For this reason, this study will be mainly focused on one of his latest works, *De Principis Instructione* (c.1190-1217). This work does not only comprise a theoretical, moral and didactical approach towards the virtues of a ruler, but it also contains a historical account of Henry II’s reign.

⁴ Madeline, “The Idea of ‘empire’ as hegemonic power,” 179-196. Other important works are Fanny Madeline, “L’empire des Plantagenets. Espace féodal et construction territoriale,” *Hypothèses* 2008/1 (2008), 236-252 and “L’empire et son espace. Héritages, organisations et pratiques,” *Hypothèses* 2007/1 (2007), 213-225. Susan Reynolds, “Empires: a problem of comparative history,” *Historical Research* 79 (2006), 151-165. See also Stephen Curch’s short intervention in the website of the Angevin Network Project <https://www.uea.ac.uk/angevin-world/feature-of-the-month>

⁵ Cf. Georgia Henley and Joseph McMullen, eds., *Gerald of Wales. New Perspectives on a Medieval Writer and Critic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018), 1.

The thesis is divided in three parts. In the first chapter, I will give an account of the historiographical debate over the “Angevin Empire”, analysing the contribution of those historians who have argued either in favour or against the expression. I will try to show how to a large extent the debate is centred on different understandings of “empire”.

In chapter two I will provide a general chronological overview of the evolution of the concept of empire beginning in the Roman period, in order to show the different notions of the concept of “empire” in circulation during the western Middle Ages. I will insist particularly on the polysemy of the concept, and how its various notions and attributions coexisted during the medieval period. This chapter’s aim is twofold: first, it will allow me to establish a contrast between what the historiography has meant by the expression “Angevin empire” and its uses during the Middle Ages. Second, it will provide the background needed for the following chapter.

In chapter three I will focus on the analysis of Gerald of Wales’s *De Principis Instructione*. I will first consider the “imperial vocabulary” in Gerald’s work, concentrating on the recurrences of the word *imperium* and its case variations. I will then trace the specific vocabulary Gerald uses when addressing Henry II’s dominions (terms such as *regnum*, *dominium*, *terrae*). By considering the context of the usage of this vocabulary, and combining Gerald’s approach in Book 1 of *De Principis* and the historical account in Books 2 or 3, I will try to establish whether there is a particular or consistent way in which Gerald thought of the Angevin dominions.

Chapter 1: The “Angevin Empire” and historiography

In this chapter I will analyse the debate within British and French historiography regarding the idea of the existence of an “Angevin Empire”. I will focus first on the debates as they emerged in 1960s in order to identify the different uses of the concept by those historians who have actively engaged in the debate. Second, I will give an account of the most recent contributions which show a tendency to address the problem of the “Angevin Empire” from a perspective centred on the vocabulary of the sources. My aim is to show how the same expression “Angevin Empire” has allowed many different interpretations and how that can be understood as a consequence of the complexities of the concept of empire.

Introduction

As a result of its long history, political load and intrinsic polysemy, “empire” is a complex concept to work with.⁶ For the vast and far reaching notions it entails, it is often problematic when applied as an analytical tool. What is an empire? Is it possible to describe it in an abstract way or a definition of it can only make sense if it relies on historical cases? In order to define something as imperial, should we decide based on those elements *we* consider as constituting parts of an empire or should we only rely on the experience of imperial peoples and how *they* thought of it?⁷

These and many other questions have been asked for the past few years as a result of the *imperial turn*, the renovated interest within social sciences and humanities on empires. Although there has always been a concern on empires in the field of historical research, from

⁶ Fanny Madeline, “L’Empire et son espace. Héritages, organisations et pratiques,” *Hypothèses* 1 (2007): 216.

⁷ Susan Reynolds, “Empires: a Problem of Comparative History,” *Historical Research* 79 (2006): 151.

at least the past twenty years new questions and methodologies have been tried, all of which have a highly critical and contextual approach.⁸

In medieval British and French historiography, the expression “Angevin Empire” has been used to label the large group of lands under possession and rule of Henry II and later of his sons, Richard and John, between 1154 and 1224.⁹ This idea of an “Angevin Empire” has divided the academic field between those who consider it an appropriate terminology and theoretical framework that helps to understand the political and territorial structure of the Angevin dominions; and those who find it either anachronistic or misleading, for it lacks support in the documentation.

The main disagreement among historians seems to be linked to different ideas about empire and what makes an empire, and the debate has mostly been, explicitly or not, connected with that. Our understanding of empire is marked by the experience of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which created a gap between us and previous ideas of empire.¹⁰ This does not mean that the concept has lost all its previous connotations. It simply means that the significance it has today possesses other layers of meaning.¹¹ Historians involved in this debate, however, do not usually have a critical approach towards the concept and it is often unclear what their understanding of “empire” is. Most of the time, their usage

⁸ See Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History. Power and the politics of difference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Also Krishan Kumar, *Visions of Empire. How Five Imperial Regimes Shaped the World* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017).

⁹ French historians prefer the expression “Plantagenêt Empire”. It is essentially used in the same way. Martin Aurell explains briefly why: “Nous avons retenu Plantagenêt pour nous plier à l’usage, somme toute légitime, des historiens français. En revanche, à l’exception de John Le Patourel, nos collègues anglais préfèrent Angevin Empire, d’après l’expression forgée en 1887 par Kate Norgate et reprise pour titre des ouvrages de James H. Ramsay (1903) et John Gillingham (1984 et 2001). Cette option ancienne présente l’avantage de rattacher les domaines du roi d’Angleterre à la maison d’Anjou, et d’insister donc plus sur la lignée continentale et sur le caractère familial de sa domination.” See Martin Aurell, *L’Empire des Plantagenêt 1154-1224* (Paris: Perrin, 2004), 15. See also on this matter John Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire* (London: Arnold, 2001), 3.

¹⁰ Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500–c. 1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 14. See also

¹¹ An example of this is the almost natural association between empire and colonization that is often found in Anglo-Norman studies. See Francis West, “The Colonial History of the Norman Conquest?” *History* 84 (1999): 219-236.

of the concept is based on the assumption that there is a general and common understanding of it.

The complexity of this situation is enhanced by the fact that there is no clear and explicit proof in the sources that this assemblage of lands was ever regarded as an empire by contemporaries, a fact even admitted by those who sustain the use of the expression.¹² When addressing the lands of the Angevins as a whole, the language of the sources is rather vague: it seems clear that there was no contemporary name for them.¹³ This is why John Gillingham has ironically called it “the empire with no name.”¹⁴ It can be argued, therefore, that the debate on the “Angevin Empire” is not only a debate about the Angevins and their rule, but it is also a debate about the concept of “empire”.

In the following section I will give an overview of the debate by analysing briefly the main contributions to it. The historiography about the “Angevin Empire” is large and has many ramifications, and it would be hard to give a full account of it in only a few pages. Therefore, I have included only the opinion of those historians who have explicitly taken part in the debate and I believe are the most significant for a summary of it.

The debate on the “Angevin Empire”

The expression “Angevin Empire” was coined in the late nineteenth century by the British historian Kate Norgate and it appeared for the first time in 1887 in her book *England under the Angevin Kings*.¹⁵ She used this expression to emphasize not only Henry II’s successful expansionist policies, but most importantly his Angevin origins. By doing this,

¹² Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*. See also Fanny Madeline, “The idea of ‘empire’ as hegemonic power under the Norman and Plantagenet kings (1066-1204),” in *Anglo-Norman Studies XL*, ed. Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2018), 181.

¹³ Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*, 2.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Norgate, Kate, *England under the Angevin Kings*, Vol. II (London and New York: McMillan & Co., 1887), 169-228.

Norgate was shifting the dominant nationalistic approach of British historiography, essentially dominated by Anglocentric and nationalistic perspectives.¹⁶

For Norgate, the “Angevin Empire” was neither an “English empire” nor a “French empire”. For her, the Angevin dominions were a “consistent whole” formed by two independent parts. First, England, which in Henry’s mind constituted an independent kingdom where he ruled as the highest authority, and where he imposed his power on Scotland, Ireland and Wales. Second, his continental possessions in France, with their heartland in Anjou and nominally subjected to the King of France. These two cores were not subordinated to one another and could not be ruled in equal terms. As she states,

It was impossible to deal with these two groups of states on one and the same principle; and Henry had never attempted to do so. (...) As a necessary consequence, Henry’s policy had also two centres throughout his reign. The key to it as a whole lies in its blending of two characters united in one person, yet essentially distinct: the character of the king of England and supreme lord of the British Isles, and the character of the head of the house of Anjou (...).¹⁷

This idea of the existence of an “Angevin Empire” became part of the vocabulary of the field very quickly. “Empire” seemed to be an appropriate concept to name the complex and extensive territorial gathering under the rule of the Angevin dynasty. Influential authors such as Frederick M. Powicke, Austin L. Poole and Jacques Boussard used the expression and by doing so helped it to become popular.¹⁸

It was not until the middle of the 1960s that this idea began to be questioned. The works of John Le Patourel and his theory of “feudal empires” renewed the interest of medieval historians in the polity built by the Angevin rulers. In a seminal article published in

¹⁶ For a general understanding of British historiography during Norgate’s times, see Michael Bentley, *Modernizing England’s Past. English Historiography in the Age of Modernism, 1870- 1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). See also Aurell, *L’Empire des Plantagenêt*, 15 and Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*, 2-3.

¹⁷ Norgate, *England Under the Angevin Kings*, 185-186. See also Stephen Church, “Was there an Angevin Empire?” available online at <https://www.uea.ac.uk/angevin-world/feature-of-the-month>, 3.

¹⁸ See Jacques Boussard, *Le gouvernement d’Henri II Plantagenêt* (Paris: Librairie d’Argences, 1956); Austin L. Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta, 1087-1216* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951); F.M. Powicke, *The Loss of Normandy (1189-1204). Studies in the History of the Angevin Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1913).

1965, Le Patourel proposed the existence of “feudal empires” which were the result of the expansionist will of dynastic groups. These families had acquired great political and territorial powers after the disintegration of the Carolingian Empire.¹⁹ The need of these dynasties to secure their power and the control over their lands created, for Le Patourel, an expansionist logic based on war, inheritance and marriage. This had given birth to at least three great dynastic and territorial cores: Normandy (which later incorporated the kingdom of England), Aquitaine and Anjou.

From Le Patourel’s point of view, this power structure changed significantly after Henry II started to actively seek power. As heir to the county of Anjou, Normandy and England, and after his marriage with Leonor of Aquitaine, Henry created a sort of “empire of empires”: the Angevins were now in control of all the post-Carolingian “feudal empires” and the kingdom of England.²⁰ For Le Patourel, this meant that Henry’s empire was a “French feudal empire”: despite Henry’s active campaigns in Britain, his interests remained focused in France.²¹ This assertion was an intention to argue against Anglocentric perspectives which regarded the “Angevin Empire” as a kind of pre-history of the later British Empire.²²

Le Patourel’s work encouraged the debate and as a result a number of publications appeared in the 1970s. These works, also highly influenced by structuralism, did not intend to question the utility of the concept, but were mainly concerned with the organization of the Angevin Empire, its function and its nature. The articles by Warren Hollister and Thomas Keefe, and by Bernard Bachrach are representative of this concern about the “architecture” of

¹⁹ John Le Patourel, “The Plantagenet Dominions,” *History* 50, no. 170 (1965): 290. See also John Le Patourel, *Feudal Empires. Norman and Plantagenet*, ed. by Michael Jones (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984).

²⁰ Le Patourel, “The Plantagenet Dominions,” 294. This is why Le Patourel speaks of “Plantagenet dominions” rather than “Angevin Empire” to address Henry’s polity. “Angevin Empire” designates the original territorial dominion of the Angevin counts, while Henry’s creation goes beyond that.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 295.

²² *Ibid.*, 295-296.

Henry's empire.²³ One of their key questions was whether the "Angevin Empire" was the result of an active "imperial" policy or of a series of accidental events. Hollister and Keefe postulated the idea that this "empire" was not the result of unintended events, but the consequence of the active work of Henry II between 1152 and 1156.²⁴ Inspired by their work, a few years later, Bernard Bachrach proposed an alternative theory of the origins of the "Angevin Empire". For him, the architect of the "empire" had not been Henry II: in his opinion, its origins were to be found in the expansionist intentions of the Counts of Anjou as early as the tenth century.²⁵ He was, to some extent, relying on Le Patourel's assertions regarding the French feudal empires.²⁶

It was also in the 1970s that voices questioning the idea of the "Angevin Empire" raised. In 1973, Wilfred L. Warren published perhaps the best biography ever written about Henry II.²⁷ There, Warren made clear his disagreement with the notion of empire. For him, the evidence of a unified administration was scarce, and Henry's plans for the future of these dominions did clearly reveal the absence of a notion of unity. Henry gave his sons part of his lands while still alive, and the only reason Richard inherited the totality of the dominions in 1189 was due to the premature death of his two older brothers.²⁸ Warren had an alternative proposition. Since for him the Angevin lands were "no more than a loose confederation of client states", Henry's possessions could be better regarded as a "commonwealth of seven internally self-governing dominions linked merely by dynastic ties and oath-takings (...)."²⁹

²³ Warren Hollister and Thomas Keefe, "The Making of the Angevin Empire," *Journal of British Studies* 12, (1973):1-25. Also Bernard Bachrach, "The Idea of the Angevin Empire," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 10 (1978): 293-299.

²⁴ Hollister and Keefe, "The Making of the Angevin Empire," 3.

²⁵ Bachrach, "The Idea of the Angevin Empire," 295.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 293.

²⁷ Wilfred Lewis Warren, *Henry II* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991).

²⁸ Warren, 228-230.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 230.

In 1975 James Holt pronounced himself on the matter during a Raleigh Lecture on History.³⁰ Although his main concern was to explain the collapse of the former Anglo-Norman realm forged after the Norman Conquest of 1066, he shared his views regarding the “Angevin Empire”. Although he did not deny the idea, Holt put a question mark next to it. His intervention is particularly interesting because it shows clearly how preconceptions about the concept have often played a part in the debate. For him, Angevin rule encouraged “the development of strong centralized systems of government within provinces of their dominions,” and the existence of what “may fairly be described as imperial acts” –for they were issued for the totality of the dominions– supports the idea of the empire.³¹ It stands very clear that these assertions have the same starting point: the association between empire and centralized administration, in a similar way to Warren’s. The same assumption is what makes Holt ultimately doubt of the imperial label: the combination of practical difficulties to have a functioning centralized system of administration is for him one of the main reasons to question the concept.³²

In 1984 two big events for the Angevin debate occurred. On the one hand, a conference was held at Fontevraud, France, whose results were published two years later.³³ Writing the conclusion notes for the dossier, and acknowledging the results of the different contributions, Robert Henri Bautier suggested to abandon the idea of an Angevin Empire and replace it for the idea of an “espace Plantagenêt.”³⁴ His general conclusions about the conference were that most participants were not entirely comfortable, within their respective fields, with the idea of “empire,” and the general opinion was that Henry’s possessions were

³⁰ James Holt, “The end of the Anglo-Norman realm,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 61 (1975): 223-265.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 227.

³² *Ibid.*, 229-230. Just like Warren, Holt adds the observation that there was a lack of political intention of the Angevin kings to guarantee the permanent union of their lands. See Holt, 241-242.

³³ Robert- Henri Bautier, “« Empire Plantagenêt » ou « espace Plantagenêt ». Y eut-il une civilisation du monde Plantagenêt ?” *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 113-114 (1986): 139-147.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 146-147. It should be remembered that in French historiography “Plantagenêt” is used instead of “Angevin.” See footnote 9.

only an assemblage of lands and the result of hazardous events.³⁵ The absence of common religious and administrative practices was proof that it was difficult to consider the Angevin land's as an "empire." Although the idea of an "espace Plantagenêt" was not successful in replacing the idea of empire, it did influence recent perspectives, such as Fanny Madeline's, enhanced by the effects of the *spatial turn* in French historiography.³⁶

The other relevant event of 1984 was the publication of John Gillingham's book *The Angevin Empire*.³⁷ Gillingham is still one of the most relevant scholars on Angevin studies, and has always been an eagerly defender of the use of "empire".³⁸ In this short book, Gillingham was seeking to revive the discussion about the "Angevin Empire" by going back to the basis set by the works of Kate Norgate and John Le Patourel. From Norgate, he found important the spirit of questioning Anglocentric perspectives. From Le Patourel, Gillingham not only recovered the idea of "feudal empires", but also the idea of the "Angevin Empire" as a French one. After all, he said, Angevin rulers were "French princes who numbered England among their possessions."³⁹

For Gillingham it was important to show that the "Angevin Empire" was not just the result of hazardous events, but it was the consequence of the active interests of the House of Anjou.⁴⁰ Although he accepted the existence of a slow tendency towards the development of administrative practices, he admitted that once the empire collapsed little was left that resemble any sort of cultural or political community.⁴¹ An exception was the survival of common economic interests among the different urban centres of both England and the

³⁵ Bautier, "« Empire Plantagenêt » ou « espace Plantagenêt », "146.

³⁶ See Meredith Cohen and Fanny Madeline, eds., *Space in the Medieval West. Places, Territories and Imagined Geographies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014); Fanny Madeline, "L'empire et son espace. Héritages," 213-225. See also Fanny Madeline, *Les Plantagenêts et leur empire. Construire un territoire politique* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014).

³⁷ Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*.

³⁸ See also Gillingham's book of essays, *The English in the Twelfth Century. Imperialism, national identity and political values* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2008). In that book he addresses fundamental issues for British history such as national values, ideologies and general perceptions of identity.

³⁹ Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*, 1.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁴¹ Ibid., 80-82 and 116.

French lands. As he states, “This economic interest was strong enough to create in those towns an active political will in favour of retaining the ‘imperial connection’.”⁴²

Perhaps the most problematic aspect of this work is the lack of a clear definition of empire or even an attempt to deepen in the problematic aspects of this concept. Although many authors have more than often skipped that step, mostly because “Angevin Empire” works very often as a rubric, Gillingham’s active defence of the terminology calls for a more explicit explanation. He only asserts that:

Unquestionably if used in conjunction with atlases in which Henry II’s lands are coloured red, it is a dangerous term, for then overtones of the British Empire are unavoidable and politically crass. But in ordinary English usage ‘empire’ can mean nothing more specific than an extensive territory, especially an aggregate of many states, ruled over by a single ruler.⁴³

Assuming a definition of empire as belonging to common sense, as if there were a universally shared notion of what an empire is, has analytical consequences. This was left without major changes in the second edition of the book, issued in 2002.

However, in a recent work published in 2016 Gillingham tried to supply a definition of empire suitable for his interpretation of the functioning of the Angevin dominions. Possibly forced by the recent development of imperial studies and their interest in reassessing the concept of empire from critical perspectives, in this publication Gillingham admitted that “the fact that contemporaries only rarely referred to this assemblage of lands as an empire has the very considerable advantage of forcing us to make explicit the criteria by which we employ the term ‘empire’.”⁴⁴ After this assertion, Gillingham quotes Stephen Howe’s general definition of empire, who describes it as a large political body consisting of a core territory inhabited by a superior ethnic group, and a periphery usually composed by conquered

⁴² Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*, 116.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 3

⁴⁴ John Gillingham, “Bureaucracy: the English State and the Crisis of the Angevin Empire, 1199-1205,” in *Bureaucracy in World History. From Late Antiquity to the Twentieth century*, ed. P. Crooks and T. Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 202.

territories.⁴⁵ For him, the core lands were the inherited ones: Anjou, Main, Touraine, Normandy and England. The rest of the territories, Aquitaine, Wales, Ireland and Brittany were peripheral.⁴⁶ This definition suited Gillingham's idea of the structure of the Angevin Empire, and settled for him the discussion regarding the definition of the concept.

One further work, which has become essential for Angevin studies, is Martin Aurell's *L'Empire des Plantagenêt*.⁴⁷ In this book, Aurell seeks to understand the functioning of the Angevin Empire by analysing the power structures, the ideological framework and the propagandistic tools that contributed to the imposition of Angevin power.⁴⁸ Although he does not give an *a priori* definition of empire, Aurell seems to have the idea that there was an intention, among Angevin Kings, to homogenize the territories in ideological terms. He sees the development of a primitive bureaucratic system around the court, the core of the empire and of the government, where there was an ideological superstructure developing.⁴⁹

From this short summary of some of the main contributions to the debate, it seems clear that the main concern of these historians, with the exception perhaps of Martin Aurell, was centred on the structure and functioning of the "empire". For them, the Angevin lands could be regarded or not as an empire by considering their level of centralized administration, cultural or political homogenization or the intention of the Angevins of preserving that structure intact –which would have meant they regarded it as a unit.

