



JOHN LE PATOUREL

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1909-1981

JOHN LE PATOUREL was born in Guernsey on 29 July 1909. His father was a lawyer, an *avocat* who took his first degree at the University of Caen and, after further training in English law, ultimately became HM Attorney-General for Guernsey. His mother was the daughter of a Devon farmer. He was raised in a mixed family in a mixed culture. His mother's interests were domestic. His father was a staunch churchman; his interests extended outside his profession into ecclesiastical and military affairs.

John was an ailing child. His early schooling was broken. His education, therefore, was sometimes informal and unstructured. At about the age of ten he was sent to join his grandmother in Devon for a year; little or no provision was made for his schooling and he spent a good deal of his time wandering around Exeter cathedral, absorbing both architecture and atmosphere, and, as a choirboy of his local church, listening attentively and critically to the cathedral choir. In Guernsey he went to Elizabeth College. In time off school and in the holidays with his schoolfellow and future brother-in-law, Leslie Le tocq, he took to walking, cycling, bird-watching. With his brother he kept a small fishing boat at the family holiday home at Cobo. It was there that the future historian of the transmutations of the Anglo-Norman kings acquired a practical knowledge of currents, tides, wind, and rocky shores. He was already an avid church-crawler. He also trained himself in archaeological fieldwork. He observed and mapped sites of saltings on the coastline, collected and recorded the associated pottery, and did the same for flints. He learned the piano and picked up organ-playing enough to stand in for the organists in various Island churches; though quite untrained he attempted composition; for a time he hoped to read music at a university. Available all the time were his father's intellectual interests and his books, imposing their own mental discipline. And above all there were the Islands, instilling a sense both of time and place: of the old Norman inheritance and the enduring physical setting. More than most historians he had an instinct for topography. He saw and continued to visualize the places which he mentioned in his writing. His photographic collection served his memory. He

wrote of Anglo-Norman history with the sites in his mind's eye and in the photographs arranged on his desk as he worked. So when he left Elizabeth College to go to Oxford he had already developed many of the interests and absorbed much of the experience which ran throughout his life and served him in his mature work: topography, archaeology, church architecture, natural history, and, least obvious to the casual observer, music. Music informed his books and articles. They were not so much written as composed, shaped by musical forms. The contrapuntal relationship of text to footnotes became a family joke.

From Elizabeth College he went to Oxford in 1928 as King Charles Scholar of Jesus College. The place cast its spell on him at once; it satisfied all his intellectual curiosity and aesthetic sensibilities. Ever afterwards he was an Oxford man, not flamboyantly so but dyed in the wool. He joined the Archaeological Society, worked on the dig at Sutton Courtenay under E. T. Leeds and ended as the Society's President and an Honorary Life Member. He continued at Jesus as the Goldsmith's Company Senior Student from 1931 to 1933. His work as a research student was supervised by Powicke. Galbraith, then Reader in Diplomatic, remembered him at this stage as a shy young man who approached him quietly at the end of classes with persistent and pertinent questions.

In 1933 he was appointed to an Assistant Lectureship at University College London and became a Lecturer in 1936. It was from there, in 1937, that he published the results of his doctoral research at Oxford, *The Medieval Administration of the Channel Islands, 1199-1309*. Characteristically, he referred in the Preface to 'this little book'; this was true only in the sense that it ran to not much more than 100 pages, an example in the publication of doctoral theses which has been long and regrettably lost. It was also characteristic of him to describe it as 'the product of five years' work and reflection', for it was the reflection which gave the book so much of its quality; this quality of ideas deeply considered and reconsidered was to become and remain the hallmark of his mature work. The book was remarkable in several ways. It was naturally concerned with the relationship of English and Norman influences in the Islands. He also saw very clearly that the sources and formation of custom and law were at the heart of his problem and that they had to be examined both geographically and chronologically. The Islands were a fragment of the old Duchy of Normandy still surviving under the rule of the English Crown. 'Their custom was a local form of Norman,

not of English law'; 'tenurial arrangements and with them the social structure of the Islands had been formed at a time when the Islands were still politically a part of continental Normandy'; hence 'there were several fossils embedded in later custom'. In a few pages, in which he combined the history of law and social status with that of feudal tenures, he demonstrated that some of these fossilized customs went back, not simply to the rearrangements made by King John after 1204, but to the conquest of Normandy by Geoffrey of Anjou 1141-4 and perhaps even beyond. He had devised a method already familiar to Norman historians but little used in England. If the accident of birth led him naturally to the study of comparative law and social structure in the one area of the old Anglo-Norman realm where it could be pursued most effectively, his own capacity for reflection showed him how to do it.

