Chapter 1

ROYAL CHILDHOOD AND CHILD KINGSHIP

An Introduction

In the spring of 1062, so Lampert of Hersfeld narrates, the eleven-year-old German king Henry IV, being in an especially jovial mood on account of the feast he had attended the day before, accompanied Anno, archbishop of Cologne (1056–75), to inspect a new ship on the Rhine.[1] After the unsuspecting Henry had boarded, Anno and his accomplices hurriedly pushed the craft away from the shore. They brought the king 40 miles by river to Cologne, accomplishing their plot to remove him from the care of his mother, Empress Agnes of Poitou (*c.* 1025–77), thereby taking the management of the kingdom into their own hands.[2] This event, often called the 'Kaiserswerth coup' (*Staatsstreich von Kaiserswerth*) after the palace from which Henry was kidnapped, is the most well-known incident of his early reign. Lampert's narrative is unparalleled among other near-contemporary sources in its details of the planning and implementation of a sensational event centred around a boy king. Many centuries later, the dramatic centrepiece gained renewed political–ideological significance in nineteenth-century representations of the struggles between the unity of the German states and princely personal interests.[3] More recent scholarly treatments have drawn attention, above all, to Anno's actions, Agnes's response (or lack thereof) and the subsequent damage to contemporary respect for royal majesty.[4] The

[1] For consistency with the other cases, Henry is titled 'German king' or 'king of the Germans' throughout. For the anachronistic nature of this designation: H. Beumann, *Der deutsche König als 'Romanorum rex'* (Wiesbaden, 1981); J. Gillingham, 'Elective kingship and the unity of medieval Germany', *German History*, 9 (1991), 124–35 (124).

[2] Lampert, *Annales*, 79–81 (trans. Robinson, *Annals*, 81–2).

[3] T. Struve, 'Lampert von Hersfeld, der Königsraub von Kaiserswerth im Jahre 1062 und die Erinnerungskultur des 19. Jahrhunderts', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 88 (2006), 251–78.

[4] G. Jenal, *Erzbischof Anno II. von Köln (1056–75) und sein politisches Wirken*, 2 vols (Stuttgart, 1974–5), I, 175–95; I. S. Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany, 1056–1106* (Cambridge, 1999), 43–5, 62; G. Althoff, *Heinrich IV.* (Darmstadt, 2006), 47–52; M. Black-Veldtrup, *Kaiserin Agnes (1043–1077): quellenkritische Studien* (Cologne, 1995), 347–52. For the injury to royal majesty see later in this chapter, 8.

boy king himself has been secondary to modern concerns. Yet Henry was the fulcrum of this organised revolt, and his childhood was integral to the shift in political power. Was Henry entirely lacking agency? How had the boy's upbringing prepared him for the realities and challenges of rulership? In what ways did Henry's childhood shape the actions of the wider political community? As with other moments of intersection between childhood and kingship, it is vital to look beyond what has been described as the 'unspoken hegemony' of adulthood to understand these events more fully.[5]

Adult male rulers were more typical, but we should not leap to the assumption that medieval societies exclusively and inflexibly conceived of kingship as a mature man's remit. Centring children and childhood refines our impressions of rulership between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. Although situated within a grander political narrative, aspects of Lampert's account allow us to observe how children and ideas about childhood coincided with the practicalities and representations of royal rule. The author's insights are important because he makes no attempt to hide the king's incapacities, but never presents Henry's childhood as incompatible with the exercise of royal authority. Lampert was not indifferent to a concept of childhood. Instead, his perspective on Henry's kidnapping represents how interwoven childhood and kingship could be. This book adduces abundant attempts to include, acknowledge and engage young boys within the political sphere, stressing children's practical involvement in rule and also focusing on positive representations of their authority and power. Doing so underscores how childhood was valued politically – and, in certain cases, emphasises the distinct political value placed upon it – while simultaneously revealing fresh insights into what people thought about and expected of their rulers. Turning from a perspective which privileges adult authority establishes how fundamentally systems, practices and ideas of medieval rulership relied on children and childhood.

How did children's education and upbringing prepare them for rule? To what extent did the king's status as a child alter the realities of kingship, and how far did childhood underpin representations of rulership? What was the cultural and social significance of child kingship, and how was this shifting over the period? These research questions provide inspiration for my approach, drawing attention to two central concerns weaving throughout this examination of royal childhood and child kingship. The first is the interconnectedness of representation and reality.

[5] R. Gowland, 'Ageing the past: examining age identity from funerary evidence', in R. Gowland and C. Knüsel (eds.), *The Social Archaeology of Funerary Remains* (Oxford, 2006), 143–54.

This motif is especially pertinent to the study of children and childhood in view of conventional scholarly divides between children's lived experiences and more conceptual surveys of ideas about childhood.[6] A strict demarcation is impossible, however, and it is more beneficial to unite two approaches that often 'reciprocally constitute each other'.[7] Prominently centring children's experiences emphasises their significance as political actors and demonstrates how the life cycle's early stages shaped interactions with rulership (see Chapters 4, 8 and 10). Uniting this examination of children's encounters with political authority, with an understanding of how contemporaries received and portrayed ruling children (as in Chapters 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9), enhances the picture. Cultural representations of ideas about childhood and rulership confirm that royal children's actions, words and emotions conveyed rhetorical and ideological weight in addition to practical authority. Ignoring or downplaying children's incorporation within practices of rule and structures of authority overlooks considerable subtleties in the contemporary sources. Focusing more closely on representations and realities of childhood within a political context corroborates a central qualitative argument, namely that a period of child kingship did not automatically equate to a time of crisis and disorder.

The second concern is one of methodology and supplies the rationale for turning from a solitary boy king such as Henry IV to compare multiple case studies across four realms of north-western Europe over two centuries. Studying children and childhood concurrently and comparatively with an eye to changing cultures further refutes child kingship's automatic association with political unrest, while also advancing a distinctive argument for chronological change. My claim for change over time is twofold. The first facet of change is drawn out by a comparison between the central and early Middle Ages (see Chapter 2). Children's fundamental role in rulership was reinforced and safeguarded more consistently from the eleventh century in ways which deviated from the practices and ideas of earlier centuries. The second aspect of the chronological argument is that change over time in the dynamics of children's encounters with royal rule is more evident than cultural and political disparities between realms. This is especially obvious when

[6] R. Aasgaard, C. B. Horn and O. M. Cojocaru (eds.), *Childhood in History: Perceptions of Children in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, online ePub edn (London, 2018), 33; A. Cohen, 'Introduction: childhood between past and present', in A. Cohen and J. B. Rutter (eds.), *Constructions of Childhood in Ancient Greece and Italy* (Princeton, 2007), 1–22.