⁴⁵ Stephen Howe's defines an empire like: "[A] large political body which rules over territories outside its original borders. It has a core territory whose inhabitants usually continue to form the dominant ethnic group, and an extensive periphery of dominated areas, usually acquired by conquest, but sometimes, especially in the medieval world, expansion comes about by the intermarriage of ruling families from previously independent states..." See the quote in Gillingham, "Bureaucracy," 202. For the full definition, see Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 14-15.

⁴⁶ Gillingham, "Bureaucracy," 202-203.

⁴⁷ Aurell, *L'Empire des Plantagenêt*.

⁴⁸ For another interesting work on the ideology of the Angevin kings see Amaury Chauou, *L'idéologie Plantagenêt* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2001).

⁴⁹ Aurell, *L'Empire des Plantagenêt*, 31.

The “Angevin Empire” in present-day historiography

More recent studies on the “Angevin Empire”, however, show an increasing interest in addressing the debate from new perspectives, basically calling for a more attentive look at the language of the sources as a means to understand what contemporaries thought of their political and territorial realities.

In the past few years, it has been mainly the work of Fanny Madeline that has given the debate a new colouring. Apart from her focus on the territorialisation of power and the creation of a political space, she has always had a critical approach to the concept of empire, which enriches her perspective.⁵⁰ On a very recent article published in 2018, she addresses the “imperial styling” of the Norman and Angevin kings in order to show how their language of power was closely related to the medieval idea of *imperium*. Starting from the idea that a language of empire existed and that it carried not only the idea of hegemonic power but also supremacy and universal pretensions, she focuses on “the occurrences and uses of the word *imperium* in the texts written under the Norman and Plantagenet kings.”⁵¹ Although she recognises the absence of the term in administrative documents, she insists that they can be commonly found in historical narratives, particularly within the British context.⁵² Her main argument is that during the Norman and Angevin periods there was a hybrid idea of empire which combined notions of hegemonic power as well as Roman and Carolingian symbolism. This, in her opinion, supported “a political project not only of hegemony but also of supremacy.”⁵³

Another example of the new interest in the semantic of empire is Nicholas Vincent’s work on the official records of Henry II’s chancery, which has shown how *imperium* is never

⁵⁰ Fanny Madeline, *Les Plantagenêts et leur empire*. Also Madeline, “L’empire et son espace.”

⁵¹ Madeline, “The idea of ‘Empire’ as hegemonic power,” 181.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

used by the Angevin Kings.⁵⁴ He analyses the specific formulaic and linguistic evidence in the records to try to establish “whether particular diplomatic forms were reserved for particular regions of the Plantagenet dominion, and in the process to establish what the charters themselves may tell us of the king’s approach to the various lands over which he ruled.”⁵⁵ He concludes that there is a clear distinction in the uses of *regnum* and *corona* specifically for England.⁵⁶ To signify Henry’s wider territorial control, however, the words *dominium*, *potestas* or *terra*, the adjectives *transmarina* and *cismarina* when associated to the land, or even the expressions *citra et ultra mare* are the most frequent when the charters are acknowledging the cross-Channel nature of Henry’s lands.⁵⁷

Vincent also notices that more than specifying geographical regions, the charters are usually addressed to peoples, identified by their regional origins.⁵⁸ As he states, Henry’s chancery, as the administrative “hub upon which all manner of the king’s subjects were obliged to converge”, derived its power not from the “unbending central authority, but from a willingness to (...) allow the English what was appropriate to England, and the Normans or the Angevins what was appropriate to Normandy or Anjou.”⁵⁹

These two cases show how the specific language of the documentation has become a focus of inquiry when addressing the wider debate on the “Angevin Empire”. The type of sources chosen for the analysis is a key element to take into consideration, however. While it seems clear from the administrative records that the idea of an “empire” was never used to

⁵⁴ He states that the debate surrounding the idea of an Angevin Empire is “(...) a debate in many ways founded upon a wholly anachronistic confusion between the medieval concept of *imperium* and the modern idea of ‘empire’, itself far from universally agreed.” See Nicholas Vincent, “Regional Variations in the Charters of King Henry II (1154-1189),” in *Charters and Charter Scholarship in Britain and Ireland*, ed. M.T. Flanagan and J. Green (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 70-106. As he shows, *imperium* occurs in only one charter which is a forgery. See page 78.

⁵⁵ Vincent, “Regional Variations,” 71.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 95.

refer to Henry's dominions as a whole, narrative sources appeal to a larger range of symbolic elements that should be treated carefully.⁶⁰

Conclusion

This brief account of the main contributions to the debate on the Angevin Empire showed how by the same expression “Angevin Empire”, historians have more than often interpreted different things. If from the 1960s the debate had been essentially centred on the discussion of the structure and functioning of the empire, recent contributions show an approach which is more focused on the languages and symbolic of power. My concerns in this work are very much related to these new perspectives. By considering the specific language used by contemporaries, we can get a glimpse of their worldviews and thoughts. If we want to understand if the Angevin Kings or their entourage considered their power or dominions as anything resembling the idea of empire, we must first look at what an empire meant for them.

⁶⁰ Madeline, “The idea of ‘Empire’ as hegemonic power,” 192. I will discuss this further in chapter 3.

Chapter 2: The concept of empire in the Middle Ages. A historical and semantic overview

The aim of this chapter is to describe the different notions of the concept of “empire” in the western Middle Ages, combining both a chronological overview and a semantic map of its different meanings and uses. I will start by providing an outline of the semantic changes experienced by the concept of *imperium* during the Roman period, since most of its overlapping senses were to remain during the Middle Ages. I will then sketch the development of the concept during the medieval period, focusing on its “Roman” notions, that is, the Papal and later Carolingians use of *imperium*, and also the “non-Roman” ideas, especially in Spain and Britain. To conclude, I will attempt a general semantic map of the concept, trying to acknowledge all the coexisting meanings of empire during the medieval period that, as I will show in the next chapter, can be traced in Gerald of Wales’s work.

Introduction

During the Middle Ages, different understandings and assertions of the concept of empire coexisted.⁶¹ Although related to each other, and ultimately connected to the same historical reference, the Ancient Roman Empire, the meaning of the concept varied significantly during this period as a result of political and intellectual changes and challenges.⁶² To draw a fixed semantic map of the concept of empire in the Middle Ages is, therefore, a hard task and runs the risk of creating an artificial image of its uses and applications. The different meanings of the concept should not be regarded as mutually

⁶¹ James Muldoon, *Empire and Order. The Concept of Empire, 800-1800* (London: MacMillan, 1999), 9.

⁶² Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World. Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500-c.1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 12. Robert Folz provides the best account of the evolution of the concept in the Middle Ages. See Robert Folz, *The Concept of Empire in Western Europe from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969).

exclusive or even chronologically determined, for they often coincide and overlap. As John Richardson states, conceptual polysemy is tricky, “for as a word gains additional meanings and applications it does not necessarily lose the old ones (...).”⁶³ If we bear in mind the complex nature of *imperium*, it is possible to identify general features which shape the basic understandings of the concept during the Middle Ages.

***Imperium* during Roman times**

The first element to be regarded when dealing with the concept of empire in the medieval period is the fact that it was, essentially, inherited from the Roman tradition. It was passed down from Rome to further generations by the legacy of its political, religious and most importantly, literary tradition. In the words of Anthony Pagden, the *Imperium romanum* “has always had a unique place in the political imagination of western Europe”, for its achievements have stimulated the actions and discourses of men for many centuries.⁶⁴

In its original sense, attested from at least the third century BC, *imperium* was used to denote the power of command of the Roman magistrates and pro-magistrates, by which they could exercise legal, public and military prerogatives.⁶⁵ It was also used, however, in the

⁶³ John S. Richardson, *The Language of Empire. Rome and the idea of Empire from the Third Century BC to the Second Century AD* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 8.

⁶⁴ Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 11-12. In the West, Rome was to remain the symbolic and historical emblem that influenced all subsequent empires. J. S. Richardson states that: “The vocabulary of empire, as it has developed in European contexts since the period of the Roman Empire, reveals clearly enough the significance of the inheritance of Rome for the regimes which have followed it. From Charlemagne to the Tsars, from British imperialism to Italian Fascism, the language and symbols of the Roman republic and the Roman emperors have been essential elements in the self-expression of imperial powers.” See Richardson, “*Imperium Romanum: Empire and the Language of Power*,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 81 (1991): 1. See also Krishan Kumar, *Visions of Empire. How five imperial regimes shaped the world* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017), 31 and 58-62.

⁶⁵ As Richardson points out, the original nature of *imperium* is to a large extent obscure, and its development before the 3rd century is hard to assess apart from the testimonies of later authors. He highlights, however, the sacral connotations regarding the process of investing the elected magistrates with the *imperium*: “Although closely associated with the elected magistrates, it was not election by the *comitia centuriata* which gave the consul or the praetor his *imperium*. Election had to be followed by the curious formality of the *lex curiata* (...) as a result of which the magistrate was given the right to take the auspices. Once he had been voted the *lex curiata*, the magistrate elect proceeded to take the auspices to confirm the acceptance by Jupiter of his holding of the *imperium*. It was not only the people who decided, but also the god.” Richardson, “*Imperium Romanum*,” 1-2 and 5-6. See also Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 12.

more abstract sense of “order” and also “power”, a meaning that would remain throughout the period.⁶⁶ During the last years of the Republic it widened its meaning to refer to the power of the Romans over other peoples, synthesized in the expression “*imperium populi Romani*”.⁶⁷ Although at this point the idea of *imperium* as a territorial entity was not yet fully developed, the concept began to acquire geographical undertones.⁶⁸ The association of the word *imperium* with the power exercised by the people of Rome over others reflects the military and political challenges of Rome’s territorial expansion. The further connection between conquest, territorial expansion and *imperium* was to enhance the military connotations of the concept.⁶⁹

It is at the beginning of the first century that the idea of “*Imperium Romanum*” to denote the territorial extension under the control of the Romans finally crystalizes.⁷⁰ *Imperium* began then to acquire the meaning of a territorial entity, unified under one rule, a connotation that would become one of the major features of the concept. This development coincided with the consequences of the political changes that gave birth to the Principate. During this period, the title of *imperator*, originally owned by those magistrates who had been given *imperium*, became “limited to a group of army commanders whose *imperium* derived not, as had that of the Republican magistrate, from the civil sphere (*domi*), but

⁶⁶ Richardson, *The Language of Empire*, 183.

⁶⁷ According to Richardson, the expression first appears in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, a handbook of rhetoric from the 80s BC. See *The Language of Empire*, 44 and 183-184.

⁶⁸ This phenomenon can be better understood when it is analysed, as Richardson does, in parallel with the development of the term *provincia*. Originally, *provincia* was a technical word which was related to the responsibility of those who hold *imperium*: it was associated with the task or the role assigned to the holder of *imperium*. In Cicero, for example, it is mostly used to refer to the areas of activity of magistrates, often in a geographical sense. When the idea of “*imperium populi Romani*” develops, so does *provincia*: it appears more often in the sense of the area under control of the people of Rome, although its geographical sense is not yet fully developed. See Richardson, *The Language of Empire*, 79 and 185. On this matter see also Andrew Lintott, “What was the ‘*Imperium Romanum*’?,” *Greece & Rome* 28 (1981): 53-67.

⁶⁹ Doubtlessly, the association between empire, conquest and military superiority was to have a long history and it is still in existence today. As Pagden states, “Since all empires began with conquest, the association of ‘empire’, understood as extended territorial dominion with military rule has lasted as long as imperialism itself.” See *Lords of All the World*, 14-15.

⁷⁰ Richardson, “*Imperium Romanum*,” 5-6. The historian Sallust is perhaps the first to have used the expression *Imperium Romanum* to signify the territorial extent under authority of Rome. See Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 13.

instead from the military (*militiae*).”⁷¹ During the following two centuries, the title usually functioned as an honorary recognition to a military leader after a victory.⁷²

But with the evolution of Augustus’s and his successors’ authority, *imperium* became increasingly associated with the individual power of the *Princeps*. During the first and early second centuries the *imperium populi romani*, the power of the Roman people, began to be absorbed by the *imperium* of the *Princeps*.⁷³ The idea of *imperium* as power and capacity to rule was then turning into an exclusive prerogative of the single ruler. With time, the idea of supreme military command and supreme legislative authority also developed to become privileges of the emperor.⁷⁴ The combination of these elements, the development of a geographical idea of *imperium* and its association to the singular rule of a *princeps*, ultimately led to what we would now acknowledge as the “Roman Empire”: a complex political and territorial entity under one individual, absolute ruler.⁷⁵

It was also under the Principate that “empire” acquired yet another connotation. As a consequence of Rome’s successful territorial expansion and the influence of Greek ideas, *imperium* merged with ideas of universalism. The Roman notion of a universal empire developed under the influence of the Hellenic idea of *oikoumene* and the Stoic idea “of a single human community united by the universality of reason”.⁷⁶ Robert Folz points out how Alexander the Great’s conquests underpinned the feeling among Greek philosophers that

⁷¹ Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 14.

⁷² Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 5. See also Richard Koebner, *Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 6.

⁷³ As Pagden explains, “Augustus, although he paid due deference to the ‘empire of the Roman people’ (*imperium populi romani*), expected the honour due to the people to be paid to him. And by the first century Roman jurists Gaius and Ulpian had both come to insist that the *imperium* of the ‘prince emperor’ absorbed that of the *imperium populi Romani*.” See Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 14.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁵ Richardson, *The Language of Empire*, 117 and 185. Krishan Kumar points this out very eloquently: “(...) the fact that empire is thought of as it is today is ultimately due to the shift in meaning that took place as Rome moved from the *imperium populi Romani* to the *imperium Romanum*. Roman usage had, therefore, by the time of the first century CE linked the two main meanings of “empire”: absolute authority or sovereignty, and rule over a complex territorial polity.” Krishan Kumar, *Visions of Empire*, 29. See Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 6.

⁷⁶ Kumar, *Visions of Empire*, 30 and 64-66. See also Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 19-24 and Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 4.

their civilization dominated the *oikoumene*, and that it had a civilizing mission over barbarism. By the second century, Rome came to be regarded as a continuation of the Hellenic *oikoumene*, and a century later *imperium* had come to be identified with the *orbis terrarum*.⁷⁷ The Roman Empire was thus equalled to the “world”, and the emperor became a *dominus totius orbis*, a “lord of all the world”.⁷⁸

The idea of the uniqueness of the Roman Empire and its mission was enhanced by Christianity, particularly after Constantine’s conversion, when the idea of an *orbis romanus* came to coincide with that of the *orbis christianus*.⁷⁹ Despite the existence of other political entities and other religions, the Roman- Christian worldview embraced the idea that “there could only be one emperor and only one religion.”⁸⁰ The emperor had now the responsibility not only to protect Christendom, but to extend the Christian faith and make those non-Christians embrace it.⁸¹ The institutionalization of the Church and the development of the authority of the bishop of Rome also established new power relations within the Empire that were to reshape the boundaries of imperial authority. This territorial, cultural and political merging of Christianity and the Roman Empire was to have a profound and lasting impact during the Middle Ages.⁸²

⁷⁷ Cf. Kumar, *Visions of Empire*, 64-79. Roman law, perhaps one of the greatest achievements of Ancient Rome, also reflected and was closely linked to the development of the universal idea of empire. “The civil law itself, which had been created by human reason (...) out of an understanding of the natural law, was the human law, the *lex humanus*. Those who lived by it were, by definition, ‘humans’; those who did not, were not. But as it was also the Roman people who were responsible for the creation of the law, there was a sense in which only the Romans could be described as human. (...) Those who were rational, and thus in some deep sense human, were those who lived within the limits of the empire (...) Roman and subsequently Christian social and political thinking was, and would remain, heavily dependent of the semantics of the Roman Law.” Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 20. The process of extension of the citizenship to those conquered inhabitants of the Empire is to be regarded as crucial in this sense.

⁷⁸ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 4 and Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 23.

⁷⁹ Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 24.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 27.

⁸¹ Ibid., 30-31.

⁸² Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 3-4. Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 24 and 29-30, where Pagden explains how the Roman notion of *pietas* “allowed the classical theory of empire to be absorbed relatively easily by its Christian successors”.

The concept of empire from the early Middle Ages to the twelfth century

The concept of empire survived the collapse of the Roman institutions in the West, and during the Early Middle Ages it remained closely attached to its Roman and Christian inheritance. Mainly as a result of the active policy of the Roman popes, the ideal of the Roman Christian Empire endured as a political aspiration that became real when Charlemagne was crowned emperor in 800.⁸³ But although the concept remained essentially associated with the idea of the Roman Empire, it was to preserve an intrinsic polysemy which allowed the development of alternative notions, as for example in the cases of England and Spain.⁸⁴

It is possible to affirm that the empire during the Early Medieval period survived more as an idea and ideal than concrete political reality. After the deposition of the last emperor, the Roman Church, led by the popes, set itself the task to become the holder of the *Christianum imperium*. The legitimization of the papacy became closely connected to its idea of the empire as the “political expression of Christian universality”.⁸⁵ The question of the pope’s responsibility towards the empire motivated the minds of many authors and became indeed one of the key elements in the theories of papal authority.

The document known as the *Constitutum Constantini* is perhaps one of the best testimonies of the way the papacy articulated its ideal of universal *imperium*.⁸⁶ Although the document is known to be a forgery made during the first half of the eighth century, and was

⁸³ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 5 and 90.

⁸⁴ I will address these cases in the following pages. It should be noticed that besides the Christian idea of the Roman Empire, *imperium* preserved its abstract meanings and connotations. It remained used as a general word for “command”, “order”, “rule”, or to acknowledge other general ideas, such as that of rule over a wide extension of territory or ultimate authority.

⁸⁵ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 9.

⁸⁶ Johannes Fried differentiates between *Constitutum* and *Donatio Constantini*. According to him, the document (text) is known as the *Constitutum Constantini*, and the idea and memory of the event is often referred to as the *Donatio Constantini*. Cf. Johannes Fried, “*Donation of Constantine*” and “*Constitutum Constantini*”. *The Misinterpretation of a Fiction and its Original Meaning* (De Gruyter: Berlin and New York, 2007), see chapter 2 and 3. For my purposes here, both can be regarded as interchangeable.

probably known to be so even during the Middle Ages, the *Constitutum Constantini* stands as the papal claim of jurisdiction over the Western Empire.⁸⁷ In the document, Emperor Constantine recognizes the superiority of the Roman pontiff over the Christian Church, as he grants him the imperial insignia and the western lands of the Empire. As Muldoon asserts, the *Constitutum* was an “extraordinary claim to imperial jurisdiction”, for it gave the papacy the right to affirm its imperial power in the West. The aim was to make the Pope the centre of the concept of *imperium* by converting the Roman Church into the heir of Rome.⁸⁸

With the coronation of Charlemagne by the pope in December 800, the revival of the *Romanum Imperium* finally took shape. It was an important symbolic act that would have great consequences.⁸⁹ The details of the events and the intentions behind them remain to a large extent obscure and debated.⁹⁰ One of the most traditional explanations sees Leo III’s

⁸⁷ The date of the composition of the document is still debated, but most historians agree that its existence is attested at least from the middle of the 8th century and was probably forged in Rome or in Roman intellectual circles during the Pontificate of Stephen II. The reasons behind its composition are also highly debated. For Robert Folz, the aim of the document was to “make the Pope the centre of the concept of empire”, going beyond the association of the empire with Christianity: the empire was now to be related directly to the Roman pontiffs. Although Folz suggests that the political intentions of the forgers played a second role, these should not be underestimated. The *Constitutum* legitimized the Pope’s claim to territories in the Italian peninsula, and was a way of asserting its authority against the Byzantines. See Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 10-12. Johannes Fried believes the document was probably composed in the 830s in the Frankish monasteries of Corbie or St. Denis, in the context of the dispute between the Papacy and Louis the Pious. See Fried, “*Donation of Constantine*” and “*Constitutum Constantini*”, 63-109. James Muldoon is more cautious with the dating and creation of the document, and simply states that most historians tend to see it in circulation around the middle of the 8th century and that it ultimately served the Papacy’s political interests. He has, however, a slightly sceptic vision of the reception of the text in later periods. Although he recognizes its importance in the 12th and 13th centuries’ debates, mainly because the *Constitutum* was included in Gratian’s *Decretum*, he nevertheless insists on the fact that even in the Middle Ages the document was suspected of being a forgery. See Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 69-72. Janet Nelson considers that the *Constitutum* had no real impact during the 8th century. She states that “(...) the Donation itself was not used, and had almost certainly never been conceived, as documentary support for papal imperialism in the later eighth century.” She argues that the survival of the *Donatio* was the result of its incorporation into a Frankish canon law collection, and that in this way it was recovered by the Gregorian polemicists in the 11th and 12th centuries. See Janet Nelson, “Kingship and Empire,” in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c.350-1450*, ed. J.H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 230-231.