In 1938 he married Jean Bird. Then came the war. To his intense chagrin he was declared unfit for military service; he was even more upset that Neale, who was his head of department at University College, refused to release him to the wartime Civil Service. He responded in characteristic fashion. In 1939 and 1940 he was seconded to University College, Leicester, as the sole historian, teaching the whole range of the London syllabus to the students still at the College. He was a founder-member of the Local Defence Volunteers to whom he passed on his expertise with the rifle which he had acquired at school. He also taught widely in Adult Education, returning home in the small hours to Barrow on Soar as the German planes droned overhead. At the end of 1940 he rejoined University College first at Bangor, then from 1944 in London. At Bangor he gave much time to Forces Education and Current Affairs classes. Busy though he was in these directions, these years saw his first incursions into what was to become his Anglo-Norman empire with papers on the *Grand Coutumier* of Normandy (1941), Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances (1944) and the trial of Pennenden Heath (1946). In 1943 he was made Reader and in 1945 he succeeded David Douglas as Professor of Medieval History in the University of Leeds. He remained there until his retirement in 1970, despite invitations to return to London. Though he remained an Islander until his death, he had found a second home.

When Le Patourel went to Leeds professors were still expected to exercise responsibility both in professing their subject and running their department. He worked alongside several professors of Modern History: Guy Chapman (1945-53), Norman Gash

(1953–5), Asa Briggs (1955–61), and finally Arthur Taylor. At first conditions were primitive, as he reported in a letter of 2 January 1978:

I was interviewed and appointed in February 1945, to replace David Douglas who was moving to Bristol. A month or two later, Turberville, the Professor of Modern History, died very suddenly, and Chapman was appointed to replace him and to be head of the department. When we started in at the beginning of the Autumn Term of that year, we found no departmental records at all. There were five members of staff in all and a final honours year (examined that Christmas) of 7 (I think). We had no secretary until Chapman got a part-time typist, a woman of French origin, very pleasant indeed but with an inadequate knowledge of English. The inexperience (in different ways) of the two professors and the small scale of things at that time meant that no truly departmental files were formed for some years. Chapman, I know, had a card index of students—it may possibly survive among the departmental records, but I have no memory of what happened to it. When he resigned in 1953 he handed over some files to me. I have found these among mine, still unlooked-at, and they are included in the lot I hope to hand over to you. Otherwise, all that exists from that period, to my knowledge, are the piles of in-letters, drafts and carbons that I kept, sorted roughly into years, together with the records of examinations that I kept year by year.

Things began to change when I got a full-time departmental secretary (Laura Hampton)—about 1954 though I doubt if there was a great deal of method in it before Asa Briggs was appointed. I continued to keep my annual file of papers; but this became increasingly a residuum as papers relating to undergraduates, postgraduates and administration generally were put into central departmental files. Nevertheless I am now turning in the whole collection up to 1970, or what survives of it; though for purposes of departmental record I should think that only those of the first ten years or so have much value. . . .

By modern standards we were very amateurish in our departmental organization during the years immediately after the war, continuing to some extent in the tradition of the small-scale pre-war university. And so far as I am concerned, I have never been interested in administration for its own sake, though others might put it less indulgently. I proceeded by very occasional conscience-ridden bursts of activity which usually petered out very quickly. But we did things differently in many ways during the forties and fifties, and the University was a very different sort of place—though not so unlike its sister universities of that time.