[7] N. Milanich, 'Comment on Sarah Maza's "The kids aren't all right"', *AHR*, 125 (2020), 1293–5 (1295). In the same issue, see also S. Maza, 'The kids aren't all right: historians and the problem of childhood', 1261–85 (1281, 1285).

Henry IV's experiences in the 1060s are placed alongside those of his contemporary in France, the boy king Philip I. The way these two children encountered royal rule throughout the initial stages of their life cycle was remarkably similar (see especially Chapters 4, 8 and 10). Philip's early encounters with royal authority bore a far closer resemblance to those of his German counterpart in the 1060s than they did to his own great-great-great-grandson, Louis IX, nearly two centuries later. This comparative and diachronic analysis relies on a holistic approach to the evidence. Consulting a wider range of source materials than is customary within studies of kingship bridges traditional scholarly approaches to illustrate interconnected and interdependent aspects of childhood and rulership (see Chapters 3 and 5). Focused and comparative scrutiny of these sources then reinforces the importance of discriminating between near-contemporary evidence, later representations (see Chapter 6) and rhetorical set-pieces (see Chapter 9).

The evidence gathered for this study derives from six central cases where a boy succeeded as sole king of England, Scotland, France or Germany before the end of childhood, interpreted here as their fifteenth birthday:[8] Henry IV of Germany (b. 1050, cor. 1054, r. 1056–1106), whose birth provides a rough starting date; Philip I of France (b. 1052, cor. 1059, r. 1060–1108); Malcolm IV, king of Scots (b. 1141, inaug. 1153, r. 1153–65); Henry III of England (b. 1207, cor. 1216, r. 1216–72); Louis IX of France (b. 1214, cor. 1226, r. 1226–70); and Alexander III, king of Scots (b. 1241, inaug. 1249, r. 1249–86), whose twenty-first birthday in 1262 functions as this study's practical terminus. Two additional examples complement these six. The first is Philip II of France (b. 1165, cor. 1179, r. 1180–1223) who, although he became sole ruler shortly after his fifteenth birthday, was crowned at the age of fourteen while his father was incapacitated. Philip's succession on the cusp of adolescence vividly illustrates the central role the male life cycle could play in perceptions of kingship; proud declarations of his youth constituted a prominent polemical topos early in his reign.[9] The second, less typical case is Emperor Frederick II (b. 1194, cor. 1198/1212 [Sicily and Germany], d. 1250), whose Sicilian coronation as a three-year-old boy expands the geographical scope of the case studies into southern Europe. His claims to the German kingship are also of interest since these were

[8] Three dates are given for each ruler: birth, first coronation/inauguration and regnal dates from the year they became sole ruler. The term inauguration is more suitable in a Scottish context, as discussed in Chapter 5.

[9] E. J. Ward, 'Child kingship and notions of (im)maturity in north-western Europe, 1050–1262', *ANS*, 40 (2018), 197–211 (203); see Chapters 7 and 8.

asserted, unsuccessfully, on Frederick's behalf during his infancy but then affirmed by the ruler himself with greater success later in his youth. These eight cases are only a tenth of the more than eighty *reges pueri* across Europe between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries.[10] The number of child rulers (though not necessarily *kings*) in the same period increases as soon as we look beyond a European framework. To provide just three examples: Al-Mustanṣir Billah (1029–94) succeeded to the Fatimid Caliphate in 1036 aged six; Antoku (1178–85) became emperor of Japan as a two-year-old infant; and Lý Chiêu Hoàng (1218–78) was seven when she became empress of Đại Việt (modern-day Vietnam) in 1224.[11] Additional examples of royal children and boy kings are woven into my analysis to illustrate broader points or reinforce comparative remarks.

Surprise is often the first modern reaction to the extensive track record of medieval child monarchs, and several historians have drawn attention to the 'astonishing regularity' of boy kings.[12] It is worth unpacking why this revelation has the ability to shock, namely the underlying assumption that adult male kingship was the norm. Unquestionably, the succession of adult men was common practice, but exemplars of medieval kingship expanded to include women and children, and solutions existed to ensure the practicality of their succession and rule. Boy kings were a less frequent occurrence than adult rulers (and girl monarchs even rarer),[13] but they were not considered abnormal as a result. Nor was a child's succession entirely unanticipated or ad hoc. Contemporary chroniclers sometimes note anxieties at a boy's succession, or draw attention to their new ruler's young age, but their accounts contain little surprise at a child on the throne. By contrast, in

[10] Vogtherr, 'Könige', 293; A. Wolf, 'Königtum Minderjähriger und das Institut der Regentschaft', in *L'enfant*, II, *Europe médiévale et moderne* (Brussels, 1976), 97–106 (97–8); R. Bartlett, *Blood Royal: Dynastic Politics in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2020), appendix B. For earlier examples of child rulership see Chapter 2.

[11] P. E. Walker, *Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and Its Sources* (London, 2002), 61, 143–7; C. Totman, *A History of Japan*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 2005), 94; V. H. Lien and P. D. Sharrock, *Descending Dragon, Rising Tiger: A History of Vietnam* (London, 2014), 79–80.

[12] C. Beem (ed.), *The Royal Minorities of Medieval and Early Modern England* (New York, 2008), 2; M. Campbell, *Alexander III: King of Scots* (Isle of Colonsay, 1999), 15; Vogtherr, 'Könige', 293.