⁸⁸ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 11-12.

⁸⁹ Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 22.

⁹⁰ The bibliography about this episode is long. For main references, see Richard E Sullivan, ed., *The Coronation of Charlemagne: What Did It Signify?* (Boston: D.C. Heath and Co., 1959); Robert Folz, *The Coronation of Charlemagne, 25 December 800* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975). For more recent works on the topic, see Joanna Story, ed., *Charlemagne. Empire and Society* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005) and Ildar H. Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Authority in the Carolingian World (c. 751-877)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008). Janet Nelson suggests that the coronation of Charlemagne was the encounter of two ideas of empire: first, the Roman-free or “hegemonial” one, held by the Carolingians, which can be associated to the idea of rule over multiple *regna* or *gentes*, an idea that Alcuin had

decision to crown Charlemagne as a response to the increasing power of the Franks in the West and the need of the papacy for protection against internal and external enemies.⁹¹ Indeed, before his coronation Charlemagne's prestige was far reaching, his triumph against the Lombards had secured him an increasing authority in Italy, and his entourage was already reflecting on the extent of his dominions and his power by using imperial references.⁹²

But if the pope's intentions seem somewhat clearer, Charlemagne's acceptance of the coronation and his thoughts about the *renovatio imperii* are hard to agree upon. Janet Nelson suggests that the outcome of the events was far from Charlemagne's will, whose idea of imperial power did not necessarily involve the pope or Rome. As she asserts, "The Franks had other ideas. For them Charlemagne was an emperor but not a specifically Roman one; he owed his title not to papal coronation but to an acknowledgment of his power by the peoples he ruled."⁹³ According to Folz, perhaps one of the most eloquent elements for understanding Charlemagne's attitude towards the new situation is to see how he chose to be called and how he addressed the rulers of the East.⁹⁴

The coronation had indeed raised the question of the coexistence of two empires, one in the West and that of the East. The situation was far from being clear, but it seems that, at

already used to address Charlemagne's power. Nelson refers to this "hegemonial" idea of empire as a commonplace during the Middle Ages, because the idea of rule over extended peoples was already present in Isidore's *Etymologies*. The second idea of empire is the Rome-centred notion of empire, which was sustained by the Papacy and which entailed the association of Romanity and Christianity. Nelson, "Kingship and Empire," 230-231.

⁹¹ Muldoon suggests the difficulties of interpreting the ideas behind Leo III's actions. The testimonies and interpretations of the ceremony by contemporary authors often differ. This makes unclear how the Pope meant to act or how his authority was regarded in comparison to that of the new emperor. Muldoon explains the questions that the description of the events in the Frankish Royal Annals pose: "As the annalist described the coronation, the pope placed a crown on Charlemagne's head and then prostrated himself before the emperor, a procedure that recalled the *proskynesis* that had become part of the imperial ritual in the reign of Diocletian and had remained part of the coronation ritual in Constantinople. Furthermore, the pope appears to have acted only as an agent in the coronation, not as the possessor of a superior authority. A superior would not have prostrated himself before his inferior. Did the annalist believe that it was Charlemagne's great military achievement that justified his assumption of the imperial title? Was the pope only serving as the representative of the Roman people when he placed the crown on Charles's head? (...)," Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 23-24.

⁹² The best examples are Alcuin's testimonies. As Folz suggests, "As an Anglo-Saxon he was used to the concept of empire which prevailed in Britain at that time and so, quite naturally, described the Frankish state as 'empire' on account of its extent and the fact that it comprised several nations." Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 17.

⁹³ Nelson, "Kingship and Empire," 231.

⁹⁴ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 19-20.

least from Charlemagne's way of styling himself, he did not want any confrontation with the eastern emperors. As James Muldoon explains, when addressing the eastern sovereigns Charlemagne would strategically avoid confrontation. By styling himself as "Emperor and Augustus and also King of the Franks and of the Lombards", relating his imperial title not directly with Rome but with the fact that he was ruling over more than one kingdom, Charlemagne was evading the matter of the existence of two emperors.⁹⁵

The title Charlemagne finally used to refer to himself from 801 was "Charles, most serene Augustus, crowned by God, great and pacific Emperor, governing the Roman Empire, and similarly, by the grace of God, King of the Franks and the Lombards."⁹⁶ Both Folz and Muldoon share the opinion that Charlemagne's title reflected his intention to remain independent from the papacy as well as on good terms with his eastern counterparts. It is possible that Charlemagne did not see himself as a Roman emperor, but only regarded his imperial title as a way to display his superior status in western Europe. Furthermore, he did not intend to rule from Rome (he set his capital in Aachen), which gives the impression that he regarded his empire as a Frankish rather than a Roman one.⁹⁷ Charlemagne's son's coronation further illustrates his intention to remain independent from the pope. Louis was recognised as emperor by the Franks and crowned by his father in Aachen, in a ceremony that did not require the approval of Rome and which exalted the Frankish dimension of the Empire. But although the Empire seemed to be more centred on the Frankish monarchy, it was Christianity which gave it its essential meaning: Charlemagne was seen as the protector of God's people and the Empire remained a Christian one.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 47-48.

⁹⁶ "Karolus serenissimus augustus a Deo coronatus magnus pacificus imperator Romanum gubernans imperium, qui et per misericordiam Dei rex Francorum et Longobardorum." The Latin is from Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1970), 114. The translation is given in Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 23.

⁹⁷ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 24.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

The situation between Carolingians and the eastern emperors reached a point of confrontation during the late ninth century. According to Muldoon, the continuous use of the imperial title by Frankish rulers after Charlemagne raised the concerns of Basil I (867-886) who, writing to Louis II, argued that Frankish kings did not have the right to hold the title of *imperator*.⁹⁹ Louis replied that the coronation of Charlemagne in 800 was proof enough of their status as emperors and detailed many reasons why Franks had the right to be entitled in such a way.¹⁰⁰ Scholars have given different interpretations to this situation. Some seem to understand that Louis was in fact acknowledging the coexistence of two empires. Others, as Muldoon, think that it is rather clear that Louis and the Franks would generally deny the eastern emperors their status, particularly pointing out the fact that they had not been consecrated by the pope and that they followed heretical teachings.¹⁰¹

The dispute was hard to settle, and it cannot be said it ever was. Both parts used their own interpretation of the *translatio imperii* as a means to legitimize their true claim as heirs to the Roman Empire, and the Byzantines would never recognize that western rulers had the same imperial status.¹⁰² They would more often address them as *basileus*, while they chose to style themselves as “Emperors of the Romans.”¹⁰³ This unresolved situation is yet another

⁹⁹ Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 48.

¹⁰⁰ In a letter whose authenticity was debated, Louis gives Basil many reasons that justify the western imperial title, explaining the rights of his family to it, and pointing to the impious nature of eastern rulers, their abandonment of Rome and Latin and the embracement of foreign ways of life. See Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 48-50.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁰² The *translatio imperii* was an essential historiographical concept during the Middle Ages. It implied that in history the empire “had been transferred from hand to hand and place to place, from Romans to Greeks and from Greeks to Franks, and had therefore survived.” See J.G.A. Pocock, “The Historiography of the *Translatio Imperii*,” in *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 127. The idea of the *translatio* had a powerful meaning in the medieval period and often served as an instrument of legitimization and it became a central element in the argumentation of universalism and superior authority. See also, in the same book “Otto of Freising and the Two Cities,” and Werner Goez, *Translatio Imperii: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Geschichtsdenkens und der Politischen Theorien im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1958), 8.

¹⁰³ Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 51. During the first half of the twelfth century, Anna Comnena was using the *translatio imperii* argument to justify the Byzantine’s legitimate claim as the only true heirs of the Roman Empire. “(...) Anna Comnena’s position was that the *translatio* not only moved the imperial capital to the East but the spiritual capital as well. In an interesting reversal of the relationship between the papacy and the emperors as described in the Donation of Constantine, she argues that by moving the capital to the east,

expression of the intrinsic complexities of the usage of the concept of empire, which was acquiring new meanings and connotations in the light of the events.¹⁰⁴

After Charlemagne's death in 814, the Empire started a slow process of dissolution. Louis the Pious established a closer relationship with the papacy, and from that moment on "it was accepted that as part of the process of becoming emperor one was obliged to submit to the rite of anointing and to the coronation ceremony performed in the city of the apostles by the Pope."¹⁰⁵ The division of the Empire into three parts after the Treatise of Verdun in 843 meant that the Empire was no longer a political reality. This new situation confined the territorial Empire to Italy, and as a consequence, "in the second half of the ninth century, the concept of empire itself took on a Roman colouring, which it was never again to lose (...)", diminishing its Frankish imprint.¹⁰⁶

However, the idea of the Carolingian Empire was to survive particularly in its eastern part, in the German Kingdom, and was to experience a revival during the late tenth century focused on the Ottonian dynasty. Once more, this *renovatio* was a papal initiative: in 961 Pope John XII requested the presence of Otto I, king of the Germans, in Rome. There, at the beginning of 962, he crowned Otto emperor, as a way to guarantee the papacy a protector.¹⁰⁷ However, the tension between the pope's and the emperor's interpretation of the source of imperial power and the meaning of what the Empire was remained. If John XII saw the imperial crown as a gift granted by the pope and therefore acknowledged the emperor as its server, the Ottonian interpretation intended to make clear the emperor's autonomy from Rome.¹⁰⁸ The progressive sacralisation of the figure of the emperor and the liturgy

Constantine had reduced the city of Rome's status and replaced it with Constantinople, thus making the bishop of Constantinople the senior ecclesiastical official." Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 52.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 52.

¹⁰⁵ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 28.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 30. See also Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 232.

¹⁰⁷ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 47. See also Percy Ernst Schramm, *Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984).

¹⁰⁸ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 47-48.

surrounding him, developed particularly under Otto III, and the intention of the papacy to establish itself as a necessary actor in choosing and consecrating the emperor was to remain a central issue. This disparity of ideas would become the core of the conflict between the two powers in the following century, when the Investiture Contest burst.¹⁰⁹

Between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries popes and emperors were involved in a dispute which had the concept of empire in its centre. The increasing power of the papacy, prompted by the reform movement, sought to enhance the figure of the pope in order to emphasize his superior authority over Christendom –which meant also over the emperor. The Donation of Constantine and the theories of the *translatio imperii* were to play a central role in this dispute.¹¹⁰ By using these tools to their advantage, popes and their entourage were seeking ways to legitimize the claim of Roman supremacy and the pope's right to exert a superior authority and hold all the symbolic emblems of empire.¹¹¹ Derived from this superior authority was the alleged right of the pope to elect the Roman Emperor. While emperors like Frederick I (1155-1190) or Henry VI (1191-1197) insisted on establishing the hereditary principle as the way to become emperor, popes insisted that only they, through the right invested to them by Constantine's Donation, had the authority to choose the emperor.¹¹²

What the controversy reveals is that as a reality, the Empire survived trapped in contradictions that would feed from the different political programs held by emperors and popes. Although ideally from the 800s the Empire was a *renovatio* of the Roman Empire, with the Christian aspirations of universality, the Empire had, from the ninth century, been

¹⁰⁹ On the imperial program of Otto III, see Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 64-66. Nelson argues that "(...) Otto had forged the bond between the *regnum* and the empire so strongly that it would not be broken even by rulers like Henry II with little interest in Roman power-base. (...) When, later, there was a German kingdom, its ruler was never officially entitled 'king of the Germans'. German kingship had become inseparable from Roman emperorship." "Kingship and Empire," 246.

¹¹⁰ See Goetz, *Translatio Imperii*.

¹¹¹ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 77-84.

¹¹² Ibid., 85-86. For a detailed account of the conflict between Popes and Emperors see Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy. The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

essentially Frank and German and tied to the political necessities of the Roman Church.¹¹³

The tensions that arose during the eleventh century between the Church and the German emperors were centred on the difficult issue of the relation and jurisdiction between them and on establishing who was dominant. Was the spiritual power to be above the secular ones?

An important tool that was used for channelling the competing ideas about the nature of empire was Roman law. Although the knowledge and study of Roman law never completely disappeared in the Italian peninsula, from the twelfth century there was a sudden revive interest in its study in the schools of Bologna. From then on, canonists and romanists would develop arguments, essentially based on Justinian's Code, which would serve the interests and needs of both the popes and the emperors.¹¹⁴ The confrontation over the Empire acquired from then on a legalistic colouring. As Muldoon explains, the central question was about the source of imperial power, "whether secular power was within or outside the Church", and if the emperor should acknowledge the Pope as his superior beyond spiritual matters or not.¹¹⁵

The canonists, through their glosses, gave multiple interpretations of the situation. The main issue was to establish the source of secular rulers' power. Although the ultimate source of power was God, the question was whether that power came directly or through the intermediation of the Church.¹¹⁶ The canonists supporting the papal claims used the idea of the *translatio imperii* derived from the Donation of Constantine to insist on the emperor's

¹¹³ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 90.

¹¹⁴ The radical importance of the rediscovery of the potential of Roman Law and its consequences for western Europe cannot be justly addressed here. For a general interpretation, see Harold Berman, *Law and Revolution. The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1983). See also Kenneth Pennington, *The Prince and the Law, 122-1600. Sovereignty and Rights in the Western Legal Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Particularly in chapters one and two, Pennington addresses the issue of the contribution of civil jurists and canonists to the understating of the imperial ideology. James Muldoon also focuses on the contributions of Roman law in the development of the concept of empire, with special emphasis on the importance of canon lawyers. See Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 64-100.

¹¹⁵ Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 73-74.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

subjection to the pope.¹¹⁷ Some understood that all secular power came through the pontiff, while others –the dualists- considered that the two powers were essentially different and that spiritual power had only a superiority of dignity.¹¹⁸ Some canonists advanced synthesis proposals, trying to acknowledge the superior authority of the pope but respecting an essential dualistic view through the distinction between possession and exercise of authority.¹¹⁹

If for the supporters of papal authority the emperor's power was subjected to the Church, and therefore he could be regarded as a vicar of the pope, the jurists in the entourage of emperors relied on the Roman legal tradition to provide an alternative interpretation. What Roman legal tradition gave the imperial jurists was a theory of imperial power that diminished the pope's role in the election and confirmation of the emperor.¹²⁰ This gave the emperors a sense of the Empire as an institution with relative independence from the papacy.¹²¹ Although naturally Christian and therefore linked to the Roman Church, emperors such as Frederick Barbarossa (1152-1190) intended to associate their power directly with God and, therefore, to guarantee themselves a sphere of autonomy to exercise their power.

Medieval jurists found in the Roman *lex regia* a source for an alternative understanding of the origins of imperial sovereignty. According to the law, the free Roman people voluntarily transferred to the emperor their sovereignty, then placing in the emperor all public authority.¹²² According to Muldoon, “when the Roman lawyers added to this the argument that the power of the people had in turn come from God, it made the emperor equal in some way to the pope.”¹²³ However, as Folz points out, the *lex regia* had potential

¹¹⁷ See Fanny Madeline, “L’empire et son espace. Héritages, organisations et pratiques,” *Hypothèses* 2007/1 (2007), 217.

¹¹⁸ Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 73-74.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 77.

¹²⁰ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 105-106.

¹²¹ Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 87. Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 92.

¹²² On the interpretations of the *Lex regia* in medieval glossators, see Daniel Lee, *Popular Sovereignty in Early Modern Constitutional Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 25-50.

¹²³ Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 90.

dangerous interpretations. Although it could free the emperors from the sphere of authority of the Papacy, the *lex* could nevertheless link the election of the emperor to the people of Rome, and therefore, indirectly, again to the pope.¹²⁴

The Digest also contained the assertions that the emperor was a *Dominus Mundi* and therefore hold universal jurisdiction. It is not clear whether emperors understood their power in these terms, considering the fact that their authority was effective within the boundaries of a given territory. However, emperors like Frederick Barbarossa and then Frederick II (1212-1250) intended to apply the universal conception of the emperor's power, at least discursively.¹²⁵ This entailed a further problem, and was that of the relation between the Empire and the emerging monarchies of Western Europe. The development of theories of monarchical sovereignty within the growing powerful kingdoms placed new challenges and had direct consequences over the concept of empire. During the thirteenth century kings, also relying on theological and legal arguments began to acknowledge their ultimate authority over their territorial kingdoms. The formula "*rex imperator in regno suo*" became a milestone of the new ideas that were in development. This expression equalled the prerogatives of the king within his realm to those of the emperor. The further consequence of this idea was to assert the non-subordinate status of kings: within their kingdoms, they were the ultimate source of authority, and they were not subject to the higher jurisdiction of any other power.¹²⁶

Other concepts of empire: Spain and the British Isles

But the imperial vocabulary and the concept of *imperium* survived the Western Roman Empire also on another level, which Folz calls "the non-roman concept of empire", for it was adopted by the entourage of barbarian kings to conceptualize, describe or enhance

¹²⁴ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 92.

¹²⁵ Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 88-89.

¹²⁶ Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 12-13. See also Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 16.

their ruler's power without claiming a direct connection either to the Roman Empire or the papacy.¹²⁷ Perhaps the best examples of these are those of the Iberian Peninsula and the British Isles. The interesting thing regarding these cases is the fact that imperial styling of both Anglo-Saxon and Spanish kings reached its peak in the tenth century, during a period in which the Empire created by Charlemagne and the pope had ceased to be a strong institutional reality.¹²⁸

In the Iberian Peninsula, the concept of empire came into sight in the late ninth century, associated with the Kings of León and later with the Kings of Castile. From Alphonse III (866-910) to Alphonse VIII (1126-1157) many Spanish kings chose to use the title of *imperator* in official records, or to style themselves in an imperial way.¹²⁹

Originally, the concept could have been connected to the attempts of Spanish kings to recover the lands under Muslim rule and to claim their authority over the territory of all *Hispania*, "suggesting that empire could mean rule over conquered lands."¹³⁰ During the eleventh century, particularly under Alphonse VI's rule (1065-1072), who declared himself *imperator totius Hispaniae*, the Castilian kings made use of the concept as a means to acknowledge their aspirations to have authority over the entire peninsula. This idea of empire was thus related to the notion of empire as superior from ruling over several kingdoms or *gentes*.¹³¹ But Alphonse VI used the imperial title also as a means to counter the growing intentions of the papacy to intervene in the political and religious life of the peninsula.¹³²

¹²⁷ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 39-40. Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 13.

¹²⁸ Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 58. See Folz, who has a similar opinion, *The Concept of Empire*, 39.

¹²⁹ See Hélène Sirantoine, *Imperator Hispaniae. Les idéologies impériales dans le royaume de León (IXe-XIIe siècles)* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2013):1. Sirantoine's book gives an excellent and detailed account of the historiographical debate.

¹³⁰ Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 55. The association between the process of the Reconquista and birth of a unified Spanish nation is perhaps one of the major debates within Spanish historiography. For a general overview of the debate, see Francisco García Fitz, "La Reconquista: un Estado de la Cuestión," *Clio & Crimen* 6 (2009): 142-215.

¹³¹ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 55.

¹³² As a result of the reform encouraged by Gregory VII, the Pope insisted that the Spanish kings should impose the Roman liturgy instead of the Mozarabic one. Furthermore, Gregory insisted that as a consequence of the Donation of Constantine, Spain was subject to Papal jurisdiction. Muldoon believes the

The use of the imperial styling reached its pick during the reign of Alphonse VII (1126-1157), who crowned himself *imperator* in Leon's Cathedral in 1135. He used the title of *imperator* in official documents, often enumerating the territories over which he ruled, and between 1139 and 1145 he often dated documents counting the years of the Empire.¹³³ The reasons for the enhancing of the imperial idea during this period are both related to the complex political situation within the Iberian peninsula, and Alphonse VII's need to reassess his authority at a symbolic level. The war against the Muslim may have also been related, for a head or some relative unity was needed to coordinate the military efforts.¹³⁴

The Spanish use of the concept of empire seems to have served the interests of those rulers who intended to assert their authority within the Iberian Peninsula. It was, as well, closely related to the idea of the conquest and expulsion of the Muslims from Hispania, associating the image of the *imperator* with that of the conqueror.¹³⁵ But what is most particular in the Spanish usage of the concept is that "it rejected any notion that the imperial title was linked to a grant from the pope."¹³⁶ The Leónese and then the Castilian kings would grant the title to themselves as a way to enhance their prestige and to assert their superior rule over all Hispania. But it was not the only particularity. They also used it "as to reject any claim by other rulers to possess some form of jurisdiction of Spain," a usage that was to be of fundamental importance for most of the emerging national monarchies of the Late Middle Ages.¹³⁷

In the case of Britain, as Folz suggests, "(...) imperial achievements which had been connected with the island were remembered when any one of the Anglo-Saxon rulers proved

intention of the Pope was probably to grant the kingdom to the monarchs as a fief. Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 56.