He himself nourished the view that he was no administrator. In some ways this was so; he certainly did not relish committees and administrative routine; not for him such displacement

activity. But increasingly he helped to run and then ran his Department quietly, efficiently, and with kindly authority. Still in his later years when he had handed over the reins to Arthur Taylor, not much happened without his approval. And where he saw academic standards at stake or the possibility of academic improvement he set to work with a will, both within the Department and more widely in the University.

One battle, still not forgotten at Leeds, concerned the old three-subject General Degree in Arts, still in favour in the civic universities in the 1950s, partly for genuine educational reasons, partly because of the vested interests of some small departments. Le Patourel led the party for reform, which meant abolition, drafting and annotating a Minority Report, and leading and marshalling the arguments in the Board of the Faculty. In the end the immediate decision went against him on the casting vote of the Chairman, but he nevertheless won the argument: the Old General Degree was soon replaced by combined Honours courses. He preserved all the papers and the notes which he made at the time including those for his introductory speech in the final meeting; they reveal much of his style and concern—‘[We] cannot compete with the ancient foundations in amenities or in snob appeal. Intellectual standards are our only chance. And there *is* a chance. But you haven’t a hope with General Degrees. [I] believe profoundly, even passionately, that [abolition] would be an entirely progressive step.’ ‘Passionate belief’ indeed was almost his trademark in this debate. Intensity was as characteristic of him as his outwardly calm and methodical reasoning. And even in these papers the scholar peeps through. One sheet was later endorsed with a draft critique of Flodoard’s notes on the concession to the Normans of Maine and Brittany.

This campaign against the General Degree was a mere *chevaucée* beside his prolonged support and sustenance of the Brotherton Library. He joined the Library Committee in 1946, within a year of his arrival at Leeds, and remained a member until his retirement. He served for a decade as either Chairman or Vice-Chairman; he gave his time unstintingly. In his first years there were gaps to fill. The Library held very large collections of research material, but the economies of the years before the war had limited the purchase of monographs. He fought successfully for the repair of all the deficiencies, opening his campaign with a long letter to the Librarian in May 1946. He pressed hard and persistently; in place of the out-of-date material available on the open shelves when he arrived he got as he put it ‘books that

historians write and undergraduates read'. He came to regard the historical resources of the Brotherton as a 'really great collection'. He rapidly won the confidence of successive Librarians. He justified it. In 1965 he steadfastly fought to ensure that the design of the new South Library extension to the Brotherton was acceptable and workable in the Librarian's view; this against the pressure of the architect, the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, and the lay members of the House and Estates Committee of the University Council. Lay control, he tartly reminded the Vice-Chancellor, Roger Stevens, was 'a mark of immaturity in this University'.

The Library was by no means his only general University commitment; he was also Vice-Chancellor's deputy and then Chairman of the Standing Committee on the University Coin Collection. But from the beginning his chief concern was with his subject and his department. He always took a major share of the medieval teaching. He stuck to the old practice whereby the professor lectured to the first year and his introductions to both British and European history were superb. His preparation was meticulous extending as it did to the distribution of what he called 'pattern making' notes complete with chronological summaries, genealogies, and bibliographies. Year after year he also conducted Finals courses on medieval England, medieval France, and special subjects on the Norman Conquest, Edward III and France, and the King's lands overseas; these attracted a select, loyal body of able students. He established within the Department the A. J. Grant room to house a collection of sources and works of reference for special subject and research students. For this last group, many of whom went on to academic or archival posts, he was unstinting in his guidance and in the generosity with which he made his own researches available to them even before using them himself. He was perhaps better as a lecturer than a tutor. His lectures expressed the authority of his scholarship; in his tutorials his kindness cloaked the toughness of his criticism; the peccant student might sometimes be advised to 'pull his socks up'. But in this too he was pervasively methodical; he entered notes on his pupils' essays from 1946 to 1969 in a single exercise book.

His influence soon spread beyond the Department. In 1951 he founded the Medieval Group, which embraced all staff and research students with medieval interests of whatever discipline, and himself read the first paper. Over the years he brought in Powicke, Galbraith, Knowles, and both the Stentons as speakers. In 1967 he was one of the founders and the first Director of

the Medieval Centre for Graduate Studies. Nor was his concern purely medieval. He encouraged local history of all periods and supported the development of American, Russian, and Far Eastern history. He was an advocate too of including recent history in the curriculum. In all these fields he encouraged younger scholars by example and personal advice.