[13] Few studies focus exclusively on child queens, but for a discussion of select girl rulers over our period see: W. C. Stalls, 'Queenship and the royal patrimony in twelfth-century Iberia: the example of Petronilla of Aragon', in T. M. Vann (ed.), *Queens, Regents and Potentates* (Cambridge, 1993), 49–61; A. Wolf, 'Reigning queens in medieval Europe: when, where and why?', in J. C. Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship* (Stroud, 1994), 169–88 (172–4). Childhood could be just as crucial a time for preparing girls to be queens as it was for preparing boys to be kings. See M. G. Büttner, 'The education of queens in the eleventh and twelfth centuries', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge (2003). For a rich variety of studies on queenship, many of which consider the upbringing of princesses and queens, see T. Earenfight, 'Medieval queenship', *History Compass*, 15 (2017), 1–9.

1152, when the seven-year-old Frederick of Rothenburg's claim to the German kingship was rejected in favour of his thirty-year-old cousin Frederick Barbarossa, near-contemporary chroniclers appear more puzzled at the circumvention of the king's son in the line of succession than at the fact that he was a boy.[14] Our understanding of child kingship between the fifth and eleventh centuries has benefited from Thilo Offergeld's prodigious contribution.[15] When moving chronologically later, however, we cannot ignore the distinctive circumstances shaping the interrelationship between childhood and rulership over the central medieval period. Representations and realities of childhood fluctuated over time and between cultures. It is imperative both to account for these changes alongside shifting practices of medieval kingship and to broaden the evidence base when comparing children's encounters with royal authority. The rest of this introduction expands the thematic discussion of representation and reality before then turning to consider matters of methodology.

CENTRING CHILDREN AND CHILDHOOD: REPRESENTATION AND REALITY

Representation and reality comprise three overlapping layers of analysis: from the narrow, source-focused perspective to a wider historical framework and, finally, a much broader historiographical context. More focused consideration of Lampert's account of events at Kaiserswerth offers, in microcosm, an insight into the interconnected realities and interpretations of a boy's experiences of royal authority. Lampert may have heard about the kidnap first-hand when Henry and the royal court visited Hersfeld three months later.[16] The monk assigns Henry a far more central role than modern historians have done, furnishing his account with details which accentuate the interrelationship between childhood and kingship. As noted, the boy king cheerfully participated in public royal ceremony. The kingdom's leading magnates sought his company, and he could socialise with them as he pleased.[17] Lampert represents Henry as an 'artless boy' (*puer simplex*) whose innocence and naivety may have made him over-trusting and less attuned to danger than an

[14] J. B. Freed, *Frederick Barbarossa: The Prince and the Myth* (New Haven and London, 2016), 62–3 and references therein.

[15] T. Offergeld, *Reges pueri: das Königtum Minderjähriger im frühen Mittelalter* (Hanover, 2001); C. Hillen, 'T. Offergeld, *Reges pueri: das Königtum Minderjähriger im frühen Mittelalter*', *Concilium medii aevi*, 5 (2002), 1013–15 (1013).

[16] *MGH DD H IV*, I, no. 88; Robinson, *Annals*, 82 n. 277.

[17] Lampert, *Annales*, 80 (trans. Robinson, 81).

adult ruler. Yet the author's assertion that the king threw himself into the river to attempt an escape implies a child raised in full awareness that he might become the target of 'violence and murder' (*vis et nex*) due to his royal position. Sentimentality concerning the boy's innocence is belied by the decisive action ascribed to him. Henry had been born in 1050 and, by age eleven, he was already unwilling to submit to political enemies without resisting. Lampert moves on to contrast the child's physical immaturity and inability to navigate the Rhine's strong currents with the strength of Count Ekbert, Henry's cousin, who jumps into the river; a magnate places himself in danger to rescue his young kinsman and king. Finally, after dragging Henry back into the boat, Anno and his accomplices soothe him with 'reassurances' (*blanditiae*). Here Lampert carefully selects evocative language associated with children and childhood, likely inspired by classical precedents. His choice also calls attention to the reality that child rulers compelled adaptations in adult speech and actions.[18]

Similar conflation of representations and realities regularly appear within the medieval evidence. A rhetoric of childhood sometimes furthered the personal purposes of magnates and prelates. When Bishop Bruno of Angers complained to Pope Alexander II (1061–73) about the count of Anjou's behaviour, the bishop urged the pope to exert his authority because the French king was a child.[19] At first glance, this letter suggests a tangible lack of royal authority under a boy king, neatly fitting the narrative of political disruption and magnate violence when a boy was king. Yet its dating, between 1068 and 1073, places it within the years when Philip I, actually in his late teens, was ruling alone after the death of his former guardian, Baldwin V, count of Flanders (1035–67). Writers often had vested interests in how they later represented a period of child kingship. It was to a much older Henry IV, in his mid-thirties at the time, that Benzo, bishop of Alba, dedicated the *Libri ad Heinricum* in around 1085. Benzo presented an intimate view of Henry's kidnap which acknowledged Agnes's suffering and aspects of the ruler's boyhood.[20] The bishop may have been inspired by stories he heard at the royal court in the mid-1060s or early 1080s, but are these truly details of Henry's personal experience as a child, simply conventional platitudes and paradigms of childhood, or some combination of the two

[18] H. Jacobson, *Ovid's Heroidos* (Princeton, 2015), 56, for *blanditiae* and childhood; Robinson, *Annals*, 4–9, for Lampert's familiarity with classical authors, including Ovid.

[19] *Briefsammlungen der Zeit Heinrichs IV.*, ed. C. Erdmann and N. Fickermann, *MGH Briefe d. dt. Kaiserzeit* 5 (Weimar, 1950); see Chapter 8.

[20] Benzo, *AH*, 236.

extremes?[21] Undoubtedly, Benzo's representation of these events served multifaceted rhetorical and political purposes in the mid-1080s. His claim that Archbishop Anno and Godfrey 'the Bearded' of Verdun (d. 1069) together 'seized the position of royal supremacy' recalls other reports of aristocratic and episcopal concerns that the king's abduction constituted a dangerous affront to royal honour and majesty.[22] Yet the context of imperial-papal disputes in the 1070s is as crucial to interpreting such comments as the realities of Henry's early reign. It would be an understatement to say that the status of royal dignity was of great concern in the Empire after Henry's excommunication by Pope Gregory VII, the king's penitence in the snow at Canossa in 1077 and Rudolf of Rheinfelden's election as a royal opponent. It is no wonder, then, that later representations of Henry's kidnap placed notions of his majesty at the forefront.[23]

Conceptual interpretations of the life cycle provide a historical context to aspects of representation and reality. These were often fundamental to how writers framed a ruler's childhood, but they could also have a real impact on the lives of royal children. The end of infancy, for example, was decisive in shaping one boy's experience of royal inauguration in mid-eleventh-century France (see Chapter 5). Similarly, Benzo drew prominent attention to *pueritia*, one of the life cycle's theoretical stages in medieval thought, in a rare reference to a boy king playing.[24] Immediately after Henry's abduction, Anno and his co-conspirators 'seized the position of royal dignity, leaving the child to play with the children (…*cum pueris puerum ludere*)'.[25] Such comments provoke further questions regarding children as social and political actors but they also place royal protagonists within a framework of idealised representations of the life cycle.