¹³³ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 56.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 57.

¹³⁵ Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 57.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 57

¹³⁷ Ibid, 58.

capable of exercising hegemony over his colleagues.”¹³⁸ This explains the usage of *imperium* that appears, for instance, in Bede’s *Historia*, where the concept is mainly used as a way to “describe a ruler’s authority when it went beyond the confines of his own land and was imposed by him on other princes.”¹³⁹ *Imperium*, in this case, entailed the idea of a power which was exercised over other kingdoms (*regna*), that is, a superior form of authority.¹⁴⁰ As Muldoon suggests, however, the use of imperial vocabulary could have simply been connected to the fact that there was no other suitable way of expressing the superior overlordship of these kings, or the exercise of their power beyond the territories of their own kingdoms.¹⁴¹ Although this kind of power has often been associated to the term *bretwalda*, the truth is the title only appears in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and is hard to trace it as a functional title for overlordship in the Isles.¹⁴²

Although Bede uses the imperial vocabulary, it is with Athelstan (924-939) that the imperial title becomes closely associated to the king’s power over all Britain (*orbis Britannicus*). By gaining control of almost the entire territory of modern England, Athelstan became England’s “first king”, and during his lifetime he was often called *rex totius Britanniae*, and more frequently, *basileus*.¹⁴³ Although according to Folz the term *imperator*

¹³⁸ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 14.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁴⁰ Bede’s use of the imperial vocabulary has been widely discussed. While some argue, as for instance Barbara Yorke, that *imperium* was used as a synonym of *regnum*, others, like Stephen Fanning, insist that in Bede the term *imperium* is not interchangeable with *regnum*. For Fanning, the concept has the very specific sense of extensive rule. As he shows, in Bede –whose work was influenced by Latin authors such as Tacitus, Jerome and Augustine–, “*Regnum* and *imperium* were synonymous in only one direction. Every *imperium* was a *regnum*, but not every *regnum* was an *imperium*. Only *regna* that had established dominion over other peoples were *imperia* (though they could still be called *regna*). Thus the word *imperium* did indeed carry specialized political significance in Bede’s time (...).” See Steven Fanning, “Bede, *Imperium* and the Bretwaldas,” *Speculum* 66 (1991): 7 and 14-15. Also Barbara Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of early Anglo-Saxon England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 158-160, and Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 53.

¹⁴¹ Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 54.

¹⁴² Fanning discusses the existence of the institution of “bretwaldaship”, often associated to Bede’s *Historia*. He convincingly shows how Bede does never use a word such as “Bretwalda” to acknowledge the special authority of a king who held overlordship on the British Isles, but instead he uses the concept of *imperium* “as it had been used in Latin sources on the Continent for some eight centuries.” Fanning, “Bede, *Imperium* and the Bretwaldas,” 25.

¹⁴³ Torben Gebhardt, “From Bretwald to Basileus,” in *Transcultural Approaches to the Concept of Imperial Rule in the Middle Ages*, ed. Christian Scholl, Torben R. Gebhardt and Jan Clauß (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Peter Lang Edition, 2017), 157. The nineteenth century *Cartularium Saxonicum* contains

appears in only one authentic document, Torben Gebhardt suggests that nevertheless, “from the 930s onwards up to the death of Athelstan, the vast majority of his charters adopted an imperial style”, particularly by using the Greek term *basileus* (βασιλεύς).¹⁴⁴ Why a Greek terminology and why not the regular usage of *imperium* or related terms? As Gebhardt suggests, the usage of the Greek *basileus* could have been an influence of members of Athelstan’s entourage who knew Greek, such as Theodore of Tarsus. A possible reason for choosing *basileus* instead of *imperator*, as Gebhardt suggests, might have been that the Greek title, in the English context, “(...) was not meant to render the king equal to either the western or eastern emperors (...) Athelstan styling himself *Basileus anglorum* expressed a wish to present himself as more than an ordinary king, but without assuming the office of the emperor, of whose title he steered clear.”¹⁴⁵

This imperial styling of the Anglo-Saxon kings, which was a way to acknowledge their authority over all the peoples of the British Islands, continued after Athelstan’s death. During Edgar the Peaceful’s reign (959-975), the term *imperator* appears now and then, alternating with *basileus* as well as with *rex*. Also Ethelred the Unready (978-1016) and later Cnut the Great, who ruled over England between 1016 and 1035, both occasionally used the title of *imperator*, although, again, not thoroughly.¹⁴⁶ All in all, between the ninth and the eleventh centuries, it is possible to find in royal charters instances where kings would render themselves as *imperator* or *basileus*.¹⁴⁷ It is true that *imperator* appears only very rarely and that many historians have regarded *basileus* as a mere synonym for *rex*. However, it seems

charters from the Anglo Saxon period. They are now also accessible online at the “Electronic Sawyer”, which contains an updated version of Peter Sawyer’s *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography* (1968). <http://www.esawyer.org.uk/about/index.html>

¹⁴⁴ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 42. Gebhardt asserts Athelstan never used the term *imperator* or any variant in his charters, see “From Bretwald to Basileus,” 162-163 and 165-166.

¹⁴⁵ Gebhardt, “From Bretwald to Basileus,” 165-167.

¹⁴⁶ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 42-43.

¹⁴⁷ Arnaud Lestremat, “*Basileus Anglorum*. La prétention impériale dans les titulatures royales à la fin de la période anglo-saxonne,” *Médiévales* 75 (2018): 197-226. The journal is available online <http://journals.openedition.org/medievales/9530>.

clear that both *basileus* and *imperator* were used in particular contexts, to enhance the wider jurisdiction of certain kings, thus using the imperial terminology to channel specific ideas.¹⁴⁸

Although the British case is less conclusive than the Spanish, for the imperial vocabulary was not used systematically and was almost limited to the idea of superior authority over the British Isles, both are good examples of the flexible usage of the concept of empire during the Middle Ages.¹⁴⁹ In the case of the Spanish and British usages of the concept, what is revealed is the fact that it developed, perhaps more emphatically in the Spanish case, in a way which was not related to any universal aspiration and was not related to the Roman Church. As Muldoon affirms, “instead, this *imperium* identified a powerful ruler, one who conquered other rulers and who was unchallenged within his kingdom.”¹⁵⁰ This idea would, later in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, serve the purpose of both English and Spanish monarchs to secure his autonomy from the intervention of external powers. Supported by legal arguments, the concept would end up reflecting “the legal theory that the king within his kingdom possessed the powers of the emperor within the empire.”¹⁵¹

Conclusion: a semantic map of *imperium* in the central Middle Ages

This brief account of the evolution of the concept of *imperium* –and, directly associated to it, of *imperator*–, shows the multiple notions attached to it that coexisted during the Middle Ages. Although most of these meanings had their roots in Ancient Rome, political, religious and social changes made the concept to acquire new nuances during the

¹⁴⁸ Lestremau, “*Basileus Anglorum*”, 197-226.

¹⁴⁹ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 43-44.

¹⁵⁰ Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 58

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 57-58.

medieval period. Following the historical development of *imperium*, it is possible to identify at least three major meanings of the concept that coexisted in the central Middle Ages:¹⁵²

- 1) ***Imperium* as universal sovereignty.** Already present in Ancient Rome, the ecumenical idea of the empire was enhanced by Christianity by equating the *orbis romanus* with the *orbis christianus*. The idea of universal sovereignty was closely attached to the idea of the existence of only one true faith and only one true empire. This idea, sustained mainly by the Roman Church, was to create an unresolved tension between the secular ruler of the *imperium* and the spiritual leader of the Church that would result in the confrontation of emperors and popes all throughout the central Middle Ages. Although closely attached to the worldview sustained by the Church, the universal idea of empire found a new alternative formulation during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Based on the renewed interest in Roman law, jurists were able to sustain an idea of universalism which was not attached to the institutional Church, but to the Roman definition of the emperor as a *dominus mundi*.
- 2) ***Imperium* as rule over an extended territory with more than one political community.** This notion of *imperium* developed very early in the Middle Ages, from an idea already in existence in the Roman period. The idea of the empire as containing many dependent *regna* or *gentes* was already present in Isidore's *Etymologies* and was developed by Alcuin during the Carolingian period. This is what Janet Nelson labels the "hegemonial" idea of empire, an idea that was not strictly attached to the Roman Empire

¹⁵² Most authors who have dealt with the history of the meaning of the concept have provided semantic maps of this sort. The conclusions are usually similar, although there can be small variations. For instance, Fanny Madeline follows closely Anthony Pagden's account of what he identifies as the three main notions of *imperium* in the medieval period (that of limited and independent community; that of a territory embracing more than one political community; and that of empire understood as absolute sovereignty), although she groups these meanings slightly differently, and goes further and adds a fourth notion, that of order. See Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 17 and Madeline, "L'Empire et son Espace," 217-219. Muldoon summarizes the different coexisting meanings of *imperium* in a different way, trying to remain closer to the historical events in which those meanings in fact appeared. Although his attempt is exhaustive, it seems however a bit messy, which best reveals how complicated it is to try to establish fixed schemes of these type with a historically complex concept like *imperium*. See Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 15-17.

or even to a Christian idea.¹⁵³ This is the meaning that seems to have prevailed, for example, in England: the Anglo-Saxon kings would often style themselves as emperors to acknowledge a superior authority over other kingdoms. To a great extent this idea can also be found among Leónese and Castilian kings, who by calling themselves *imperator* were demanding a superior status over all Hispania.

- 3) ***Imperium* as superior, independent authority.** This idea was sustained mainly within the context of the emergent monarchies from the late twelfth century on. This notion of *imperium* aimed to acknowledge the non-subordinate status of kings within their kingdoms, neither to the pope nor to the emperor. This notion of empire was essentially developed by jurists and it is best synthetized in the expression “*rex in regno suo imperator est*,” meaning that kings were allowed to exercise the same prerogatives of the emperor within their realms and that they were not subject to the jurisdiction of any other authority. It is possible to find, as was discussed in the previous section, an early development of this notion of *imperium* in the Hispanic tradition, as a way to deny the papacy any superior jurisdiction over the Peninsula.

These abstract notions were indeed attached to real political phenomena, what Folz terms “the realm of political realities.”¹⁵⁴ For medieval thinkers, the idea of what constituted an empire was closely related to those historical entities that had once been or still responded to that title. I pinpoint this fact because in the following chapter I will show how, for an author like Gerald of Wales, “empire” designated very specific political entities, such as the Roman Empire, the Carolingian and then Holy Roman Empire or the Byzantine Empire.

¹⁵³ Nelson, “Kingship and Empire,” 230.

¹⁵⁴ Folz, *The Concept of Empire*, 3-4.

Chapter 3: Gerald of Wales and the “Angevin Empire”

In this chapter I will analyse Gerald of Wales’ *De Principis Instructione*, in an attempt to establish the image he portrays of Angevin territorial and political power. For that, I will make a terminology analysis, showing those instances in which the imperial vocabulary appears and its context, in order to see what Gerald regarded as an empire. Then, I will work on what I call “alternative vocabulary”, that is, other terminology used by Gerald when referring to the Angevin dominions. By doing this, my aim is to try to establish whether Gerald associates the Angevin Kings with imperial power or not.

Why Gerald of Wales?

As I have stated before, I am fundamentally interested in understanding how contemporaries perceived the Angevin assemblage of lands. In order to achieve this, it is important to re-centre the debate over the “Angevin Empire” taking into consideration the specific vocabulary of the sources, acknowledging the way in which the Angevin dominions were depicted in the documentation. If I choose to focus on words it is because, as Susan Reynolds has wonderfully asserted, they are the means by which past concepts and representations have come to us.¹⁵⁵ An author’s choice of words can respond to multiple factors, but in any case words should not be overlooked, as they respond not only to individual decisions but also to more general worldviews.

Trying to reconstruct the perception of contemporaries is a complex problem. What is usually acknowledged as the “Angevin Empire” is a compound of many regions with different traditions, cultural developments and historical experiences which can determine

¹⁵⁵ Susan Reynolds, “Empires: a problem of comparative history.” *Historical Research* 79, no. 204 (2006): 152.

very different perceptions of the phenomenon. Running the risk of seeming biased, or even sustaining an Anglocentric perspective, I chose to concentrate on Gerald of Wales's work for two main reasons. First, I believe that focusing on the overall perspective of an author has the benefit of allowing us to trace more deeply the conceptual elements used to address the Angevin dominions. Although the alternative strategy, that of combining brief or isolated elements from different sources as a means to justify the existence of an "Angevin Empire", has the advantage of providing a seemingly "global" idea of the phenomenon, it nevertheless runs the risk of taking the examples out of context, which can be misleading.¹⁵⁶

Second, Gerald's particular biography and the characteristics of his works make him an extraordinary witness to his own time. As a man who was related to royal, aristocratic, and ecclesiastical circles, Gerald's works have allowed historians to delve into the views of a contemporary of Henry II on an extensive variety of topics which range from the political and ethnographic situation within the British Isles, to miracles and the supernatural, natural history, Angevin court life, saints' lives, ecclesiastical reform and clerical criticism, among others.¹⁵⁷

Although mostly famous for his works on Ireland and Wales, Gerald's testimony shows, as Robert Bartlett has argued, many different trends of his time.¹⁵⁸ Gerald's vivid and intimate prose, full of details, stories and gossip, provides an insight to his mind rare among twelfth century writers, and his observations and opinions on the political affairs of his time offer a unique historical but also personal perspective.¹⁵⁹ Gerald was well educated, versed in

¹⁵⁶ See Fanny Madeline's recent article "The idea of 'empire' as hegemonic power under the Norman and Plantagenet kings (1066-1204)," in *Anglo-Norman Studies* XL, ed. Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2018).

¹⁵⁷ See Georgia Henley and Joseph McMullen, *Gerald of Wales. New Perspectives on a Medieval Writer and Critic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018), 1. For a full list of Gerald's works and editions available, see Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales. A voice of the Middle Ages* (Stroud: The History Press, 2006), 235-236 and Georgia Henley and Joseph McMullen, *Gerald of Wales*, ix-x.

¹⁵⁸ Most of Gerald's biographical details come from his autobiography. See *Autobiography*. See also Henley and McMullen, *Gerald of Wales*, 2-3. and Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 10. Gerald's life and works will be discussed in the following section.

¹⁵⁹ Henley and McMullen, *Gerald of Wales*, 1.

history, theology and law, and his worldview is, to a great extent, representative of the conventions, prejudices and conceptualizations of his time.¹⁶⁰

Even though scholars have long focused on Gerald's works on Ireland and Wales, his understanding of the totality of the Angevin dominions has been overlooked. A case study on Gerald's work could give us a good idea of the way in which intellectuals close to the Angevin kings thought of their territorial and political power and conceptualized it.

A brief account of Gerald's biographical background and works

We know many details of Gerald's life thanks to his own testimony: he did not only write in a very personal style, but some of his most important works were inspired by direct experiences.¹⁶¹ The best testimony of Gerald's life story is his biography. Written by him, although narrated in third person, it is a piece of work that gives the reader an unusual insight into the thoughts and personal experiences of a medieval writer.¹⁶²

Born in Pembrokeshire, c. 1146, Gerald came from an aristocratic family of the Marcher knights of South Wales, with both Welsh and Norman lineage.¹⁶³ He was destined to an ecclesiastical career from very early, and was first educated in Gloucester, in the abbey of

¹⁶⁰ See the following section.

¹⁶¹ For a detailed account of Gerald's life, see J. S. Brewer's Preface in the first volume of Gerald's *Opera*. *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, Vol. 1 (London: Longman, 1861). Also Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, and Georgia Henley and Joseph McMullen, *Gerald of Wales*, 1-16.

¹⁶² Gerald's biography survives in two works, *De rebus a se gestis* and *De iure et statu Menevensis Ecclesiae*, both of which survive in single manuscripts, although the manuscript containing *De rebus a se gestis* is not complete. The manuscript which contains *De rebus a se gestis* is Cotton MS Tiberius B XIII, and apart from Gerald's work it contains the only extant copy of his *Speculum Ecclesiae* (c. 1220). The manuscript belongs to the first quarter of the 13th century, and can be found today at the British Library. It has been digitized, and it is accessible online at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Tiberius_B_XIII. Part of it was published by Brewer in the *Opera*, Vol. 1. Butler prepared an English edition combining both the content of the Cottonian manuscript and inserting parts and references from the *De iure et statu Menevensis Ecclesiae* and other works by Gerald as to make the biography as complete as possible. See *Autobiography*, Preface.

¹⁶³ Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 10.

St. Peter. He then moved to Paris, where he studied the liberal arts and was in contact with many of the finest minds of his day.¹⁶⁴

In 1174 he returned to Britain. He served as the Archbishop of Canterbury's legate in Wales and was later awarded the archdeaconry of Brecon by his uncle, the bishop of St. David's.¹⁶⁵ It is in 1176, after the death of his uncle, when Gerald's long and tumultuous pursuit of the bishopric of St. David's begins. His autobiography shows how, for most part of his adult life, he tried to succeed his uncle to the bishopric without success.¹⁶⁶ Despite being a suitable candidate, the Angevin kings systematically denied him the appointment to the Welsh See.¹⁶⁷ This is one of the key elements which help to explain why Gerald's overall views on the Angevin dynasty changed significantly throughout his life. From praising them in his early writings, he turns to building a deeply negative portrayal of their character, particularly in the case of Henry II.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ He tells us about his early years in Paris, "But in course of time, desiring greater learning and profit, he thrice crossed the seas to France and spent three periods of several years at Paris in the study of the liberal arts and at last equalling the greatest teachers, taught the *Trivium* there most excellently, winning especially fame in the art of rhetoric; and he was so wholly devoted to his studies, and so free from all levity and frivolity both in word and deed that, as often as the teachers of the Arts desired to produce a pattern of excellence from among their best scholars, with one accord they named Giraldus in preference to all the rest. And thus in the first years of his youth his merits made him worthy not merely to seek but also to set an example of excellence in the duties of a scholar," *Autobiography*, c.1.2, 37. Note: when quoting from the *Autobiography* I will give the page number of Butler's standard edition. Moreover, since the passages quoted from the *Autobiography* are illustrative and are not inserted with the intention of further analysis, I will only provide Butler's English translation. For part of the Latin text, see *Opera* Vol. 1.

¹⁶⁵ *Autobiography*, c. 1.3, 38-43. He says, "Wherefore when his duties as legate were completed and he had returned to the Archbishop, taking with him the Bishop of Mynyw, the latter at the instance of the Archbishop conferred the Archdeaconry and Prebend upon Giraldus (...)," 43.

¹⁶⁶ *Autobiography*, Introduction, 22-23.

¹⁶⁷ Gerald always assumed that the Angevins' rejection of his candidacy to St. David's was related to his Welsh origins. He tells us about it both in his *Autobiography* and in *De Principis*. See *Autobiography*, c. 1.10, 61-62. In *De Principis*, he says, "For, if gravity of conduct, literary talent, and hard work were able to win any favour, then the suspect, troublesome, and hateful name 'Wales', took it all away. For, although my descent is three-quarters from the English and Normans, as is the whole power and quality of my 'surroundings, which forms one's character', and also a long 'habit' of residence, 'which can be deemed a second nature', nevertheless a hostile people concluded that from that fourth column of family descent and from the first wheel after the thirds of the family's chariots, drawn from the Trojan nobility, the whole had been infected and 'the mass had been corrupted by a little yeast', as it were, and inflated with perennial pride. Whence, since our education and daily contacts were, as we have said, amongst the English, but our birthplace and our family are to be found in Wales, it was agreed and deduced from this that each people judged me to be a stranger, not one of their own, regarding me with the eye of a step-parent, one holding me to be suspect on account of this, the other to be hateful." *De Principis*, *Prefatio Prima*, 3-5.

¹⁶⁸ *Autobiography*, Introduction, 22-23. Gerald's portrayal of Henry in *De Principis* is particularly bitter. See Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 59-62.