He did not always win, even within the Department. His instincts, upbringing, and increasingly his research made him critical of the insularity of English history. In the 1950s he tried to 'break the mould' of academic teaching by combining British and European history and by studying them comparatively. The modernists, led by Gash, opposed it; not all the medievalists were convinced, for there were great difficulties in designing reading for such a course, given the standard pattern of books and articles. In the end he had to let the scheme drop. He had advanced beyond the practical. In later years he regretted his failure rather than that he had tried. It might have worked, with him in charge, twenty years later.

So when he retired from his Chair in 1970 he had made a difference, more than most men; more, certainly, than many 'professional' committee men. And much else lingered in the memories of his colleagues and those who knew him: the public lectures which he gave from time to time which Lord Boyle counted as outstanding occasions in his university life; the care and forethought with which he spoke so that what he left unsaid could be as significant as what he said; the unfailing courtesy of a shy man who made great efforts to welcome newcomers and guests and to mix and talk with the young, mucking in with the tidying up after departmental occasions; the generous hospitality which Jean and he provided at their home in Ilkley for visitors, colleagues, and students; the impression of a 'gentle, modest, courteous, helpful and good natured man' as a junior professor in another department commented; but one of commitment and determination—'There are a lot of last ditches to be fought in there' was a favourite phrase used appropriately in varied contexts; and one too of bubbling, subtle humour, at once impish and mollifying. A senior member of the Department, approached in hesitation and apparent shyness, quaked when Le Patourel asked—'Could I raise a personal matter?' Then after a suitable pause to allow for the introspective review of all possible delinquencies—'May I ask where you buy your shirts?'

The North and the Dales soon took hold of him and he served northern scholarship well. He was President of the Thoresby



Society 1949–55, of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society 1965–9, and of the Leeds Philosophical Society 1966–8. He reinvigorated the publications of the Thoresby Society, contributing his own presidential addresses on the manor, borough, and parish church of Leeds and on Kirkstall Abbey. In 1976 he was elected Patron of the Society. His Presidency of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society likewise inaugurated a new era for the Society. He was a working president, chairing lectures, entertaining visiting speakers, travelling to local groups. He achieved a marked improvement in the standard of lectures, in the quality of papers in the *Journal*, and in the resources of the Library. He was the main mover in bringing the Society, the Thoresby Society, and the Leeds Civic Trust together in their present accommodation in Claremont. And this work in turn fed other projects in the University. In 1966 he founded the journal *Northern History*, of which volume 10, published in 1975, was a Festschrift in his honour.

Beyond the University and these societies he lectured widely: to student societies in other universities and colleges, and to local branches of the Historical Association or the Council for British Archaeology. The invitations came in thick and fast, and he was too generous to reject them until illness called a halt. The celebration of the Norman Conquest was a bumper year—at least twelve engagements between April 1966 and April 1967 which he concluded with the exhausted comment: ‘It will be something of a relief to talk about the Hundred Years War after this endless commemoration of the Norman Conquest.’ These talks, too, were meticulously prepared. So also were the lectures and guided tours which he gave on the castles, monasteries, and historic buildings of Yorkshire and neighbouring counties. His notes for some of these still survive; they are a model; a concise summary of the architectural history of Lincoln, for example, on 2½ sides of foolscap; notes only, but a masterpiece of compression. In the end he knew the North almost as well as he knew the Channel Islands. Hence when he came to write the history of the Norman settlements of England his work was shot through with numerous illustrations and insights drawn from his deep knowledge of local history, especially of Yorkshire. He also published *Documents Relating to the Manor and Borough of Leeds, 1066–1400*, as the Thoresby Society Publication for 1956, and the history of his own parish church of Ilkley in 1963.

He decried all this with a characteristic disclaimer in a lecture—‘Is Northern History a subject?’—delivered to a colloquium at Leeds in 1975 (published in *Northern History*, 1976).