A variety of illustrative schemes divided the progression of life into three, four, six or seven phases.[26] It was relatively common practice for the first fourteen years of a boy's life to be split into infancy (*infantia*),

[21] I. S. Robinson, *Authority and Resistance in the Investiture Contest: The Polemical Literature of the Late Eleventh Century* (Manchester, 1978), 71–2. For the possibly imaginary nature of Benzo's relationship with Henry: *PREC*, 83–4; A. A. Latowsky, *Emperor of the World: Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority, 800–1229* (Ithaca, 2013), 102–3.

[22] 'arripiunt locum regalis prioratus', Benzo, *AH*, 238.

[23] See Lampert, *Annales*, 80, for the deliberate prefiguration of Henry's deposition in 1076. As discussed in Robinson, *Annals*, 32.

[24] For a comparable reference to royal children playing in the palace see William the Breton, *Gesta Philippi Augusti*, ed. H.-F. Delaborde, in *Œuvres*, 2 vols (Paris, 1882–5), I, 168–333 (179–80).

[25] Benzo, *AH*, 238.

[26] What follows is a simplification of several different schemes which existed in medieval Europe: J. A. Burrow, *The Ages of Man: A Study in Medieval Writing and Thought* (Oxford, 1986), esp. 5–54; I. Cochelin, 'Introduction: pre-thirteenth-century definitions of the life cycle', in I. Cochelin and K. Smyth (eds.), *Medieval Life Cycles: Continuity and Change* (Turnhout, 2013), 1–54.

from birth to age seven, and childhood (*pueritia*), between seven and fourteen.[27] Notions of meaningful consent and command of language could mark the end of *infantia*, which was also associated with the commencement of schooling and spiritual education.[28] Isidore of Seville, tracing the etymological foundations of *infans* in the seventh century, noted 'it is called an infant, because it does not yet know how to speak (*in-*, "not"; *fari*, present participle *fans*, "speaking"), that is, it cannot talk. Not yet having its full complement of teeth, it has less ability to articulate words'.[29] Similar perceptions of infantile inability and lack of legal capacity in the twelfth century lay behind the *Decretum Gratiani*'s definition of the age of consent as seven.[30] After infancy and childhood followed adolescence (*adolescentia*) and youth (*iuventus*), with adolescence lasting in many cases until the late twenties.[31] Then came manhood (*uirilitas*), old age (*senectus*) and finally senility (*senium*) or decrepitude (*decrepitas*). Age is, of course, far more equivocal than these rigid schemata suggest. Some of this ambiguity and flexibility around age identity in the eleventh century can be inferred from Lampert's and Benzo's narratives, which draw attention to aspects of physical strength and biological development (with reference to Henry's swimming capability), social and cultural roles (by linking children and play), and intellectual or physiological capacity (in emphasising the boy's *simplicitas*).

Periods of child kingship provide sustained episodes which underscore the mutability of childhood experience, affirming the historical reality that some boys were neither silent nor peripheral. Children were often seen as 'a mute and marginal group' who infrequently appear in literary and historical texts.[32] Royal children, however, benefit from far greater visibility than their non-royal peers and were of the utmost

[27] In 1374, for example, the age of majority for kings of France was fixed at fourteen. See, now, B. Grévin, *La Première Loi du royaume: l'acte de fixation de la majorité des rois de France (1374)* (Paris, 2021).

[28] S. Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London, 1990; 2nd edn, 1992), 4, 22–3, 174; N. Orme, *Medieval Children* (London, 2001), 68.

[29] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, 11.2.9 (ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols [Oxford, 1911], II, 22; ed. and trans. S. A. Barney *et al.*, *The Etymologies* [Cambridge, 2006], 241).

[30] *Decretum magistri Gratiani*, ed. E. Friedberg, *Corpus iuris canonici* 1 (Leipzig, 1879), C. 30, q. 2 and see C. 22, q. 5, c. 14; J. Goldberg, 'The legal persona of the child in Gratian's *Decretum*', *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law*, 24 (2000), 10–53 (esp. 33–4, 48–9).

[31] H.-W. Goetz, '*Adolescentia* in abendländischen Quellen des frühen Mittelalters zwischen Kindheit und Erwachsensein? Ein begriffsgeschichtlicher Zugang', in D. Ariantzi (ed.), *Coming of Age in Byzantium: Adolescence and Society* (Berlin, 2017), 251–94 (esp. 251–8).

[32] D. G. Angelov, 'Emperors and patriarchs as ideal children and adolescents: literary conventions and cultural expectations', in A. Papaconstantinou and A.-M. Talbot (eds.), *Becoming Byzantine: Children and Childhood in Byzantium* (Washington, DC, 2009), 85–125 (85). Similarly, see D. Herlihy and C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans et leurs familles: une étude du catasto florentin de 1427* (Paris, 1978), esp. 552–5.

importance to political communities. Their words and deeds conveyed authoritative weight and their lives were of interest to commentators on a wider, international stage. Throughout the book I identify moments where children were significant catalysts for change, sometimes altering the behaviour and actions of adults (see Chapter 5), at other moments stimulating administrative or political developments (see Chapter 8), or inspiring cultural production (see Chapter 3). Boy kings' experiences are by no means universally representative of childhood. For this reason, they have tended to feature in broad overviews of childhood and family sporadically, often only to illustrate wider points.[33] A recent study on young Byzantine emperors and patriarchs contritely apologises that: 'Neither their childhoods nor their relationship with their parents were representative of the experiences of common people'.[34] Boy emperors and kings did not live like 'common people', but assuming homogeneity in childhood and familial experiences lower down the social scale is also problematic. The notion of a truly 'representative' experience seems chimerical. Examining the lives of royal children informs a broader appreciation of the relevance of status to childhood experience, revealing, for example, how royal parents attempted to differentiate their young sons' experiences from aristocratic norms (see Chapter 6) or how kingship added further flexibility to notions of age identity (see Chapter 10).