After failing his first attempt to be elected as the new bishop of the diocese of St. David's, Gerald returned to Paris to study law and theology.¹⁶⁹ He remained there at least two or three years, and then he came back to England.¹⁷⁰ Between 1180 and 1183 he spent much of his time in Wales, where the Archbishop of Canterbury put him in charge of the diocese of St. David's after the bishop, Peter de Leia –who had succeeded Gerald's uncle–, was forced to leave under unclear circumstances.¹⁷¹ He made his first journey to Ireland in late 1183, in company of his brother Philip, and in 1184 he was summoned by King Henry to enter his service as a royal clerk.¹⁷²

During the years as a royal clerk, Gerald travelled extensively. In 1185 he was sent to Ireland in an expedition led by the king's youngest son, John, and this experience resulted in two of his most popular works: the *Topographia Hibernica* (c. 1187) and the *Expugnatio Hibernica* (c. 1189).¹⁷³ The first is a description of the landscape, beliefs and peoples of the island –in a not very complimentary way–, while the second is an account of the invasion and

¹⁶⁹ He tells us: "After these achievements Giraldus, 'thinking naught done, while aught remained to do nor ever looking back, but continually pressing forward and mounting higher with unfaltering step, that his knowledge might be increased and ripened, resolved, having collected his treasure-store of books, to cross the sea to France and once more to apply himself with all his heart and soul to the study of the liberal arts at Paris, that thus he might have power upon the foundation of arts and letters to raise high the walls of civil and canon law and above them to complete the sacred roof of theological learning, and finally to secure this triple edifice with bonds that time should not destroy." *Autobiography*, c. 2.1, 64.

¹⁷⁰ *Autobiography*, c. 2.4, 69.

¹⁷¹ Gerald says "(...) Peter, Bishop of Mynyw, who on account of a quarrel betwixt himself and the Welsh had been or rather pretended to have been driven out of Wales..." *Autobiography*, c. 2.6, 74-75.

¹⁷² See F.X. Martin, "Gerald of Wales, Norman Reporter on Ireland," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 58 (1969): 284-285. Gerald describes how he was called to the presence of King Henry in his biography: "Now, as the fame of Giraldus increased and became more widely known from day to day, King Henry II, who was then in the March intent upon the pacification of Wales, summoned him to him on the advice of his magnates; and although he was most unwilling (for as he values the scholar's life above all others, even so he detests the life of a courtier), yet by reason of the King's urgency and also of his promises and commands, he at length became a follower of the Court, and the King's clerk." *Autobiography*, c. 2.8, 81.

¹⁷³ Most of Gerald's works were edited in the 19th century. Cf. *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, 8 Vols., edited by J.S. Brewer, James F. Dimock and George F. Warner, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, RS 21, 1861-1891. For the Latin version of the *Topographia* and *Expugnatio*, see *Opera*, Vol. 5. For an English translation, see Thomas Forester's translation in Wright, *The Historical Works*. See also *The History and Topography of Ireland*, translated by John O'Meara, London, Penguin Classics, 1982 and *Expugnatio Hibernica: Conquest of Ireland*, translated and edited by A.B. Scott and F.X. Martin, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 1978

conquest of Ireland during the second half of the 12th century.¹⁷⁴ In 1188 Gerald joined Baldwin, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in his journey to Wales to preach the Third Crusade. As an outcome of this journey Gerald wrote the *Itinerarium Kambriae* (c. 1191) and the *Descriptio Kambriae* (c. 1194), which aimed, similarly to his works on Ireland, to describe the geography and ethnography of Wales.¹⁷⁵ These four works are by far the best known and most studied among Gerald's long list of writings because they provide a unique insight into the history of Ireland and Wales in the late twelfth century.

After King Henry's death in 1189, Gerald continued serving Henry's son and heir, Richard, until 1196. After years at the service of the Angevin Kings, being promised and offered many things except that what he wanted –the Bishopric of St. David's–, Gerald decided to retire to a life of study at Lincoln.¹⁷⁶ In 1198 a new chapter concerning his aim to become bishop of St. David's begins. Having been elected by the Chapter of the See, Gerald's candidacy was rejected by the king and by the Archbishop of Canterbury. After several appeals to Rome to defend his claim to the bishopric, Gerald finally gave up and in

¹⁷⁴ It should be pointed out that Gerald accustomed to rewrite his works, which explains the existence of different contemporary versions of them. On the details of the content of the *Topographia* and the *Expugnatio*, see Martin, "Gerald of Wales," 286-290. See also Thomas Wright, *The Historical Works of Giraldus Cambrensis* (London, 1863), viii-x.

¹⁷⁵ See Martin, "Gerald of Wales," 290. Both works were translated by Richard Colt Hoare's in Wright, *The Historical Works*. There is a further translation: *The Journey Through Wales and the Description of Wales*, ed. Betty Radice and trans. L. Thorpe (London, Penguin Classics, 1978). For the Latin version, *Giraldus Cambrensis Opera*, Vol. 6. *Autobiography*, cc. 2. 18 and 2.19, 99-104.

¹⁷⁶ He tells us: "Now Giraldus, considering that his following of the Court was utterly in vain, vain too all promises, vain all promotions offered him, vain and unworthy of himself and his deserts, withdrew himself wholly from the turmoil of the Court as from a stormy sea, a course which he had long since conceived in his mind and now gradually begun to follow; and with salutary wisdom he resolved to transfer himself to the schools as to a calm and tranquil haven." *Autobiography*, c.3.1, 123. He intended to go to Paris, but the conflict between King Richard and King Philip of France prevented him to go. Instead, Gerald decided to stay in Lincoln. As he explains: "So having collected from all quarters his treasure-store of books, concerning which he would say that it were a sweet and delectable thing not only to live but also to die among them, he set out for Paris forthwith that he might perfect himself in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. But as he drew near the sea, he heard for sure that the war between King Philip and King Richard, which he had been told was for the time being lulled to sleep by a five-years truce, had once more broken out; and since for this reason it was not possible for him to go to France, he resolved no longer to endure such loss of time, than which nothing could be more grievous to him. So for the sake of his studies, he went to Lincoln, where he knew that the science of Theology flourished most soundly in all England, under that best of teachers, Master William de Monte, so-called because he had read in Paris at Mont Ste Genéviève, where the Archdeacon had known him." *Autobiography*, c. 3.3, 127.

1203 he retired again to Lincoln, where he dedicated the last days of his life to study, writing and re-writing some of his old compositions. He died in 1223.

Gerald was a prolific writer, and wrote extensively on a variety of topics. Apart from his famous works on Ireland and Wales already mentioned, Gerald wrote many saint's lives: *The Life of David* (Vita Davidis), the *Life of Ethelbert* (Vita Ethelberti), the *Life of Remigius* (Vita Remigii), the *Life of Hugh* (Vita Hugonis), and the *Life of Caradoc of Llancarfan* (Vita sancti Karadoci), probably during the 1190s or early 1200s. He also dedicated a work to Geoffrey, the illegitimate child of Henry II who later became Archbishop of York: the *Life of Geoffrey, Archbishop of York* (Vita Galfridi).¹⁷⁷ Other important works which are extant are the *Gemma Ecclesiastica* (c. 1197) and the *Speculum Ecclesiae* (c.1220), both of which show Gerald's concern for the Church and monastic affairs, and the *Symbolum Electorum* (c. 1199), which contains poems, letters, speeches and other writings Gerald "put together in the 1190s."¹⁷⁸ His works reveal the enormous variety of motivations, experiences and interests he had. To *De Principis Instructione* I will dedicate the following section.

De Principis Instructione

The main focus of my research is Gerald of Wales's *De Principis Instructione*.¹⁷⁹ The particular composition of the work, which combines a reflection on the moral virtues of the

¹⁷⁷ Both the *Life of David* and the *Life of Ethelbert* are actually rewritings, which Gerald was probably asked to do. The original *vitae* were the versions of Rhygyfarch of Llanbadarn and of Osbert of Clare. See Robert Bartlett, "Rewriting Saints' Lives: The Case of Gerald of Wales," *Speculum* 58 (1983): 600. The *Life of St. David*, the *Life of St. Remigius*, the *Life of Hugh*, and the *Life of Geoffrey* are all published in Latin in *Opera* in Vols. 3, 7 and 4 respectively. The *Life of Caradoc* is not preserved: only the preface survives. The *Life of Ethelbert* was edited and published by M.R. James, "Two Lives of St. Ethelbert, King and Martyr," *English Historical Review* 32 (1917): 214-244.

¹⁷⁸ Robert Bartlett, "Introduction" to *Gerald of Wales. Instruction for a ruler (De Principis Instructione)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), li. From now on "Introduction" and "*De Principis*". See footnote 178.

¹⁷⁹ I will use Robert Bartlett's new critical edition of *De Principis Instructione*, published by Oxford Medieval Texts in 2018. Apart from providing the first full English translation, Bartlett's edition is the first one to present the complete Latin text. Warner's previous edition for the *Opera*, although contains all three books, usually shortens long passages of classical quotations, mainly in Book 1. Considering the needs of our research, this would have made our task very complex. Also, Bartlett takes into consideration Warner's edition. See Bartlett, introduction, lix. Note: to facilitate the reading, I will always give first the English translation. Only in cases when I regard necessary the contrast with the Latin text I will insert it. Next to the chapter number I provide the number pages of Bartlett's edition.

ruler and a narrative of Henry II's reign, provides a valuable insight into the view of Gerald on political matters and makes *De Principis* an ideal source of information for addressing the problem of the "Angevin Empire". The book was thought as a didactic piece of writing dedicated to advice and to instruct the ruler. Gerald states his intentions for writing *De Principis* very clearly at the beginning of Book 1: "I am driven to write a treatise on Instruction for a Ruler especially because, when I consider the behaviour of rulers and prelates, who ought to govern and mould others by example as well as by power, I discover more that can properly be criticized."¹⁸⁰

Of complex composition, *De Principis* contains three books but is divided in two parts. The first book, forming over half of the entire work, contains Gerald's considerations on the matter of the principles that make a ruler virtuous. The second and third books, on the other hand, consist of a narrative account of the reign of Henry II.¹⁸¹ He explains the organization of the work in the Preface of Book 1: "This work is in three books: the first consists of teaching and advice on the instruction of a ruler, drawn from the various statements of authorities, theologians as well as moralists and pagan writers; but the second and the third teach how to rule from experience."¹⁸²

It is believed that versions of the work were in existence in 1191, as suggested by assertions Gerald himself makes in other works.¹⁸³ There is no proof, however, that the first version of *De Principis* was published in its complete form, with the three books. There are

¹⁸⁰ "De principis Instructione tractatum edere me compulit id precipue, quod in principum moribus et prelatorum, qui alios tam exemplo quam potestate regere tenentur et informare, quod digne reprehendi possit plus inuenio." *De Principis*, 1.Prefacio Prima, 34-35.

¹⁸¹ Bartlett, "Introduction," xxviii.

¹⁸² "Est ergo trimembris operis huius distinctio: prima de principe instruendo per varia auctorum, tam theologorum quam ethnicorum et ethicorum, testimonia doctrinam continent et precepta; secunda vero et tertia rationem docent regiminis per exempla." *De Principis*, 1.Prefacio Prima, 36-37.

¹⁸³ Bartlett asserts that "Gerald refers to the *De Principis instructione* in several of his other works. The earliest such mention seems to be in the first edition of the *Itinerarium Kambriae*, where, referring to the miserable end of Henry II, he writes 'as we narrated in the book *De Principis instructione*'. James F. Dimock, the editor, dated this version of the *Itinerarium* to 1191 (...) if this is correct, Gerald had written at least parts of what are now Books 2 and 3 of the *De Principis Instructione* by the middle of 1191." Bartlett, "Introduction," xiii-xiv.

testimonies that Gerald published Book 1 separately and kept working on Books 2 and 3.¹⁸⁴ They could have been originally intended as separate works, but it is uncertain. It is also possible that Gerald began to prepare the definitive version near the time he left the King's court, and waited until King John's death to publish the definite version of *De Principis*, which was issued c. 1216-1217.¹⁸⁵

De Principis Instructione survives in only one manuscript, the Cotton MS Julius B XIII, ff. 48r-173v, now in the British Library.¹⁸⁶ The manuscript is from the 2nd quarter of the fourteenth century, and according to Bartlett it is a copy of a second and revised edition of the original text.¹⁸⁷ Of the original text, only the Preface is extant in another single manuscript from the early thirteenth century, the MS R. 7.11 in Trinity College (Cambridge), which contains Gerald's *Symbolum Electorum*. The original preface of *De Principis* is in ff. 86r-92r, followed by the prefaces of the three books which are closely similar to the ones in the Cotton MS Julius B XIII.¹⁸⁸

Let me now comment briefly on the content of the books that form *De Principis*. As has been mentioned before, Book 1 is a treatise on the moral virtues of the ruler, and is usually acknowledged as a "Mirror for Princes".¹⁸⁹ It is the longest book, comprising more

¹⁸⁴ Bartlett, "Introduction," xiv-xv.

¹⁸⁵ Robert Bartlett calls the attention on a passage of the original preface which seems to point out in this direction. Gerald writes: "However, since it is better to repent late than ever, I have renounced and repudiated the court for ever, and left far behind me its deceits, traps, and tricks, and the ambitions and flatteries that courtiers engage in (...) I have gathered together the treasures of my scattered library from all sides and returned to a life of learning (...)" *De Principis*, Prefatio Prima, 7. Bartlett also suggests that the decision to issue the book publicly so late could be related to the fact that, given the fierce critic of Henry II it contains, it would not have been safe to do it before. See Bartlett, "Introduction," xviii.

¹⁸⁶ The manuscript contains, besides Gerald's work, a part of the "Melrose Chronicle", which includes the Chronicle of Hugh of Saint Victor (ff.2r-40v) and supplementary historical material (ff. 41r-47v). It has been digitized by the British Library and is available for free consultation on its website. See http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_julius_b_xiii_f048r . See Bartlett, "Introduction," xii.

¹⁸⁷ Bartlett, "Introduction," xi-xii.

¹⁸⁸ Bartlett, "Introduction," xii. This manuscript has also been digitized and can be consulted free online at <https://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/uv/view.php?n=R.7.11#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=87&xywh=1726%2C597%2C980%2C520>

¹⁸⁹ Bartlett, "Introduction," xxiii. What is usually consider as a "mirror for princes" is a moral exhortation with the didactic purpose of teaching or giving counsel to rulers on how to conduct their behaviour. They usually present an idealized image of the virtuous ruler. The Mirrors became very popular during the

than half of the entire work, and it differs substantially from the other two both in composition and content. It is structured in twenty one chapters, fifteen of which are formally built around the virtues a ruler is supposed to possess –gentleness, chastity, patience, temperance, clemency, generosity, among others-, while the rest deals with topics such as the difference between a king and a tyrant, examples of good rulers, and an exposition of rulers' titles.¹⁹⁰ Gerald's focus is on displaying the princely virtues and on providing moral advice to the ruler by drawing on historical *exempla* of previous rulers, rather than attempting to develop advice on political matters.¹⁹¹ This aim to provide model cases explains why Book 1 is filled with quotations, examples, anecdotes and stories which often make the writing seem far from systematic.¹⁹² Gerald's sources are mainly the Bible, classical authors and poets, patristic texts, legal works, medieval chronicles and... himself.¹⁹³

From the Bible, Gerald usually extracts moral precepts and historical examples and he quotes mainly from the Psalms and the Book of Mathew. From patristic texts, he uses mostly Jerome's letters and Ambrose's *De Officiis*, although he also quotes (or attributes quotations to) Augustine and Gregory the Great. Regarding Roman pagan authors, he uses references to Seneca, Cicero, Ovid, Horace, Lucan, among others. It is interesting to notice, as Bartlett

Middle Ages. As Patricia Eberle explains, "the medieval mirror takes monarchy as the given form of government and assumes that good government will follow from the rule of a morally good man." Patricia Eberle, "Mirror of Princes," in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, Vol 8, ed. Joseph R. Strayer (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1987): 434-436. One of the best examples of this sort of writing is John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (c.1159). Bartlett suggests both the *Policraticus* and Gerald's Book 1 of *De Principis* share some common elements: "Both blend general reflections on rulership, moral criticism of court life, and masses of quotations from biblical, classical, and patristic sources (...) both presume monarchical government and devote much space to the proper ethical qualities of the ruler." Although it is highly possible that Gerald knew some of John of Salisbury's works, there is no testimony that Gerald ever read the *Policraticus*. We can be certain that he knew John, for he gives proof of it in *De Principis*, 2.19, when addressing the issue of the *Laubabiliter* bull. See Bartlett, "Introduction," xxvii and *De Principis*, 2.19, 509-511. See also Cristian Bratu, "Mirrors for Princes (Western)," in *Handbook of Medieval Studies. Terms, Methods, Trends*, Vol. 3, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 1921-1949. Also Linda Darling, "Mirrors for Princes in Europe and the Middle East: A Case of Historiographical Incommensurability," in *East meets West in the Middle Ages and early modern times: transcultural experiences in the premodern world*, ed. Albrecht Cassen (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2013).

¹⁹⁰ Bartlett, "Introduction," xxii.

¹⁹¹ Bartlett, "Introduction," xxiii-xxiv.

¹⁹² Bartlett, "Introduction," xxii-xxiii.

¹⁹³ Bartlett provides an excellent overview of Gerald's use of sources. See Bartlett, "Introduction," xxxv-lvi. Regarding Gerald's use of his own works, Bartlett makes a funny assertion, "Gerald is one of the great auto-plagiarists of the Middle Ages (...)." Bartlett, "Introduction," l.

suggests, that most references to classical authors do not often come from first hand texts, but from *florilegia*, collection of extracts of classical authors very popular in the 12th century. Bartlett shows how Gerald takes most of classical quotes and references from three main anthologies, the *Florilegium Angelicum*, the *Moralium Dogma Philosophorum* and the *Florilegium Gallicum*.¹⁹⁴ In some passages, particularly in chapter 20, Gerald shows knowledge of Justinian's *Codex*, the *Digest* and the *Institutes* and, although he doesn't make it explicit, he also alludes to Gratian's *Decretum*.¹⁹⁵ Finally, Book 1 contains many passages taken from medieval chronicles. Gerald uses them mainly when he is discussing Roman and Carolingian history. He relies frequently on Hugh of Fleury's chronicle, but he also quotes from Paul the Deacon and the *Vita Karoli Magni* (which he attributes to Alcuin).¹⁹⁶

On the other hand, Book 2 and Book 3 contain a detailed account of King Henry II's life, with a focus on the period that goes from the death of Thomas Becket in 1170 to Henry's death in 1189. As Bartlett claims, Gerald's narrative is not always coherent and well organised, with multiple breaks in the chronological sequence, many retrospectives and an unbalanced presentation of events.¹⁹⁷ The narrative attempts to "fit the events into a dramatic arc of rise and fall," concerning only very shortly Henry's promising first years and focusing on the misfortunes of this late life.¹⁹⁸

The themes which Gerald emphasizes are clear. One is Henry's troubled relation with his sons. Gerald dedicates several passages to describing Henry the Young King, Richard,

¹⁹⁴ Bartlett, "Introduction," xliii. On this matter, see also A.A. Goddu and R.H. Rouse, "Gerald of Wales and the *Florilegium Angelicum*," *Speculum* 52 (1977): 488-521. They argue that Gerald's knowledge of many antiquity authors comes from the extract collection that is the *Florilegium Angelicum*, but also probably from the *Symmachus Florilegium* and the *Valerius Maximus-Aulus Gellius Florilegium*.

¹⁹⁵ Bartlett, "Introduction," xlv-xlvi. In a passage of his autobiography, Gerald tells us about his studies of Law and Paris, and praises his abilities on this matter. See *Autobiography*, 2.1, 64-65.

¹⁹⁶ Bartlett, "Introduction," xlvii.

¹⁹⁷ Bartlett, "Introduction," xxviii-xxix. Bartlett provides an excellent Chronological table of both Books.

¹⁹⁸ Thomas Becket's murder is usually considered the turning point in Henry's life. See Bartlett, "Introduction," xxxii. About the narrative of "rise and fall" and its relation with the metaphor of the Wheel of Fortune, see Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 64-68.

Geoffrey and John's rebellious behaviour towards their father.¹⁹⁹ Other recurrent theme in these books is the relation between Henry and the French kings, and the superiority of the Capetians.²⁰⁰ As Bartlett explains, "Gerald completed the work at the time of the French invasion of 1216-1217 and welcomed the prospect of a change of dynasty."²⁰¹ King Louis VII is more than often portrayed as a pious, virtuous ruler, in clear contrast with his English counterpart.