'Thirty years of residence and working make me feel quite at home here; but I have never done more than dabble in one or two very localized bits of northern history, and then chiefly because I can never keep my fingers out of the history of the place in which I happen to be living and working.' It was some dabble. No one should set out to study local history, of whatever place, at whatever period and at whatever level, without first reading that paper. It was a quest for definition, a quest seen as unending, but one which illuminated how local history should be done.

It was not simply about the North. The Channel Islands, Normandy, and the provincial history of France were all brought into play. Indeed, in referring to a paper published in this same year on 'Guernsey, Jersey and their environment in the Middle Ages' he said: 'I had to be away from the place for a good deal more than thirty years before I could see the sort of shape in Channel Island history that I have recently been trying to describe.' And the shape of that history was similar to that of the North—'the history of Guernsey and Jersey, Alderney and Sark, or all together, does not consist simply of events that occurred or conditions that obtained on the Islands themselves, but is concerned as much, and sometimes more, with what was going on around them.' This grasp of interrelationships underlay all his later work.

In one sense, of course, he was never away from the Channel Islands. He remained conscious and proud of his roots and he served the Islands well. He was appointed Archivist to the Royal Court of Guernsey in 1946. He served on the Ancient Monuments Committee, first as a co-opted member and then from 1968 as Honorary Adviser. In addition to a number of important papers on Channel Island history he published, with D. H. Giffard and R. H. Videlo, H. M. Greffer to the Royal Court of Guernsey, the first volume of the *List of the Records in the Greffe* (1969). His introduction to this volume is essential to any serious study of the administration and records of Guernsey. He remained devoted to this cause until the end. Only a fortnight before his death he wrote to Videlo—'I want to see this job done [vol. 4 of the *List of Records*] or very well on its way to completion. I am 72 come the end of this month and I want to pack in the "archivist's" job as soon as may be.' The inverted commas meant something: since 1979 he had been drafting papers and writing letters in an attempt to persuade the Royal Court to appoint a full-time records officer or archivist.

France, the old Norman and Plantagenet possessions, especially Normandy and in his last years Brittany, formed a yet wider circle. He knew Normandy before the war; later he went there regularly, for research visits, for the meetings of the *Société de l'histoire de Normandie*, the *Semaines de droit normand*, and other groups, and for holidays, for all his French holidays tended to begin and end in Normandy. In his last years he still mixed visits to sites with days of rest or 'idleness', as he put it. Sometimes there was a sense of urgency, of time too short—'I have just gratified one of my dearest wishes, to get myself up into this place once more', he wrote from Le Mont S. Michel in 1975 (he was to 'get up' it again in 1980). But the chief effect was to give him a mellow understanding of the history of northern and western France unsurpassed by any other English historian of his day. He worked with Yver. He read conference papers at regular intervals. He gained the respect of French scholars. Already in 1957 his standing was recognized by the conferment of an honorary doctorate by the University of Caen.

All these interests and enthusiasms—the Islands, above all Guernsey, Normandy and France, the North, the sense of place; and all these commitments—the Department, the University, the northern societies, the archival work for Guernsey—were fashioned into one by his scholarship and the onward drive of his own research. On his retirement in 1970 the University conferred on him the unusual honour of a research professorship, a change in title and an implied change in function which drew a characteristically wry comment from the recipient. In 1968, in a note warning the Council of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society that he did not wish to be re-elected President in 1969, he wrote: 'My reason is simply that I have more on my plate than I can take, and there is quite a lot that I want to do in the way of writing etc. before I am too old to do it.' But, although he was pulled this way and that by all the demands upon his time, he had built an integrated life which enriched his work as a historian.