Within the broader historiographical framework, the experiences of royal children and ideas about child kingship have largely been treated separately (or not at all) in the different provinces of social, cultural, political and legal history. There has been little reference on the part of scholars to each other's findings. It is important to re-think the way political history, in particular, has engaged with social–historical ideas and with children's roles as social actors. Medievalists began focusing on representations and realities of childhood more acutely following the publication of Philippe Ariès's theory of a *longue durée* of the historical development of childhood.[35] Since then, scholars of art, medicine, law, literature, history and hagiography alike have firmly cemented

[33] L. J. Wilkinson (ed.), *A Cultural History of Childhood and Family in the Middle Ages* (London, 2010); Orme, *Medieval Children*.

[34] Angelov, 'Emperors', 85.

[35] P. Ariès, *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris, 1960) (trans. R. Baldick, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* [New York, 1962]); L. Haas and J. T. Rosenthal, 'Historiographical reflections and the revolt of the medievalists', in J. T. Rosenthal (ed.), *Essays on Medieval Childhood: Responses to Recent Debates* (Donington, 2007), 12–26 (esp. 14–15). For Ariès's earlier concern with ideas about childhood, see his *Histoire des populations françaises et de leurs attitudes devant la vie depuis le XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1948). For the important role of folklorists in studying children's oral culture and everyday lives see J. C. Bishop, 'The lives and legacies of Iona and Peter Opie', *International Journal of Play*, 3 (2014), 205–23 (esp. 209–10).

children's significance within medieval society and culture.[36] Historians scrutinising child kingship have been less quick to embrace such critical insights, even to the extent of considering childhood irrelevant to kingship. Jacques Le Goff, for example, continued to state as late as 1996 that childhood was essentially a 'write-off' or 'non-entity' (*une non-valeur*) in the Middle Ages.[37] Approaching child kingship from the assumption that medieval boy kings are oxymoronic means that their very existence becomes a paradox in need of reconciliation or legitimisation. Attempts to resolve this alleged contradiction have included interpreting child rulers as a variation on the theme of absentee rule – placing boy kings alongside captive rulers or monarchs away from their realms on pilgrimage or crusade – or as a peculiar example of the inept king, *rex inutilis*.[38] Neither of these models accounts sufficiently for the reality of children's importance within political society and culture between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.

Child rulers fall into a particular scholarly chasm between social history, on the one hand, and political history on the other. Uniting these methodologies provides a way to balance representation and reality while appreciating the complexities of intersections between childhood and rulership. Previous investigations of subjects such as elite sibling relationships furnish an important template in this regard, demonstrating the value of interweaving political history with topics traditionally studied from a social–historical perspective, such as the life cycle and

[36] In part as a critical response to Ariès's flawed conclusion that a concept of childhood was not 'discovered' until the early modern period. Select critiques include U. T. Holmes, 'Medieval children', *Journal of Social History*, 2 (1968), 164–72; L. deMause, 'The evolution of childhood', in L. deMause (ed.), *The History of Childhood* (New York, 1974), 1–73; I. H. Forsyth, 'Children in early medieval art: ninth through twelfth centuries', *Journal of Psychohistory*, 4 (1976), 31–70; J. Kroll, 'The concept of childhood in the Middle Ages', *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences*, 13 (1977), 384–93; A. Wilson, 'The infancy of the history of childhood: an appraisal of Ariès', *History and Theory*, 19 (1980), 132–53; Shahar, *Childhood*; D. Alexandre-Bidon and D. Lett, *Les enfants au Moyen Âge: V^e–XV^e siècles*, rev. edn (Paris, 1997) (trans. J. Gladding, *Children in the Middle Ages: Fifth–Fifteenth Centuries* [Notre Dame, 1999]); Orme, *Medieval Children*; B. A. Hanawalt, 'Medievalists and the study of childhood', *Speculum*, 77 (2002), 440–60. However, an uncritical acceptance of an imperfect English translation of the French *sentiment* as 'idea' further heightened impressions of the inadequacies of Ariès's assertions. See H. Cunningham, 'Histories of childhood', *AHR*, 103 (1998), 1195–1208 (1197).

[37] Le Goff, *Louis*, 88. Similar sentiments appear in his 'Royauté biblique et idéal monarchique médiéval: Saint Louis et Josias', in G. Dahan (ed.), *Les Juifs au regard de l'histoire* (Paris, 1985), 157–67 (163) and 'Le roi enfant dans l'idéologie monarchique de l'Occident médiéval', in *Actes du colloque international: historicité de l'enfance et de la jeunesse: Athènes, 1–5 octobre 1984* (Athens, 1986), 231–50.

[38] F. Olivier-Martin, *Les régences et la majorité des rois sous les Capétiens directs et les premiers Valois (1060–1375)* (Paris, 1931); F. Lachaud and M. Penman, 'Introduction: absentee authority across medieval Europe', in F. Lachaud and M. Penman (eds.), *Absentee Authority across Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 2017), 1–19 (1–2).

family.[39] Placing children within the context of elite family life draws attention to parent–child interactions and relationships, especially to the influential maternal involvement in a boy's early political education (see Chapter 4). A core issue is that childhood, and by inference child kingship, is a liminal state and one that crosses conventional subject boundaries. Entwining ideas about the male life course and medieval rulership; placing boy kings into their familial context; considering issues of gender, age and lordship together; exploring concepts of child rule in educational texts, biblical models and literary and historical writings; and thinking more broadly about how childhood influenced and altered administrative practices, ritual and kingship – all these themes are significant facets of this analysis. They can only be studied by traversing traditional partitions imposed on scholarship.