One last topic that receives much attention in Book 2 and especially in Book 3 is the Third Crusade. Gerald dedicates a detailed account of the visit of the Patriarch of Jerusalem to England, asking Henry's help to defend the Holy Land, and he also provides a description of Fredrick Barbarossa's crusade in Book 3. The attention to this particular topic allows Gerald to argue that Henry's constant refusal to take the cross was another reason for his later hardships.²⁰²

It is in these books that Gerald makes significant references to some of his previous works, particularly the *Topographia Hibernica*, the *Expugnatio Hibernica*, the *Itinerarium Kambriae* and the *Gemma Ecclesiastica*.²⁰³ Sometimes he does not explicitly refer to them, but some others he quotes complete passages. Perhaps one of the best examples is his praise of King Henry in chapter 21 of Book 2, taken from the *Topographia*, where Gerald himself tells us how the passage belonged to one of his previous works.²⁰⁴

One last interesting particularity of Books 2 and 3 is the considerable number of documents Gerald inserts. From papal letters to royal documentation, it is possible that

¹⁹⁹ For instance, see *De Principis* cc. 2.4, 2.10, 3.10, 3.11, 3.26, among others.

²⁰⁰ Bartlett, "Introduction," xxviii and xxxi-xxxii.

²⁰¹ Bartlett, "Introduction," xxviii. See also Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, 79-86.

²⁰² Gerald's narrative of the Crusade in Book 3, which goes from c. 3.16 until c. 3.22 is identical to the *Itinerarium peregrinorum*. The visit of the Patriarch is told in c. 3.24 to 3.28. See Bartlett, "Introduction," lv.

²⁰³ Bartlett, "Introduction," li-liii.

²⁰⁴ He says, "Moreover, in addition, what is found written at the end of our Topography of Ireland about the qualities of that same king should also, not without a cause, be copied here. Although these things may indeed appear to be uttered with a little flattery, being written for a ruler who was still reigning and who wielded his sceptre with power, yet nevertheless they are supported in every respect by historical truth." *De Principis*, c. 2.21, 515.

Gerald had access to many of them, as it is possible that many of the events he records were witnessed by him. He served the king for many years and certainly had a close relation to key administrative members of the king's household.²⁰⁵

Gerald of Wales's conceptualization of the Angevin dominions

Identifying those cases in which Gerald uses the term *imperium* or any other related lexical form will give us a better idea of what, in fact, appears acknowledged as an empire or as empire-related. As Fanny Madeline suggests, "what was meant in using this word [*imperium*] needs to be clarified to understand better how men, writing about kings, saw the world and how their views could have shaped their actions."²⁰⁶ I agree with her on the key importance of taking a deeper look at the specific vocabulary of the sources, very much as Nicholas Vincent did with Henry II's charters.²⁰⁷ Focusing on the uses of the "imperial vocabulary" found in Gerald's work will allow us to see whether there is any direct association between the occurrences of terms and the power of Henry II and his sons.

By "imperial vocabulary" I understand all the case variations of the nouns *imperium*, *imperator*, *imperatrix*, and adjectives such as *imperialis* and *imperatorius*.²⁰⁸ I searched throughout Books 1, 2 and 3 all the instances I could find of these terms, in order to establish three main points.²⁰⁹ First, I needed to see where the terms were more recurrent, and how

²⁰⁵ Bartlett, "Introduction," liii-liv.

²⁰⁶ Madeline, "The idea of 'empire' as hegemonic power," 181.

²⁰⁷ Nicholas Vincent, "Regional Variations in the Charters of King Henry II (1154-1189)," in *Charters and Charter Scholarship in Britain and Ireland*, ed. M.T. Flanagan and J. Green, (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 71. See Susan Reynolds, "Empires: a problem of comparative history," 152. She says that "Words nevertheless, are my starting point, since they are what we have in the sources and what we must start from when considering notions and the phenomena that they represent."

²⁰⁸ I decided not to include verbal forms (*impero*) or participles, for they are not particularly revealing of the general conceptualization of "empire". *Impero* is usually translated as "command", "rule", "govern", as so are its related participles. To include verbal forms I would have had to search for other synonyms of "rule" and "command" in the source, which would have given an idea if the verb *impero* is used in particular contexts or it is randomly use without any further connotations. Unfortunately, this would have gone beyond the scope and also the possibilities of the present work.

²⁰⁹ I cannot assure I have found all the instances where the terms appear. Despite the efforts of being as systematic as I could, it is possible that my eyes might have skipped some examples. However, I believe I have

their frequency was related to the content of what Gerald was writing about. Second, I wanted to establish groups of topics to which the imperial vocabulary was mostly associated to: for example, the Roman past, the Carolingian rulers, the Byzantine Empire, etc. Finally, I wanted to see if there were examples where the imperial vocabulary was connected to the Angevin rulers and how.

As to the first point, it is clear that the imperial vocabulary appears more extensively in Book 1, whereas in Books 2 and 3 the terminology is less frequent. From a total of around 277 cases, 221 are to be found in the first book, 46 in Book 3 and only 10 in the second book (see Appendix 7). Apart from the fact that Book 1 is considerably more extensive than Books 2 and 3 and this could be something relevant to take into consideration, what best explains the disparity between the number of cases found are the different characteristics of the contents.

The imperial vocabulary in Book 1

In the previous section I described the general features of the three main parts of *De Principis*. As we have seen, Book 1 is full of quotations and references to historical examples, most of which are related to the Roman past. This explains the considerably large quantity of cases of the imperial vocabulary occurring in this book (see Appendix 1).

In Book 1 the imperial vocabulary appears mainly associated to the Western Roman Empire and Roman emperors. Of a total of 221 cases, almost 126 are related to the Western Roman Empire and emperors and they appear mostly in cc.1.2, 1.17 and 1.18 (see Appendix 8). They usually occur in instances when Gerald is commenting on the story of a given emperor or discussing an event in Roman history. These cases occur mainly in cc.1.17 and 1.18, where Gerald describes examples of tyrants and virtuous rulers.

covered most of the instances and that despite possible omissions, the tendencies shown by the examples listed are representative and sustain my conclusions.

In c.1.17 (“The death and bloody end of tyrants”) he consecrates great space to retell the dramatic story of Julius Cesar who, despite the glory of many of his achievements, “had usurped for himself the monarchy of the world.”²¹⁰ It then follows the example of Marc Antony, who after avenging Cesar and while ruling in the company of Octavian, had been seduced by Cleopatra and had betrayed his wife and his co-ruler, starting the civil war. In this list of rulers who had succumbed to immoderation, oppressiveness and other moral deviances, Gerald quotes the cases of Tiberius, and of course Caligula, “the most wicked and destructive man.”²¹¹

In c.1.18 (“The praiseworthy life and death of chosen princes”) we find most of the examples of the vocabulary linked to Roman emperors and the Roman Empire, with nearly 72 cases, and the vast majority of the imperial vocabulary in Book 1 in general (See Appendix 2). Similarly as in c.1.17, here Gerald gives an extensive list of exemplary rulers that illustrate the virtues of the good princes he discussed in previous sections of the book. The list of examples of Roman emperors is long, starting with Octavian (later Augustus), followed by Claudius, Vespasian, Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Constantius and Constantine the Great, Jovian, Gratian and Theodosius.²¹² This large set of examples taken from Roman history explains the great amount of cases of *imperium* in this chapter.

There are other few cases, which I have regarded separately, concerned with the Roman law, essentially the *Codex*, the *Digest* and the *Institutes*. At least 14 cases occur when Gerald is discussing aspects of Roman law. For example in c.1.2 where Gerald is reflecting on the relation between the emperor and the law, relying mainly on the *Codex* and the

²¹⁰ “(...) quia mundi monarchiam et singular dominium atque imperium sibi usurpauit (...)”. *De Principis* c.1.17, 208-209.

²¹¹ “Successit autem Tyberio Gaius Cesar, cognomento Caligula, Drusi priuigni Augusti et ipsius Tyberii nepos, sceleratissimus ac funestissimus et qui eciam Tiberi dedecora purgauit.” *De Principis*, c.1.17, 216-217.

²¹² *De Principis*, c.1.18, 264-309.

Institutes or in c.1.20, where he discusses those laws issued by emperors in which “their devotion to God and the Holy Church is made apparent.”²¹³

The imperial vocabulary linked to the Carolingians follows in number the cases of the Western Roman Empire and Roman emperors with nearly 18% of the examples (39). Once more, the great majority of the examples can be found in cc.1.17, 1.18 and 1.20.²¹⁴ Regarding the Carolingians, Gerald discusses at large the coronation of Charlemagne, the division of the Empire between the sons of Louis the Pious and the transfer of the Western Roman Empire to the Franks, the *translatio imperii*, mostly in cc.1.17 and 1.18.²¹⁵ In an interesting passage in c.1.17 Gerald establishes the Empire of the Franks as the authentic Roman Empire, downgrading the Byzantine emperors as illegitimate. He writes,

Now, since around this time Charles, king of Franks, was crowned and raised up to be emperor and Augustus at Rome by Pope Leo, who had been blinded and expelled from the city, but who was at length called back to his see by Charles, and in this way the Roman empire was happily transferred to the Franks and the Germans, henceforth let us leave to their tyranny the tyrants of Byzantium, who from this time claimed the name but not the reality of empire (...).²¹⁶

There are a few other cases I would like to comment. In at least 10 instances, the imperial vocabulary appears in connection with Amazons, Parthians, Scythians and Persians.

²¹³ “Proinde et leges ab imperatoribus promulgatas, quibus erga Deum et ecclesiam sanctam eorum deuocio patet et luce clarius emicat et enitescit, quasdum et hic inserere preter rem non putauimus.” *De Principis*, c.1.20, 342-343.

²¹⁴ The majority occur in c.1.18.

²¹⁵ See chapter 2 of this thesis. On the importance of the *translatio imperii* in the context of the Plantagenet ideology, see Amaury Chauou, *L'idéologie Plantagenêt* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2001), 174-175. Gerald also gives testimony of the Donation of Constantine, which is one of the key elements in the medieval conception of the *translatio imperii*. In c.1.18, when he is giving an account of Constantine as an example of a virtuous ruler, Gerald inserts a passage explaining how the Pope was given the city of Rome: “So, recognizing God’s grace more and more from day to day, ‘he handed over the city of Rome, along with his palace called the Lateran, to the apostles of Christ, Peter and Paul, and to the holy pope Silvester’, with many towns and fortresses throughout Italy (...).” “Tunc ergo Dei gratiam amplius de die in diem recognoscens, ‘urben Romam cum palacio suo, quod Lateranense dicitur contulit apostolis Christi Petro et Paulo et sancto pape Siluestro’, cum urbibus et castris per Italiam multis (...).” *De Principis*, c.1.18, 284-285. Although Gerald does not explicitly establish a link between the Donation and the *translatio*, the account of both episodes and the relation of the *translatio* with the Franks prove that Gerald’s views on historical empires share most of the common features we acknowledged in the previous section of the thesis.

²¹⁶ “Porro quoniam circiter hos dies Karolus rex Francorum a Leone papa Rome, exsecrato et ab urbe eiecto, tandem tamen ad sedem suam per Karolum reuocato, qui primo patricius factus fuerat, iam in imperatorem et Augustum coronatus est et sublimatus, ad Francos et Germanos translatio sic Romano feliciter imperio, Bizantii tyrannos, de cetero nomen et non omen imperii pretendentes (...).” *De Principis*, c.1.17, 230-231.

The inclusion of a long passage about them in c.1.14, the chapter where Gerald discusses the boldness and courage of rulers, is a bit puzzling. Although Gerald justifies the inclusion by promising to give an account of the courage of these peoples, “the details of the Scythian way of life might strike some readers as only tenuously connected with that theme.”²¹⁷ The case is peculiar within the book, but is interesting to point out for it was part of the intellectual framework of an author like Gerald.²¹⁸

In at least 19 examples, *imperium* appears in very general formulations and cannot be directly associated with any concrete historical case. An example of what I mean can be found in c.1.13, when Gerald quotes the following sentence: “Do you want great power (*imperium*); I give it to you- rule yourself.” In this case *imperium* is used in its most abstract sense and does not allow further conclusions.²¹⁹ An additional example of this “general use” is in Gerald’s description of the ruler’s titles, in c.1.19. There, he explains why an “emperor” is called in that way: “So ‘emperor’ (*imperator*) is so called from ‘commanding’ (*imperando*), because he exercises command in the whole body of the empire; namely, the one who possesses the power of commanding conferred by everyone.”²²⁰

Lastly, there are few cases (8) where the Eastern Roman Empire or the Greek emperors are mentioned explicitly and only five instances which are either not clear or isolated.²²¹ Of this last group, for example, in one case Gerald mentions an anecdote regarding Gregory VII, and says the Pope appeared wearing “imperial ornaments” (*imperialibus ornamentis*). In

²¹⁷ Bartlett, “Introduction,” xlvii. Bartlett suggests the examples of the nomadic Scythians could have been useful to Gerald while writing his portrayal of the Welsh in the *Descriptio Kambriae*. See Bartlett, “Introduction,” xlvii-xlviii. Most of the pages dedicated to these peoples are based on Hugh of Fleury’s *Chronicon*. See *De Principis*, c.1.14, 170-181.

²¹⁸ See Eva Matthews Sanford, “The Study of Ancient History in the Middle Ages,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 5 (1944): 21-43.

²¹⁹ “Vis magnum imperium, do tibi, impera tibi.” *De Principis*, c.1.13, 158-159.

²²⁰ “Imperator igitur ab imperando dicitur, quoniam in totum imperii corpus exercet imperia; puta penes quem est imperando ab universitate collata potestas.” *De Principis*, c.1.19, 318-319.

²²¹ He speaks of Tiberius II Constantine in c.1.18 and c.1.20 and of emperor Nicephorus in c.1. 17. There is one instance in c.1.17 where he speaks of the “Greek emperors” (*imperatoribus Grecis*). *De Principis*, c.1.17, 232. I did not include in this category the instances where Justinian is mentioned, for when he is it is in relation to the Roman law, and therefore the examples were considered into that group.

other opportunity Gerald, when writing about Theobald of Blois, speaks of “imperial Burgundy” to refer to the Dukedom of Burgundy, but it is the only instance in the entire work.²²²

Imperium and the Angevins: Books 2 and 3

As stated before, in Books 2 and 3 the vocabulary appears less frequently (see Appendices 2 and 4). In Book 2 we have only ten examples of which half are related to Frederick Barbarossa, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (1155-1190) and contemporary of King Henry.²²³ Although Book 3 has more examples, counting a total of 46, almost all of them refer also to Frederick or the Holy Roman Empire, and they mostly appear in the context of the discussion of the Third Crusade.²²⁴ In c.3.20 there are also a few occurrences where the Byzantine emperor Isaac II Angelos is mentioned as the “Greek emperor”, in clear contrast with Frederick, the “emperor of the Romans”.²²⁵

There are three passages in Books 2 and 3 which I would like to discuss further. In these examples the imperial terminology appears in a context where it seems to be related to the Angevins. However, as I will argue, they are hardly proof of Gerald acknowledging Angevin power in an “imperial” way or, even less, the Angevin dominions as an empire.

One example we find in *De Principis Instructione* that seems to connect imperial vocabulary with the Angevins is the association of Henry II with his mother, Empress Matilda.²²⁶ Before marrying Henry’s father, Count Geoffrey of Anjou, Matilda was married to the Holy Roman Emperor Henry V for almost eleven years. After the emperor’s death and

²²² Both cases appear in *De Principis*, c.1.20, 354: “(...) papam uidisset tam pontificalibus quam eciam imperialibus ornamentis insignitum (...)”. The other case appears in 1.20, 386: “(...) in Burgundia regale quam imperii quoque finibus (...)”. Here Gerald is telling the story of Theobald of Blois, one of whose daughters married Odo II of Burgundy.

²²³ *De Principis*, c.2.1, 444-445 and c.2.30, 547-548

²²⁴ For the events of the Third Crusade Gerald relies almost entirely on the *Itinerarium peregrinorum*. According to Bartlett, “from the last paragraph of iii.16 to the end of iii.22, Gerald’s *De Principis Instructione* if identical to the *Itinerarium peregrinorum* (...)”. Bartlett, “Introduction,” iv.

²²⁵ See *De Principis*, c.3.20, 644-645.

²²⁶ Madeline, “The Idea of ‘Empire’ as hegemonic power,” 190.

her marriage with Geoffrey she kept using the title “*imperatrix*” in public documents, and she is usually referred to in that way in many accounts. In c.3.27, when Gerald is describing the corrupt origins of both Henry II and his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, he refers to Matilda as empress:

Moreover, to show how the root of the stock was also corrupt on King Henry’s side, one should know that the emperor Henry, who had married Matilda, daughter of King Henry I and mother of Henry II, and who, from earthly ambition, first held captive in chains his fleshly father and afterwards his spiritual father, namely Pope Paschal, voluntarily abdicated the empire and, seeking a hermitage in the far western parts of Britain towards Chester, here did holy and religious penance until his death. Geoffrey, count of Anjou, received the **empress** [*imperatricem*] in marriage when she returned, handed over by her father but with her husband still living, and has sons by him, two of whom, when they were already in full grain and of great hope, nevertheless suddenly withered and passed away without fruit, but the third, as has been said, began higher than he finished.²²⁷

This example is the only case where Gerald mentions Henry’s mother, and the passage reveals more about Matilda than about Henry. Although it is possible that Henry saw as an advantage to be styled as Henry Fitzempress, for it could establish a strategic symbolic link with the Imperial See, he never sought the imperial dignity. Fanny Madeline, however, believes that Henry,

was conscious that imperial honours brought a greater authority, associated with sacrality and glorious ascendancy. Any ties with these honours were thus used for increasing his symbolical power. In choosing to be called Fitzempress of *filius imperatricis* he was claiming an imperial status through his maternal legacy.²²⁸

It could be possible that Henry was trying to enhance his authority by claiming some kind of filiation with the Empire –no matter how remote. However, Madeline’s assertion that this was Henry’s way of fulfilling an “imperial ambition” by claiming an “imperial status”

²²⁷ “Ad haec etiam, ut ostendatur qualiter ex regis Henrici parte radix quoque propagnis vitata fuerit, siendum quod imperator Henricus, cui nupserat filia regis Henrici primi et mater secundi, nomine Matildis, quique propter ambitum terrenum primo patrem suum carnalem captum in vinculis tenuit et postea sipiritualem, papam scilicet Paschalem, imperium sponte reliquit et, in ultimis occidentaleis Britannie versus Cestriam finibus heremun petens, ibi usque ad obitum suum sancte et religiose poenitentiam egit. **Imperatricem** vero reversam comes Andegaviae Gaufredus patre tradente, ses marito vivente, nuptam suscepit, filiosque ex ea genuit, quorum duo jam in spica et spe magna, subito tamen et sine fructu, emarcuerunt et evanuerunt, tertius autem, ut dictum est, coepit altius quam finivit.” *De Principis*, c.3.27, 686.

²²⁸ Madeline, “The Idea of ‘Empire’ as hegemonic power,” 190.

seems to push the argument to an extreme and would require a deeper analysis of Henry's uses of the label "Fitzempress". Even if we can admit that in some instances the imperial vocabulary was channelling ideas of superior authority, Gerald's example leaves little space for further conclusions, and it should be pointed out that he never refers to Henry as "Fitzempress" in *De Principis*.

Another example I would like to call the attention to also occurs in Book 3, and it is a passage copied from the *Topographia Hibernica*.²²⁹ In this case the vocabulary appears in a different context, not directly related to Henry but to two of his sons. In c.3.8, Gerald describes Richard I and compares him with his older brother, Henry the Young King. In the description of their moral and physical aptitudes as future rulers, Gerald asserts that both brothers' had a figure "*digne imperio*" (worthy to rule):

Although they were different in conduct and endeavours, if from the same seed and root, both nevertheless deserved the glory of perpetual praise and an eternal memory. Both were tall in stature, a little above average and with a **figure worthy to rule**. They were almost equal in energy and greatness of spirit, but very unequal in the path of virtue.²³⁰

Although in his translation Robert Bartlett interprets "*imperio*" as "to rule", which seems to fit perfectly the context, Fanny Madeline gives a different reading and proposes a direct translation of "*imperio*" as "empire".²³¹ This allows her to argue that this is clear evidence that for Gerald, "imperial dignity should also be embodied by men of good moral and physical stature (...) For Gerald, therefore, *imperium* had a physical presence in the body of the ruler."²³² I do not fully see the relation between the appearance of *imperium* in this passage and the automatic association of it with the imperial dignity. She seems to be assuming the imperial dignity of both Henry the Young King and Richard, but this does not

²²⁹ *Topographia* c.3.50 and c.3.51.