For almost twenty years at Leeds his published work was largely concerned with the history and archaeology of the Channel Islands, to which he added the Thoresby Society addresses on Leeds and Kirkstall and his edition of the records of Leeds. On the occasions when he moved away from this it was towards the relationship of England and France in the fourteenth century in studies which culminated in an important lecture on the Treaty of Brétigny delivered to the Royal Historical Society in 1960. Only the early papers on Geoffrey of Coutances and the trial of

Pennenden Heath hinted at what was to come. Then between 1965 and 1971 he published a series of papers which remain essential reading for all studies of Anglo-Norman and Angevin history: 'The Plantagenet Dominions' (1965), *Norman Barons* (1966), 'The Norman Colonization of Britain' (1969), 'The Norman Succession', 'The Norman Conquest of Yorkshire', and *Normandy and England 1066-1144* (his Stenton Lecture), all in 1971. All this work was drawn together, deepened and extended in his major book, *The Norman Empire*, in 1976. It was a decade of remarkable achievement, recognized by the British Academy when he was elected to a Fellowship in 1972.

This work changed the accepted view of the Norman settlement derived from Round and Stenton. Le Patourel's appreciation of the individuality first of Channel Island and then of northern history mixed with his continuing interest in France to produce a marvellous compound. The Channel Islander predominated, as he announced in his Stenton Lecture—'Sir Frank Stenton was a great English historian; but however English we Channel Islanders may feel when we are in France, none of us who were born and brought up in the Islands before radio and the aeroplanes came to plague us can ever feel wholly English in England. Yet we are perhaps more deeply involved historically, in the relationship between Normandy and England that was created as a result of Duke William's conquest than either the English or the French.' His main intent, plainly enunciated in the essay on the Plantagenet dominions, was to emphasize the continental aspect of English history, then to work the history of England and Normandy into a picture of a coherent Anglo-Norman world, neither wholly English nor wholly French, deserving study in its own right and on its own terms, terms which required that each part owed something to the other and to the whole. The king/duke could not be on both sides of the English Channel at one and the same time. From the single-minded yet subtle pursuit of the consequences of that simple fact he built up an intricate picture of transfretations, of interlocking administrations, of an Anglo-Norman episcopate and civil service, of a nobility with a single shared tradition, and of a structure of law and government framed by the association of duchy and kingdom.

Another achievement was less obvious but just as important. More than any earlier historian he grasped the fact that the Norman Conquest had to be viewed as a process of colonization. Round's cataclysm, in which Norman rule was imposed almost cut and dried, was replaced by a much subtler picture of a more

complex process in which frontiers were established progressively and the great baronies of Norman England were formed in stages. His paper on Norman colonization of 1969 signalled the opening of a rich field of study where many have followed.

His method also was striking in two respects. First, as in his first book, he reflected. So, more than most, he worked and reworked the argument, publishing it in ever more refined versions. Secondly, part of this reflection, and a very important part, was a search for definition, for clarification, revealed very clearly in many of his later titles—‘What did not happen in Stephen’s reign’ (1973), ‘Norman kings or Norman King/Dukes?’ (1976), ‘Is Northern History a subject?’ (1976), ‘The Norman Conquest, 1066, 1106, 1154?’ (1979).

Le Patourel did not surrender to fashion easily, if at all. He remained very much an administrative, constitutional, and legal historian. He liked the concrete. As he used to say in his talks on buildings, he preferred a good bit of long and short work to any amount of theorizing. He was wary of the inconclusive: ‘I always used to think’, he wrote in 1973, ‘that place-names (there isn’t much else to go by) showed a fairly dense Scandinavian settlement in the Islands, but a little doubt has been thrown on that lately; though the same writer who throws the doubt has found evidence of an independent Norse settlement of the Cotentin in the late tenth century. But this place-name stuff has got so technical that I personally wait for the experts to pronounce, and then take what they say in full expectation that the next lot will say something different’ (Letter to his cousin, Sir William Arnold, Bailiff of Guernsey). So he approached the unity of Norman history through the interchangeability of officials, the common elements in law and government and the Channel crossings of kings and their agents. In so doing he gave a reality to the Anglo-Norman world of a kind evoked hitherto only by Stenton.