The field of childhood studies has crucially advocated breaking down conventional boundaries between subjects to engage more holistically with representations and realities.[40] At the heart of the field's entreaty is the acknowledgement that 'child actors bridge categories'.[41] Though this book is not an interdisciplinary study, it draws on cross-disciplinary insights to inform aspects of medieval childhood experience. Cultural anthropologists, for example, have shown play to be one of the few true 'universal' traits of childhood, recurrently used by adults across cultures as a means of distracting children.[42] Revisiting Benzo's comments with this in mind offers an alternative way of comprehending Anno's engagement with the eleven-year-old boy king. Leaving Henry to play does not have to be interpreted exclusively as a manifestation of the archbishop's power-hungry objectives. Since Henry had just survived a close brush with death after nearly drowning in the Rhine attempting to escape his captors, it seems sage conduct on the archbishop's part to distract him by sending him to play with his peers. Other disciplinary insights which have proven especially valuable include archaeological work on age thresholds, anthropological interest in children's agency and sociological understanding of the variability of age identity (see especially

[39] Especially, J. R. Lyon, *Princely Brothers and Sisters: The Sibling Bond in German Politics, 1100–1250* (Ithaca, 2013).

[40] Cohen, 'Introduction', esp. 1–15; C. Lewis, 'Interdisciplinarity, archaeology and the study of medieval childhood', in D. M. Hadley and K. A. Hemer (eds.), *Medieval Childhood: Archaeological Approaches* (Oxford, 2014), 145–70; M. J. Kehily (ed.), *An Introduction to Childhood Studies*, 3rd edn (Maidenhead, 2015); S. Crawford, 'SSCIP: the first 10 years', *ChPa*, 10 (2017), 10–15.

[41] J. E. Baxter *et al.*, 'Reflections on interdisciplinarity in the study of childhood in the past', *ChPa*, 10 (2017), 57–71 (59).

[42] D. F. Lancy, *The Anthropology of Childhood: Cherubs, Chattel, Changelings*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2015), 19–20 and throughout ch. 6.

Chapters 4, 5 and 10).[43] To achieve a more rounded understanding of royal childhood and child kingship which unites representation and reality, conventional boundaries *within* disciplines also need to be broken down. The willingness of scholars of childhood to embrace cross-disciplinary perspectives is an urgent reminder of the need to move beyond silos within the study of medieval rulership which have often hindered a clearer view of children's actions and the ways they were interpreted and represented.

Accordingly, this book also pushes against the historiographical imposition of a rigorous legal framework around the concept of a child king because the boy's legal status was only one perspective, among various others, which affected their experiences of childhood and influenced how contemporaries perceived them. Debates in political thought and legal history regarding the enigma of an underage boy as the head of state helped cultivate a principal, influential theory underpinning the study of Frankish-Germanic child kingship: that boy kings were not, in fact, *legally* underage.[44] This model relies on a strict differentiation between the legal terms 'underage' (*unmündig*) and 'minor' (*minderjährig*). The former implies a need for a legal representative, or guardian, who fully adopts the legal personality of the ward; the latter, which carries no such implication, was therefore deemed more appropriate for situations of child kingship.[45] Because no individual could assume private guardianship of a child king, the 'fiction' of a child's rule was maintained by *faktische Regentschaft* (often translated into English as de facto regency). These notions derive, in large part, from early modern legal traditions, particularly the words of the eighteenth-century English common lawyer and judge William Blackstone (1723–80): 'In the king is no minority and therefore he hath no legal guardian'.[46] Blackstone's denial that the political body of

[43] Particularly Gowland, 'Ageing the past'; M. Lally and A. Moores (eds.), *(Re)thinking the Little Ancestor: New Perspectives on the Archaeology of Infancy and Childhood* (Oxford, 2011); Hadley and Hemer (eds.), *Medieval Childhood*; D. F. Lancy, 'Unmasking children's agency', *AnthropoChildren*, 2 (2012), 1–19 and *Anthropology of Childhood*; A. James and A. Prout (eds.), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*, 3rd edn (London, 2015).

[44] Set out first in Kölzer, 'Königtum'. The entwining of these political and legal ideas has been especially influential among Theo Kölzer's students (Thilo Offergeld, for example, completed his doctorate with Kölzer). See also S. Hamm, 'Regentinnen und minderjährige Herrscher im normannischen Italien', in J. Hamesse (ed.), *Roma, magistra mundi: itineraria culturae medievalis: mélanges offerts au Père L. E. Boyle à l'occasion de son 75e anniversaire*, 3 vols (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1998), III, 123–39; C. Hillen, *Curia regis: Untersuchungen zur Hofstruktur Heinrichs (VII.) 1220–1235 nach den Zeugen seiner Urkunden* (Frankfurt, 1999).

[45] Kölzer, 'Königtum', 293, 322.

[46] William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England: Book I: Of the Rights of Persons*, ed. D. Lemmings and W. Prest (Oxford, 2016), 161; W. Prest, 'Blackstone, Sir William (1723–1780), legal writer and judge', *ODNB*; Kölzer, 'Königtum', 309; Vogtherr, 'Könige', 291; Offergeld, *Reges pueri*, 833.

the king could be underage was never meant to be taken at face value, however. It was shorthand for a far more extensive and complex debate. Ernst Kantorowicz noted this ambiguity, but other scholars have rarely acknowledged it.[47] Fixating on legal vocabulary and the legal status of boy kings has erroneously enforced a distinction which is imperceptible over the central medieval period (see Chapter 7). Contemporaries did not distinguish between the legal terminology of customary guardianship and the vocabulary they used to describe child kings, their age or the arrangements for their care. Instead, it is precisely during the period under consideration here that, first, writers expanded the range and use of legal terminology to represent situations of child kingship and, secondly, changing practices of tenurial wardship more forcefully influenced how royal children experienced the progression to maturity.