²³⁰ "Diversis igitur tam moribus quam studiis eodem ex germine eademque radice duo cum fuerint, perpetue tamen laudis gloriam eternitatisque memoriam uterque promeruit. Ambo staturae grandis, pauloque plusquam mediocris, et forme **digne imperio**. Strenuitas illis et animi magnitudo fere par, sed via virtutis valde dispar." *De Principis*, c.3.8, 600.

²³¹ She translates *et forme digne mperio* as "and a body worthy of the empire". Madeline, "The Idea of 'Empire' as hegemonic power," 191.

²³² Madeline, "The Idea of 'Empire' as hegemonic power," 191.

stand out from Gerald's comment. Although it is true that for Gerald a virtuous ruler is a man of good moral behaviour, he speaks of this as a condition for every kind of ruler.

One last case can be found in chapter c.2.21. This is the famous passage of Gerald's *Topographia Hibernica* reproduced in *De Principis* where Gerald praises the easy way in which Henry II got control of Wales and Scotland, forcing their kings to recognize him as their lord by the act of homage, and where he praises Henry II as a "western Alexander", comparing him with Alexander the Great. Gerald writes,

Your victories vie with the world, since you have extended your arm, our Western Alexander, from the Pyrenean Mountains of Spain to the western and uttermost limits of the northern ocean. As far as nature has produced lands in these regions, so far have you brought forth victories. If the bounds of your campaigns were to be sought, the end of the world would be reached before their limits. Brave heart may run out of lands, but will not know how to cease from victory. (...) How the little kings of the west, astonished at the flashing light of your arrival, immediately eagerly flocked to your power (*imperium*), as if to a lamp!"²³³

This expression of Gerald has often been regarded as an example of those chroniclers who, astonished by Henry's success, praised him by acknowledging his far reaching power and the extension of his territorial dominions. Some historians have seen in this a justification for the idea that Henry ruled an empire. The assimilation of his person with Alexander, who was neither labelled emperor, has function as a strong proof to sustain the existence of the Angevin Empire.²³⁴

²³³ "Certant enim cum orbe terrarum victorie vestre; cum a Pyreneis Hispanie montibus usque in occiduos et extremos borealis oceani fines, Alexander noster occidentalis, brachium extendisti. Quantum igitur hiis in partibus natura terras, tantum et victorias extulisti. Si excursuum tuorum metse querantur, prius deerit orbis quam aderit finis. Animoso quippe pectori cessare possunt terre, cessare nesciunt victorie; nec deesse poterunt triumphi, sed materia triumphandi. (...) Qualiter fulguranti adventus vestri lumine attoniti occidentales reguli, tanquam ad lucubrum, avide ad vestrum statim **imperium** convolaverint!" *De Principis*, c.2.21, 516-517.

²³⁴ Aurell, *L'Empire des Plantagenêt*, 9-10 and Madeline, "The Idea of 'Empire' as hegemonic power," 189. According to her the "occurrences of the term *imperium* in chronicles of the reign of Henry II are often associated with the narrative of his conquests in the British Isles." Madeline, "The idea of 'Empire' as hegemonic power," 191. The image of Henry as a "conqueror" within the British Isles has given space to some historiography to see an intrinsic "imperialistic attitude" of the English over their neighbours developing already in the twelfth century, which is often associated with the emergence of a national identity. However, as an example quoted by Rees Davies shows, despite the fact that there is an intention of asserting Henry's superior status through language, the imperial vocabulary does not seem to be the way, "Scotland was recurrently referred to as a land (*terra*), not as a kingdom (*regnum*) (...) the premier-league status of Henry II's title as 'the lord king' (*dominus rex*) stood in pointed superiority to that of William, merely 'king of the Scots' (*rex*

The military triumphs and the successful initial policy of Henry over his lands, assuring him an extended control over France and Britain, decisively triggered the imagination of contemporaries. The image of Henry as a victorious warrior and conqueror would give place to expressions of admiration such as Gerald's, which would often be channelled by images or references to great leaders such as Alexander or even Augustus. In c.2.9, for example, when discussing the qualities of Henry the Young King, Gerald compares him with Caesar, Augustus, Achilles and Hector in an attempt to enhance his virtues: "Honour of all honour, grace and adornment of the city and the world, the splendour, glory, light, and pinnacle of knighthood, Julius in spirit, Hector in virtues, Achilles in strength, Augustus in conduct, Paris in appearance."²³⁵

Although these examples seem to allow an association between the Angevins and the idea of empire as conquest and military success, to conclude that this allows speaking of Henry's dominions as an "empire" –at least in the terms historiography has intended to–, seems dubious. These examples in Gerald's work could be alternatively read as a rhetorical tool in a context where he is clearly enhancing the great power of the rulers. The comparisons Gerald uses can be seen as a way to express the outstanding achievements of Henry and his

Scottorum). See R.R. Davies, *The First English Empire. Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093-1343* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 14. See also Michael Staunton, *The Historians of Angevin England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 338-339 and 342-343. See also John Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century. Imperialism, national identity and political values* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), Part I.

²³⁵ "Omnis honoris honos, decor et decus urbis et orbis, militie splendor, gloria, lumen, apex; lului ingenio, uirtutibus Hector, Achilles uiribus, Augustus moribus, ore Paris." *De Principis*, c.2.9, 474-475. In the same section, Gerald refers to Henry the Young Kings as a "second Alexander" (*Macedo secundus*). *De Principis*, c.2.9, 476-477. Fanny Madeline believes that these references illustrate how Gerald applied elements from "the lexical field of the word *imperium*" to depict Angevin power: "The description of the power of the English kings within the lexical field of the word *imperium* shows that those who used the word drew on the classical repertory of the ancient empires, Greek or Roman, and used imperial models as references of governmental virtues." Madeline, "The Idea of 'Empire' as hegemonic power," 192. This is undeniable. Given the intellectual background of twelfth century authors like Gerald, whose knowledge was very much rooted in the revived interest on Latin classics and Roman law, isn't it expected that they channelled their understanding of power through the exempla or theoretical framework provided by sources they considered authoritative? In any case, it doesn't mean that they could not differentiate the political attributions of Roman emperors and those of medieval rulers such as Henry. Moreover, as Gerald's example suggests, the "description of the power of the English kings within the lexical field of the word *imperium*" is relatively scarce.

son, and not a testimony of him acknowledging Henry's dominions as an empire or his power as an "imperial" one.

However, there is one further reading of the comparison of Henry II to Alexander. As we have already pointed out, in *De Principis* Gerald presents a highly negative portrait of the King and the Angevin dynasty, which makes the inclusion of the passage of the *Topographia* rather puzzling and contrasting. If we follow Gerald's often non-systematic argumentations, we find that among those rulers who despite their great achievements had succumbed to temptations and had faced a dramatic fate, Gerald includes the example of Alexander: "Apart from the vice of ambition, which rarely dominates the minds of rulers without tyranny, Alexander was afflicted with the vice of drunkenness (...)." ²³⁶ As Gerald denounces Alexander's ambition as one of the causes of his tragic fate, in c.2.1 he seems to accuse Henry of the same, by criticising his lack of honour and honesty when extending his power:

Moreover, overseas in Aquitaine in France, apart from Anjou, Maine and the Touraine, which descended to him by paternal inheritance, and Poitou and the whole of Gascony as far as the Pyrenean Mountains of Spain, which came to him through marriage, he boldly added the Auvergne and Berry to his domains, as well as Gisors and the Norman Vexin, which had been taken away from Normandy long before. He courageously extended his ambitions not only to rule over the French, abusing the easy ways of the sincere and holy King Louis, but also to the Roman empire, taking advantage of the long war and memorable discord that had arisen between the emperor Frederick and his men, and, being often invited by the whole of Italy and the city of Romulus, he purchased for his purpose, but did not effectively obtain, the road through the valley of Maurienne and the Alps. When he was with his private companions, he often used to utter this hold and ambitious statement, 'for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks,' that the whole world was too little for a brave and powerful man. ²³⁷

²³⁶ "Alexander itaque preter ambicionis uicium, que raro in principium animis absque tyrannide regnare solet, ebrositatis uitio laborauit (...) Set, quoniam eo ipso genere delicti quo plus laborant plerosque perire uidemus, uir tantus, orientali totaliter orbe subacto, conuocatis principibus suis in conuiuio publico, gaudio resolutus et uinolentus denique sorum insidiis uino, cui trans modestiam datus fuerat, periit uenenato, sicut supra in capitulo de Prouidentia dictum est." *De Principis*, c.1.17, 202-203

²³⁷ "Preterea in transmarinis Aquitannice Gallie partibus preter Andegauiam, Cenomanniam et Turoniam, que ei patrimoniali iure, Pictariam quoque et Gasconiam totam usque ad Pyrenoeos Hispanie montes, que ei matrimonialiter obuenerant, dominatui suo Aluerniam et Berricum, Gisorcium quoque cum Vegesino Normannico, olim Normannise subtracto, uiriliter adiecit. Nec solum ad Francorum, simplicis ac sancti uiri Ludouici regis abutens commoditate, uerum etiam ad Romanum imperium, occasione werre diutine et inexorabilis discordie inter imperatorem Frethericum et suos oborte, tam Ytalia tota, quam urbe Romulea sepius

There is a similarity between Alexander the Great succumbing to his vices and Henry's fate: they both had known all glories but, as a consequence of their misbehaviour, had suffered an unexpected, tragic end.²³⁸ The inclusion of the passage of the *Topographia* where Henry is compared with Alexander seems, in the broader context of *De Principis*, an assertion of the common disgraceful destiny of both rulers.

As can be concluded from the previous analysis, the cases in which the imperial vocabulary explicitly appears in association with the Angevin dynasty are extremely rare. Although certain passages allow an ambiguous interpretation regarding possible imperial connections ascribed to Gerald's descriptions, this is not reflected through the specific vocabulary of *imperium*. Even in those cases where historiography has wanted to see a link between the Angevins and the idea of empire, this is not, in the case of Gerald, channelled through the use of imperial vocabulary. These cases, moreover, are concerned with the personal characteristics of the power of Henry II and his sons, and say little about the Angevin dominions as a whole. What stands as an empire in Gerald's mind seems to be rather clear by his uses of the vocabulary in Book 1.

inuitatus, comparata quidem sibi ad hoc Morianae uallis et Alpium uia, sed non efficaciter obtenta, animositate sua ambitum extendit." *De Principis*, c.2.1, 444- 445. I believe this is an eloquent example in terms of providing an association between Henry and an "imperialistic" attitude towards the continental lands. Gerald claims that Henry's ambitious were challenging Louis's authority over France and, presumably, over territories border with the Holy Roman Empire. The passage is indeed interesting. Although it doesn't permit an interpretation of the Angevin dominions as an "empire", it does however give the impression that Henry's ambitions could echo imperial ideas, only if we associate them with the idea of military conquest. It is also interesting that, contrasting with the praise of Henry as a western Alexander, in this opportunity Gerald's tone has clearly negative connotations, which fits the general overtone of *De Principis* regarding Henry.

²³⁸ The idea of the brilliant carrier followed by an abrupt and unexpected fate can be also found in Henry's epitaph, as recorded by Roger of Wendover, Mathew Paris and Ralph of Diceto. See on this matter Robert Favreau, "L'épithaphe d'Henri II Plantagenêt à Fontevraud," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 50 (2007) : 3-10. The way Gerald portrays the death and funeral of Henry gives an eloquent picture of the dramatic fate of the king. See *De Principis*, c.3.28, 694-697.

The “alternative vocabulary”: *terra, regnum, terrae transmarinae*.

It is clear from the previous section that Gerald did not consider the Angevin dominions an “empire”, and that the imperial vocabulary is associated to them to loosely to consider it a proof of the existence of an “Angevin Empire”. When there are references to the Angevin dominions in Gerald’s work, the terms which appear more often are *terra*, *terra transmarina* and *regnum*. Although the instances where the topic of the Angevin lands is addressed are not many, it is possible to get a general impression of the way Gerald thought about them.²³⁹

What the vocabulary shows us is, essentially, the absence of an idea of unity. There is a fundamental distinction between the insular lands, represented by the English kingdom (*regnum*), and the “ovearseas lands” (*terrae transmarinae*). Apart from a short fragment in c.3.25 where England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales are regarded as “realms”, there are not many examples of a specific vocabulary associated to the British Isles. Except for England, which appears often and as a *regnum*, the rest of Britain is rather obscure in *De Principis*.

Regarding the “continental lands” the panorama seems clearer. When mentioned, Henry’s lands in France are almost always referred to by the generic “*terra*” and usually the adjective “*transmarina*”. Let’s see a few examples. In c.2.27 Gerald gives an account of the visit of the Patriarch of Jerusalem to England and Henry’s refusal to assume any responsibility in Jerusalem. The contrast between the kingdom of England and the continental lands stands clear:

At London on the appointed day, after many, both to the knightly order and of the common people, were signed to the service of Christ, moved by the

²³⁹ All the examples appear in Books 2 and 3. For that reason, in this section I will focus only in those Books, which contain the narrative account of Henry’s reign. The methodology is slightly different than from the previous section. When dealing with the imperial vocabulary I was aware of what I was searching for, and therefore I could develop a more systematic way of working. In the case of the “alternative” vocabulary, apart from having some expectations of what I could find (suggested, for example, by Nicholas Vincent’s previous work on Henry II’s charters), I had to go all through the source in search for passages where the dominions of Henry were being issued, regardless of a specific terminology.

admonitions of the patriarch and the public sermons persuasively delivered both by him and by that venerable and holy man Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, the patriarch finally received this answer from the king, that it was not safe at present for him to leave his **kingdom** without protection and government and expose his **lands overseas** to the rapacity of the French, to whom he was hateful.²⁴⁰

There is another example, this time in c.3.7, where Richard asks his father to guarantee him the loyalty of both English men and those of “the lands overseas” before he leaves to the Holy Land:

And since he was bound to undertake such a lengthy and perilous journey, in order that during his long absence nothing should be wickedly plotted to his disadvantage, he should grant him the right to receive the fealty of the barons of the English **kingdom**, and also the fealty of those of the **lands overseas** that pertained to him by hereditary right (...) ²⁴¹

This contrast between kingdom and “lands” gives the impression of the existence of a hierarchy between them. While usually the *regnum Anglorum* stands for its individuality, the lands in France appear as a rather amorphous group. This could be explained by the fact that in many of the examples where the Angevin possessions are mentioned the context involves the French king. Henry’s superior title was that of King, which provided him with the same symbolic status as his French counterpart, to whom, in connection with his continental lands, he was subjected to. Henry’s ambiguous relation with the King of France, as a pair and as a subject could explain the apparent superior status of the kingdom of England in connection to the continental lands, and it certainly illustrates the intricate relations of power in the

²⁴⁰ “Dic uero Londoniis praefixo, multis quidem tam militaris ordinis quam plebis, per patriarchae monita publicosque tam eius quam uiri uenerabilis et sancti Cantuariensis archiepiscopi Baldwini sermones ad populum suasorie factos, ad Christi obsequia consignatis, tandem responsum a rege patriarcha suscepit, quod **regnum** suum absque tutela et regimine destituere, **terrasque suas transmarinas** Francorum rapacitati, quibus exosus exstiterat, ei inpraesentiarum exponere tutum non erat.” *De Principis*, c.2.27, 532-535.

²⁴¹ “Et quoniam tam longinquum iter et periculosum arripere debuit, ne quid absentia sua tam longa in preiudicium ipsius malitiose machinari possit, fidelitates procerum **regni** Anglicani, nec non et **terrarum transmarinarum** ipsum iure hereditario contingencium fidelitates, salua in omnibus fidelitate patri prius et exhibita et debita, suscipiendas indulgeret.” *De Principis*, c.3.7, 392-393.

period.²⁴² There is, however, one passage where Gerald explains what these *terrae transmarinae* are and how they came to be grouped together under Henry's rule:

Moreover, overseas in Aquitaine in France, apart from Anjou, Maine, and the Touraine, which descended to him by paternal inheritance, and Poitou and the whole of Gascony as far as the Pyrenean mountains of Spain, which came to him through marriage, he boldly added the Auvergne and Berry to his domains, as well as Gisors and the Norman Vexin, which had been taken away from Normandy long before.²⁴³

The word *dominatui* which appears in this passage reinforces the image of Henry's lordship over his French lands in a very loose way.²⁴⁴ The term rarely appears associated to Henry, but it appears more often in reference to King Louis who is generally addressed as "lord" or *dominus*. This is probably a way to reassess the subordinate status of Henry as a vassal of the King of France for his continental possessions. In an example in c.2.28 the feudal relation between Henry and King Louis appears very clearly. In this chapter Gerald tells about a discussion between Henry and the Patriarch of Jerusalem who, disappointed by Henry's negative to accept his requests, reminds the king of all the faults committed against his lord, King Louis:

(...) and how he [Henry], on the other hand, never kept faith with his lord, King Louis, not only taking many lands away from him after unjustly harassing him many times with wars that brought so much slaughter and arson, but las, as the height of injury, taking his wife, Eleanor, unjustly and having heir from such a union (...).²⁴⁵

There is one further example I would like to quote that illustrates the complex articulation of hierarches. In this fragment Gerald describes how King Louis, in his final

²⁴² In the letter that gives testimony to the agreement between King Louis and Henry to go together on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the subordination of Henry as vassal of Louis, although he is addressed as "King Henry", is made very clear. See *De Principis*, c.2.5, 460-467.

²⁴³ "Praeterea in transmarinis Aquitanniae Galliae partibus praeter Andegaviam, Cenomanniam et Turoniam, quae ei patrimoniali jure, Pictaviam quoque et Gasconiam total usque ad Pyrenaeos Hispaniae montes, quae ei matrimonialiter obvenerant, dominatui suo Alverniam et Berricum, Gisortium quoque cum Vegesino Normannico, olim Normanniae subtract, viriliter adjecit." *De Principis*, c.2.1, 444-445.

²⁴⁴ See Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 219-220.

²⁴⁵ "(...) et qualiter e contra ipse domino suo regi Ludowico nunquam fidem servavit, unde non solum toties ipsum guerris injuste vexando, per qua stot caedes et incendia pervenerunt, terras ei plurimas abstulit, sed etiam ad injuriarum cumulum sponsam suam Alienor indebite subtraxit et ex tali copula suscepit haeredes, ae si dicerete: 'Non habet eventos sordida praeda bonos' (...)." *De Principis*, c.2.28, 538-539.

days, addresses Henry. It is possible to see, in this example, Henry's double quality as a King and vassal:

From the beginning of your reign, and even before, O king, you have spurned the reverence of fealty and homage and inflicted injuries on me in many things –to say nothing of other things, in lands you have occupied without right or justice. But, more than all other injuries, far greater and more blatant, is that concerning the Auvergne, which you presume so impudently to retain without right against the crown of France.²⁴⁶

Together with *regnum* and *terrae*, the overall image we get from Gerald's way of addressing Henry's lands is that of a composite structure of several feudal structures which were regarded as such in relation to their status. Therefore, the *regnum*, which gave Henry his highest status, is often addressed independently from the rest of the lands, possibly because it was regarded as different. This could be of course related to Gerald's point of view, more focused on the situation within the British Isles than in France. However, it does give a hint of the way land and status were intimately related and how this is reflected in the way of addressing the lands. It is interesting to notice, also, that there is a further distinction, throughout the few examples given, between those land inherited by Henry and therefore rightfully under his rule, and those lands claimed by him or –in the case of the British Isles, as one can deduce– conquered or acquired by force. This also implies a differentiation of status between the lands that reinforces the idea of Henry's dominions as a complex composite.

From this short analysis of the most representative passages where the Angevin dominions are given a name, we can extract some conclusions. It seems clear that the Angevin lands are not named or regarded as a unified totality. The general *terrae* does not specify a particular conceptualization of the lands as either a political or territorial entity.

What prevails in Gerald's *De Principis* is a vocabulary that differentiates the lands not only

²⁴⁶ "In multis mihi, rex, ab initio regni vestri et ante, spreta fidelitatis et hominii reverentia –sed, ut de aliis taceam, super terris praeter jus et aequum occupatis- injurias irrogastis. Sed prae cunctis injuriis illa de Alvernia longe major est et manifestior ; quam citra jus omne contra coronam Franciae tam impudenter detinere praesumitis." *De Principis*, c.3.1, 564-567.

regarding their geographical location, but also their status. This is made evident whenever the lordship of the King of France over the Angevins is enhanced in the passages, or Henry's right over the lands is acknowledged or discussed.