He would have been the first to agree that this world was incomplete. He did not do much to embrace the cultural and intellectual history which became fashionable in the years in which he was at work on the Normans, learned though he was in these fields. He was less ready to budge in the face of another possible criticism: that his method tended to emphasize the centripetal against the centrifugal forces in the Anglo-Norman world. Was the Norman Empire ‘a subject’? He felt in his bones, and indeed he demonstrated, that it was. Hence his reading of detail was always reinforced by his general view of the unity of the Anglo-Norman world. A difference with him on this only

brought out his unfailing courtesy; there was no acrimony and certainly no rhetoric; instead an exchange of notes and postcards adding further detail, and a readiness at all times to array and weigh new evidence with old. His letters, apparently casual, contained great wisdom: on the Norman law of succession, for example—‘I don’t think that distinctions or precise formulations were made or thought of until some case cropped up that rendered them necessary; which makes arguing back particularly risky in legal history, and there is hardly a statement of Norman custom in private law before 1199.’

From 1976 until his death he returned to the history of the Plantagenet dominions. Already in 1973 he had added a paper on ‘Feudal Empires: Norman and Plantagenet’ to his discussion of 1965. Now he intended a second book—a successor to *The Norman Empire*. It was never completed. A paper on Henry II and Brittany appeared in 1981; the rest remained as draft chapters or fragments when he died. One important piece on ‘Angevin successions and the Angevin Empire’, fully worked out as a paper read in Cambridge in 1980, was published posthumously in his selected essays, *Feudal Empires: Norman and Plantagenet* (1984). The rest was insufficiently advanced to publish. His method of work, which involved repeated annotation and redrafting, would have made posthumous publication very difficult; more important, it could not have done justice to his own meticulous standards.

The more considerable fragments of the intended book, surviving in typescript and handwritten notes, are:

1. Introduction: a first draft: 40 fos., much corrected, few footnotes.
2. Chapter II: The Formation of the Angevin Empire: 104 fos., a final typescript, largely footnoted; annotated for revision.
3. Chapter III: The Government of the Angevin Empire: 14 fos., plus loose notes, but includes a paper on Angevin government read to a staff seminar at Leeds, 1980, and notes of Henry II’s transcriptions: otherwise very fragmentary.
4. Plantagenet rule in Brittany to 1205: 43 fos., comprising (i) The establishment of Plantagenet rule in Brittany: chronology (1–27) and (ii) The Plantagenet administration in Brittany (28–43, incomplete): footnotes, annotated at fo. 24 ‘From this point, done only in outline. Chronicles and Charters to be worked through systematically.’ Despite its incompleteness this chapter on Brittany is more searching and methodical than anything available in print, certainly in English.
5. Typescripts, more extended than the published versions of ‘Les Archives de l’Empire Angevin 1154–1204’ (*Journées d’histoire du droit de l’Ouest*, Angoulême, 1976) and Guillaume fils Hamon (*Journées de l’histoire de droit de l’Ouest*, Dinard, 1978).

The fragments are a reminder of the careful reworking of his material which was his characteristic method. They also illustrate the capacity for reflection and the search for definition which had been his from the start. 'The Angevin Empire' still survived in the short title to Chapters II and III. The title on the folder of Chapter II is 'The Plantagenet Realm'. But it is a further subtitle to Chapter II, 'Britain and the Plantagenet Lands', which was intended as the title of the book. 'The empire', as he wrote in 1980, had become 'a term which I am going to use for convenience, though I no longer think that it is appropriate' (address to Leeds staff seminar, 1980). But he still stuck to his kind of history: 'In what follows more emphasis will be laid upon kings, dukes and counts, their powers and the transmission of their powers, than is perhaps fashionable now among historians . . . it is still king or prince who creates kingdom or principality . . . and it is kingdoms and principalities that provide the framework within which all ranks of society live their lives and carry on their activity.'

He died suddenly at home on 22 July 1981. He had been happily at work in the Brotherton Library the previous day. To the end his mind was ranging ahead, searching, analysing, rearranging, remoulding. He never gave in or gave up. History for him was an exploration and adventure which only ended on the day he died.

J. C. HOLT

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All the written evidence used in this notice, including the written material sent to me, is now in the Department of MSS, Brotherton Library. So also are the fragments of 'Britain and the Plantagenet Lands', which may be consulted by permission.

There are select bibliographies of Le Patourel's work in *Northern History*, X (1975) and in *Feudal Empires: Norman and Plantagenet* (1984).