Childhood experience has long been assimilated into biographical studies, based on the widespread appreciation that the psychological and cognitive impact of children's upbringing and education underpins a full understanding of the adults they become, revealed through the work of Sigmund Freud (d. 1939), Jean Piaget (d. 1980) and others. Today it is almost impossible to envisage a historical biography which does not take the subject's childhood into consideration, even if this life phase is given short shrift.[48] Emphasising the significance of infantile and juvenile experience as a fundamental criterion for understanding adult lives has long been a root justification for the historical study of childhood.[49] But such reflective perspectives can become reliant on assertions of childhood trauma and disruption that equate child kingship with heightened political disorder, a conjecture which this book disputes. Although childhood's formative nature is undeniable, there are worrying teleological implications to requisitioning childhood purely to act as a psychological explanation for adult actions. This methodology can be flawed even on an individual biographical basis because it risks either mythologising royal childhood or exaggerating the extent of the violence and disruption provoked by a boy king's

[47] E. H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, 2nd edn (Princeton, 1997), 3–6; Kölzer, 'Königtum', 309. The oversimplification has even crept into the scholarship on childhood more broadly. See S. Crawford and C. Lewis, 'Childhood studies and the Society for the Study of Childhood in the Past', *ChPa*, 1 (2009), 5–16 (10).

[48] Recent examples include D. Bates, *William the Conqueror* (New Haven and London, 2016), 16–48; M. Strickland, *Henry the Young King, 1155–1183* (New Haven and London, 2016), 17–33; L. Grant, *Blanche of Castile, Queen of France* (New Haven and London, 2016), 29–45; Freed, *Frederick Barbarossa*, 1–59.

[49] N. Orme, 'Medieval childhood: challenge, change and achievement', *ChPa*, 1 (2009), 106–19 (110). A pertinent example of this in practice is E. A. R. Brown, 'The prince is the father of the king: the character and childhood of Philip the Fair of France', *Mediaeval Studies*, 49 (1987), 282–334 (285 n. 7, for Freud's influence).

accession. Scholarship on Frederick II provides some particularly germane examples of both extremes. Awareness of the adult emperor Frederick would become runs throughout Kantorowicz's representation of the ruler's early years: 'Though in his childhood the boy Frederick appeared the mere plaything of those forces which as a man he mastered and directed, he was even then being educated by destiny for the supreme power'.[50] Karl Leyser, on the other hand, attempted to rationalise why one should not reproach the adult Frederick for being 'neither likable nor reassuring' by blaming royal minorities as 'times of crisis and unrest in the kingdoms of the Early and High Middle Ages, a calamity for which their ruling strata knew no remedy'.[51] According to Leyser, Frederick's upbringing, like that of Henry IV, led him to seek revenge for what he had suffered as a child. Taking a retrospective view of royal childhood and child kingship is not entirely unreasonable, but this historiographical approach reinforces an impression that children's experiences are only significant in foreshadowing the realities of their later, adult lives.

Rather than representing childhood retrospectively, it is important to consider this phase of the male life cycle within its own context. Doing so reveals children's centrality to royal rule not solely as the adult leaders they might one day become, but also because of their embodiment of a dynastic past and their ability both to represent and to shape rulership in the present. Turning to other disciplines reinforces the scholarly necessity of an approach which moves beyond the use of childhood primarily to inform an understanding of later, adult behaviour and actions. Retrospective assessments of childhood are often grounded in developmental or cognitive universals which anthropologists and sociologists have increasingly challenged since the 1990s, on the basis that these psychological theories frequently fail to account for the significant impact of culture and nurture.[52] Recent reflections on the over-reliance on WEIRD citizens (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich Democracies) within behavioural science research are especially important here. These discussions challenge historians' indiscriminating application of 'universal' ideas from cognitive and developmental psychology to situations in the

[50] E. H. Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (Berlin, 1928), 9–38 (quote at 29) (trans. E. O. Lorimer, *Frederick the Second, 1194–1250* [London, 1957], 3–35 [25]).

[51] K. Leyser, *Medieval Germany and Its Neighbours, 900–1250* (London, 1982), 272. Similarly see T. Struve, 'Heinrich IV: Herrscher im Konflikt', in J. Jarnut and M. Wemhoff (eds.), *Vom Umbruch zur Erneuerung? Das 11. und beginnende 12. Jahrhundert: Positionen der Forschung* (Munich, 2006), 55–70 (56), who claims Henry's experiences as a child had a destabilising effect on his personality.

[52] Crawford and Lewis, 'Childhood studies', 8–9; Lancy, *Anthropology of Childhood*, 1–2; A. Prout and A. James, 'A new paradigm for the sociology of childhood? Provenance, promise and problems', in James and Prout (eds.), *Reconstructing Childhood*, 6–28.

past, especially those concerning children.[53] Anthropological refutation of the theory that coercive control over children inevitably manifests in adolescent aggression is especially pertinent in the case of kings such as Frederick II and Henry IV.[54] Childhood was, and of course still is, intrinsically variable both in conception and practice. Understanding it within its specific cultural, social and political setting is imperative to appreciate the interconnections between children's experiences of rule and contemporary representations of their power and authority.[55] Childhood, like rulership, cannot be treated as a transhistorical concept with universal application, even across the Middle Ages.

CHILDHOOD AND RULERSHIP: METHODS AND SOURCES

Three essential components shape this study's methodology: a comparative approach, a diachronic analysis and a holistic approach to the sources. The tendency to study both kingship and royal childhood in isolation, from a solitary national perspective, has discouraged comparison between kingdoms, reinforcing the supposition of children's abnormality within royal rule. When Armin Wolf identified the lack of comparative scholarship on child kingship across Europe in 1976, he claimed that such a study was not yet possible due to the lack of reinforcing research.[56] Since then, although many kings who began their reigns as children now have new scholarly biographies, few studies have attempted a comparative analysis of child rulership.[57] There is a welcome body of research which centres the education and upbringing of royal children, but the focus remains on individuals or single dynasties and usually on the period from the later thirteenth century.[58] Employing comparative history to counter the isolation

[53] J. Henrich, S. J. Heine and A. Norenzayan, 'The weirdest people in the world?', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33 (2010), 61–83 with commentary 83–135.

[54] Lancy, *Anthropology of Childhood*, 2.

[55] K. Thomas, 'Age and authority in early modern England', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 62 (1977), 205–48; Crawford and Lewis, 'Childhood studies', 6–7.

[56] Wolf, 'Königtum Minderjähriger', 99.