The terminology, therefore, shows the Angevin lands as a grouping of several distinct unities which are regarded differently and certainly not as a territorial or political unity. What seems to group them together is, after all, their common ruler.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to give a general mapping of the vocabulary found in Gerald of Wales's *De Principis Instructione* regarding the problem of the "Angevin empire". After showing how the "imperial vocabulary" appears in Gerald's work, I concluded that there is no clear association between imperial terminology and the Angevin rulers and their possessions. I discussed those examples usually used by historiography to sustain their arguments in favor of the idea of the "Angevin empire" and tried to show, as much as it was possible, that other reading was possible.

Finally, I intended to give account of the terminology that does in fact appear in connection to the Angevin possessions. The brief analysis doesn't make justice to the complexities of the problem, which would require a much deeper and longer work, even regarding Gerald himself. However, I tried to establish some tentative conclusions, for the vocabulary was not pointing to the direction of the existence, in the eyes of contemporaries, of what the historiography has usually acknowledged as the "Angevin Empire".

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to contribute to the debate on the Angevin Empire by analyzing Gerald of Wales's *De Principis Instructione*. My aim was, following the recent tendencies among historians of the "Angevin Empire" described in Chapter 1, to show how the imperial vocabulary appeared in the source and associated to what.

In order to understand if it was possible for the Angevin Kings and their entourage to consider their power or dominions in imperial terms, it was necessary first to take a look at what an empire meant in the Middle Ages. In Chapter 2 I provided an overview of the meaning of the concept during the Early and central Middle Ages. The first thing to be regarded was that in the minds of medieval people, empire was essentially associated to the Roman Christian tradition. I showed, however, that there were many coexisting meanings and notions that made "empire" a flexible and often complex concept.

However, my analysis in Chapter 3 showed that despite the wide number of connotations of the concept, at least in the case of *De Principis Instructione*, the imperial vocabulary was almost always related to very specific things which coincide with the general basic understanding of the concept in the Middle Ages. For Gerald, empire meant Rome, the Carolingians, the Papacy, the Holy Roman Empire, Byzantium. It did certainly not mean the Angevin dominions, and can only vaguely be associated to the Angevin rulers.

The passages in *De Principis Instructione* where the imperial vocabulary appeared associated to the Angevins were not entirely conclusive. As I showed, those ambiguous instances where it seemed possible to establish an imperial connection, this was not reflected through the specific vocabulary of *imperium*, but through different types of analogies, such as

the one which compared Henry II with Alexander the Great. I showed in this case that another explanation is possible. These cases, moreover, are concerned with the personal characteristics of the power of Henry II and his sons, and say little about the Angevin dominions as a whole.

The analysis on the “alternative vocabulary” showed that when addressing the Angevin dominions, Gerald usually used a set repertoire of words: *terra*, *regnum*, *terrae transmarinae*. The terminology used by Gerald shows the Angevin lands as a group of several distinct unities which were regarded differently and certainly not as a territorial or political unity. From what can be grasped from Gerald’s account, it seems clear that the unifying element holding the lands together were their common rulers: the Angevins, mainly Henry II and, later on, Richard and John.

Our analysis of the “alternative vocabulary” was indeed brief and needs further research. However, taking into consideration what Nicholas Vincent’s work on Henry II’s charters has shown, a deeper look at the actual language found in the sources regarding the Angevin lands could help us establish an understanding of them more closely related to the view of contemporary actors.²⁴⁷ Although the concept of “empire” seems useful as a general reference to name that “which had no name”, it can often be misleading and needs to be critically addressed if the intention is to use it as an analytical tool.²⁴⁸ The gap between our understanding of the concept and that of the times of Henry II should be taken into consideration. Gerald of Wales and his contemporaries had a clear idea and usage of “empire”, yet they never regarded the Angevin lands as such: this fact, as simple as it may seem, must not be underestimated.

²⁴⁷ Nicholas Vincent, “Regional Variations in the Charters of King Henry II (1154-1189),” in *Charters and Charter Scholarship in Britain and Ireland*, ed. M.T. Flanagan and J. Green, (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005)

²⁴⁸ As Michael Clanchy states, “For lack of any better term to describe this distinctive but passing phenomenon, the ‘Angevin Empire’ stands as a necessary historical convenience rather than a precise twelfth century reality.” See Michael Clanchy, *England and its Rulers 1066- 107* (Oxford: Wiley- Blackwell, 2014), 105.

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Appendices

1. Imperial vocabulary in Book 1 of *De Principis Instructione*

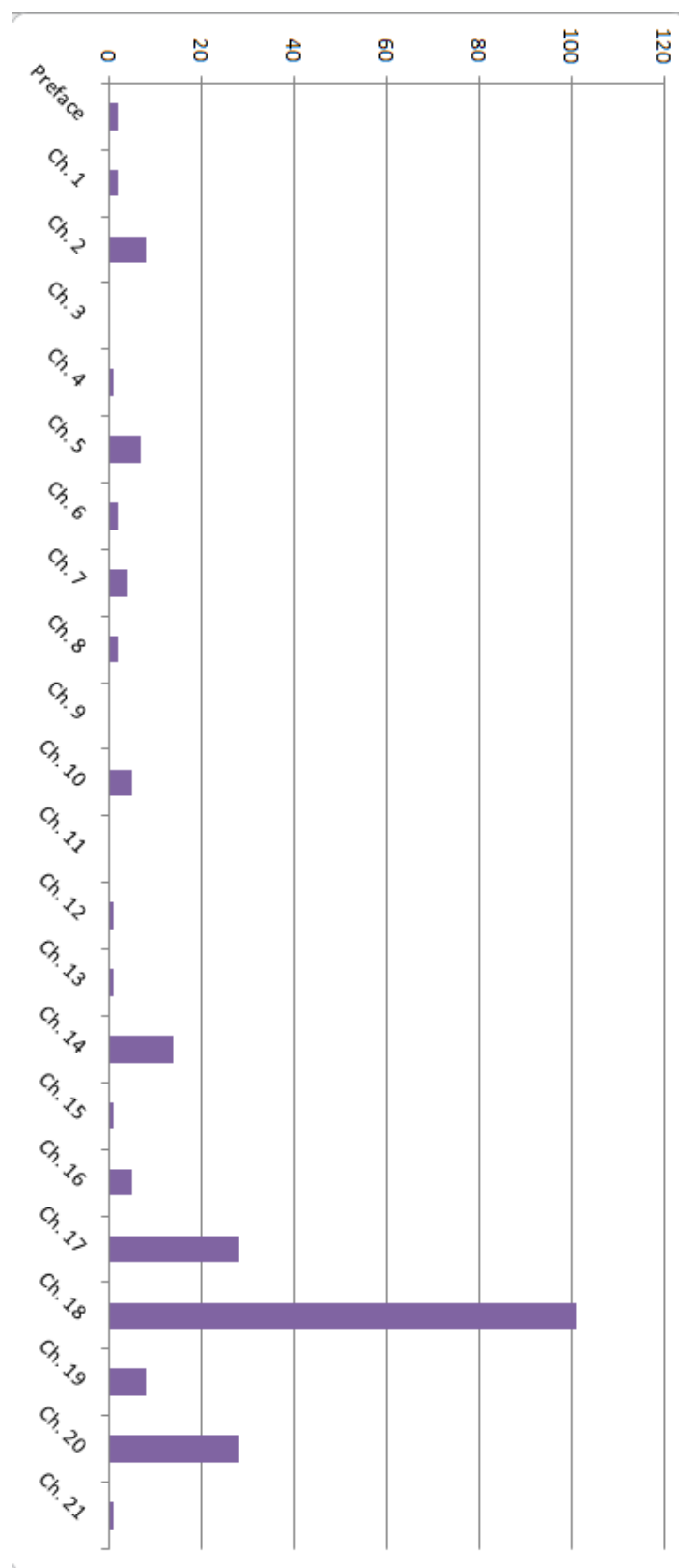
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imperialia	40	Preface	imperii	84	7	imperium	174	14
imperiale	40	1	imperia	84	7	imperio	174	14
imperatorie	42	1	imperio	88	7	imperium	174	14
imperatoris	44	2	imperialibus	90	7	imperium	178	14
imperio	44	2	imperator	100	8	imperium	178	14
imperii	44	2	imperium	102	8	imperium	180	14
imperatorem	44	2	imperatoriam	118	10	imperium	182	15
imperii	44	2	imperator	118	10	imperator	190	16
imperii	46	2	imperio	118	10	imperii	190	16
imperiali	46	2	imperatoris	118	10	imperium	192	16
imperio	50	2	imperium	134	10	imperii	192	16
imperio	62	4	imperatoribus	150	12	imperium	192	16
imperatorum	66	5	imperium	158	13	imperatoribus	198	17
imperatores	66	5	imperio	162	14	imperatoribus	200	17
imperator	66	5	imperatorem	166	14	imperatore	208	17
imperialis	68	5	imperium	166	14	imperium	208	17
imperatoris	68	5	imperatorem	168	14	imperatores	208	17
imperator	68	5	imperatoris	168	14	imperium	210	17
imperiale	68	5	imperia	170	14	imperio	210	17
imperio	74	6	imperii	170	14	imperio	210	17

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imperii	212	17	imperii	264	18	imperatorem	276	18
imperatorum	212	17	imperator	264	18	imperatores	276	18
imperatores	214	17	imperium	266	18	imperium	280	18
imperii	216	17	imperatorum	266	18	imperatoris	280	18
imperium	218	17	imperii	266	18	imperii	280	18
imperium	220	17	imperium	268	18	imperator	280	18
imperii	220	17	imperio	268	18	imperii	280	18
imperatoris	226	17	imperator	268	18	imperator	280	18
imperator	226	17	imperator	268	18	imperator	282	18
imperator	230	17	imperatores	268	18	imperio	282	18
imperialibus	230	17	imperatorem	270	18	imperium	284	18
imperii	230	17	imperialium	270	18	imperium	284	18
imperatorem	230	17	imperio	270	18	imperii	284	18
imperio	230	17	imperatore	270	18	imperii	284	18
imperii	230	17	imperatore	272	18	imperiali	284	18
imperii	230	17	imperator	272	18	imperii	286	18
imperium	232	17	imperatore	272	18	imperatoris	288	18
imperatoribus	232	17	imperatore	272	18	imperium	288	18
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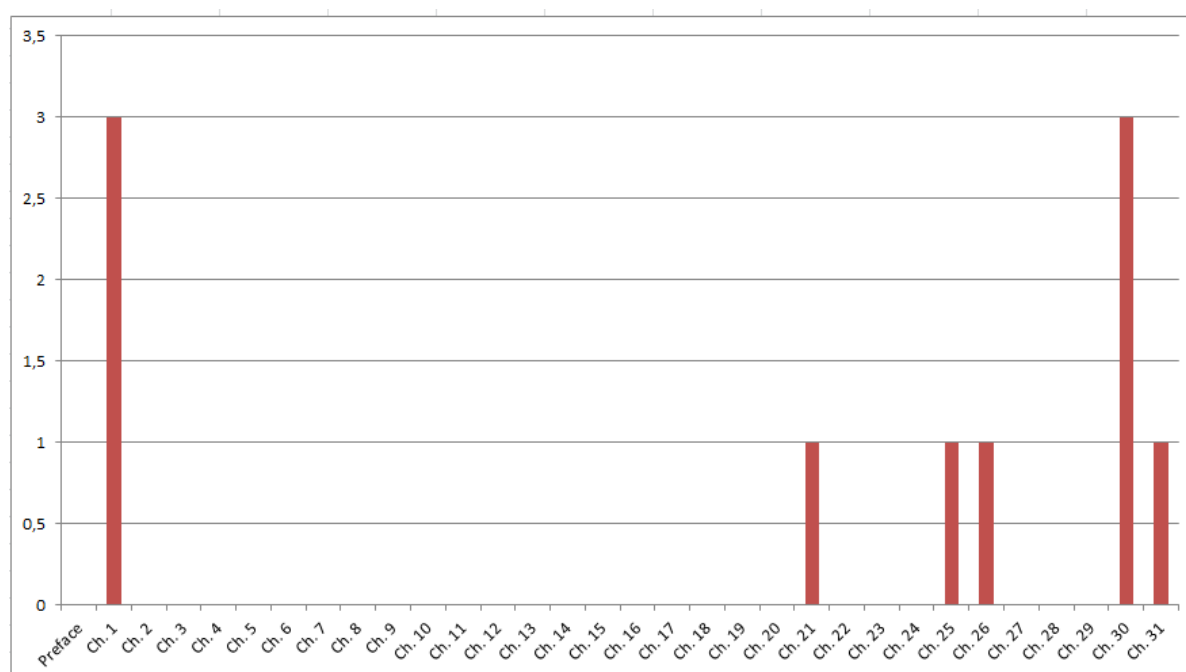
2. Vocabulary cases in Book 1 per chapter



3. Imperial vocabulary in Book 2 of *De Principis Instructione*

Word	Page	Chapter
imperio	442	1
imperium	444	1
imperatorem	444	1
imperium	516	21
imperatoribus	530	25
imperatoribus	532	26
imperatoris	548	30
imperatore	548	30
imperatoris	548	30
imperio	556	31

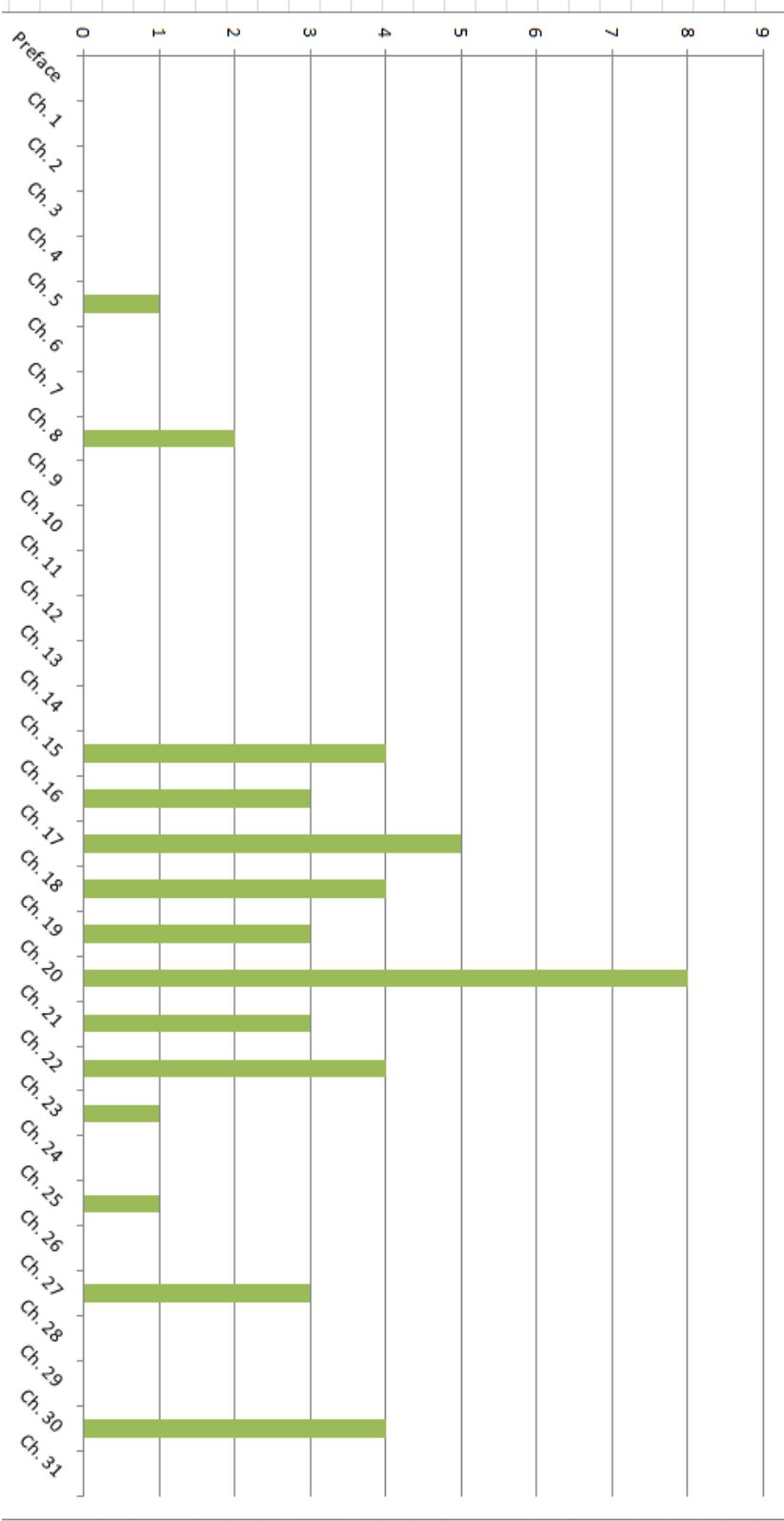
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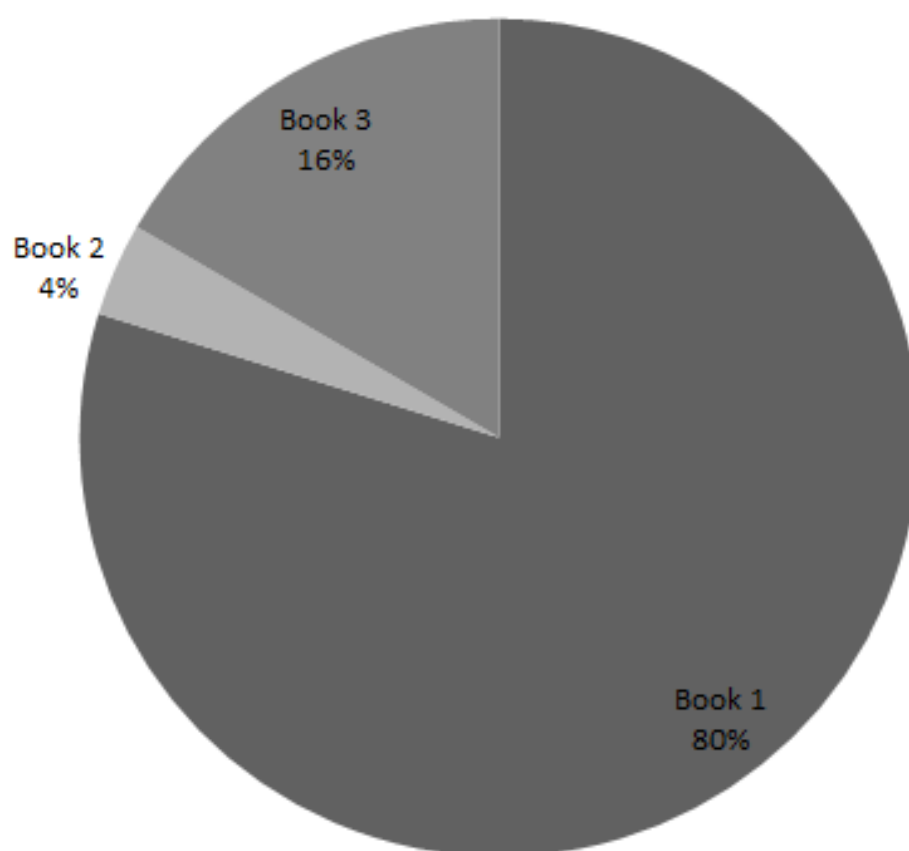
5. Imperial vocabulary in Book 3 of *De Principis Instructione*

Word	Page	Chapter						
imperator	586	5	imperator	642	19	imperatoren	674	25
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imperatoris	602	8	imperiali	642	19	imperium	686	27
imperatore	624	15	imperatoren	644	20	imperatricen	686	27
imperator	624	15	imperator	644	20	imperator	712	30
imperator	626	15	imperator	644	20	imperatoris	712	30
imperii	626	15	imperator	644	20	imperii	712	30
imperator	632	16	imperatoris	646	20	imperatorum	714	30
imperialis	632	16	imperii	646	20			
imperator	632	16	imperatoren	646	20			
imperatoris	634	17	imperator	646	20			
imperator	634	17	imperatoris	648	21			
imperii	634	17	imperator	650	21			
imperio	634	17	imperio	652	21			
imperialis	634	17	imperatore	652	22			
imperatoris	636	18	imperator	654	22			
imperio	640	18	imperii	654	22			
imperii	640	18	imperatoris	654	22			
imperator	640	18	imperatoris	656	23			

6. Vocabulary cases in Book 3 per chapter



7. Cases of imperil vocabulary per Book



8. Imperial vocabulary and topics in Book 1