[57] Select biographies include Robinson, *Henry*; Althoff, *Heinrich*; J. Bradbury, *Philip Augustus, King of France, 1180–1223* (London, 1998); D. Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (London, 1988; new edn, 2002); K. Norgate, *The Minority of Henry the Third* (London, 1912); D. A. Carpenter, *The Minority of Henry III* (London, 1990) and *Henry III: The Rise to Power and Personal Rule 1207–1258* (New Haven and London, 2020); Le Goff, *Louis* (trans. G. E. Gollrad, *Saint Louis* [Notre Dame, 2009]); Campbell, *Alexander*. The standard text on Philip I's reign is still A. Fliche, *Le règne de Philippe Ier, roi de France (1060–1108)* (Paris, 1912). Malcolm IV has never been the subject of a biographical monograph, but see *Malcolm IV*, 3–26.

[58] K. Staniland, 'Royal entry into the world', in D. Williams (ed.), *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1986 Harlaxton Symposium* (Woodbridge, 1987), 297–313; M. Howell, 'The children of King Henry III and Eleanor of Provence', *TCE*, 4 (1992), 57–72; J. C. Parsons, '*Que nos*

or exceptionalism of differing national traditions is not a new tactic, nor is such a methodological approach exclusive to medieval history.[59] Anthropologists and sociologists have long advocated the advantages of comparison between cultures. Historical comparison has an equally lengthy tradition, if not longer, in part because arguments for exceptionalism have often rested on implicit or explicit comparison with other societies.

The kingdoms at the centre of my analysis – England, Scotland, France and Germany – were chosen, geographically speaking, because kinship networks and marital alliances link their royal families throughout the central Middle Ages. The genealogies which preface this introduction provide a visual demonstration of the interconnected nature of these ruling families, while political strategies and diplomacy bring the interconnected kin-groups into even closer contact. These four kingdoms have traditionally been associated with very different approaches to kingship between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, yet some of these prominent distinctions have attracted sustained criticism and refinement in recent decades. Historians of post-Conquest England still tend to focus on the development of a centralised and administrative kingship, but this can no longer be interpreted as antithetical to the 'sacral' kingship of the Capetian rulers.[60] Similarly, scholars have importantly articulated many of the problems with viewing kingship in the Empire as fundamentally different in nature to royal rule elsewhere.[61] Nevertheless, some of the political specificities regarding children's incorporation within German kingship continue

in infancia lactauit: the impact of childhood care-givers on Plantagenet family relationships in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries', in C. M. Rousseau and J. T. Rosenthal (eds.), *Women, Marriage, and Family in Medieval Christendom: Essays in Memory of Michael M. Sheehan* (Kalamazoo, 1998), 289–324; W. M. Ormrod, 'The royal nursery: a household for the younger children of Edward III', *EHR*, 120 (2005), 398–415; M. Strickland, 'On the instruction of a prince: the upbringing of Henry, the Young King', in C. Harper-Bill and N. Vincent (eds.), *Henry II: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 2007), 184–214; C. J. Neville, 'Preparing for kingship: Prince Alexander of Scotland, 1264–84', in J. Nugent and E. Ewan (eds.), *Children and Youth in Pre-Modern Scotland* (Woodbridge, 2015), 155–72; P. Mormiche and S. Perez (eds.), *Naissance et petite enfance à la cour de France: Moyen Âge–XIX^e siècle* (Villeneuve-d'Ascq, 2016).

[59] C. Wickham, 'Problems in doing comparative history', *The Reuter Lecture 2004* (Southampton, 2005) and 'Historical transitions: a comparative approach', *The Medieval History Journal*, 13 (2010), 1–21; G. E. R. Lloyd, 'Introduction: methods, problems and prospects', in G. E. R. Lloyd and J. J. Zhao (eds.), *Ancient Greece and China Compared* (Cambridge, 2018), 1–30.

[60] See, crucially N. Vincent, *The Holy Blood: King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic* (Cambridge, 2001).

[61] T. Reuter, 'The medieval German *Sonderweg*? The empire and its rulers in the High Middle Ages', in A. J. Duggan (ed.), *Kings and Kingship in Medieval Europe* (London, 1993), 179–211 and both 'Assembly politics in western Europe from the eighth century to the twelfth' and 'The making of England and Germany, 850–1050: points of comparison and difference', in his *Medieval Polities and Modern Mentalities*, ed. J. L. Nelson (Cambridge, 2006), 193–216, 284–99; B. Weiler, *Henry III of England and the Staufen Empire, 1216–1272* (Woodbridge, 2006) and *Kingship, Rebellion and Political*

to be overstated (see Chapter 2). For Scotland, although recent scholarly trends have placed greater emphasis on the kingdom's position within a 'North Sea world', research has also revealed the realm's participation in wider European networks, challenging the former relegation of the kings of Scots to the sidelines as mere imitators of English royal practices.[62] Consequently, incorporating the Scottish boy kings Malcolm IV and Alexander III into this study is of fundamental importance. Comparative analyses of medieval kingship most commonly confine themselves to placing two realms in comparison – typically focusing on Anglo-French,[63] or Anglo-Scottish,[64] perspectives – but expanding comparisons across multiple realms has been shown to provide fruitful insights into the practices, conceptions and constructs of royal rulership.[65] *Royal Childhood and Child Kingship* is, to a large extent, inspired by these historians and their work on comparative kingship.

Adopting a comparative framework additionally helps to counter isolationism and tendencies towards exceptionalism in the scholarship by

Culture: England and Germany, c. 1215–c. 1250 (Basingstoke, 2007) and 'Crown-giving and kingmaking in the west *c.* 1000–*c.* 1250', *Viator*, 41 (2010), 57–87 and 'Tales of First Kings and the culture of kingship in western Europe, *c.* 1050–*c.* 1200', *Viator*, 46 (2015), 101–27; N. Vincent, 'Sources and methods: some Anglo-German comparisons', in T. Huthwelker, J. Peltzer and M. Wemhöner (eds.), *Princely Rank in Late Medieval Europe: Trodden Paths and Promising Avenues* (Ostfildern, 2011), 119–38; R. Kemp, 'Images of kingship in bishops' biographies and deeds in twelfth-century England and Germany', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Aberystwyth University (2018).

[62] G. W. S. Barrow, *Scotland and Its Neighbours in the Middle Ages* (London, 1992); B. Weiler, 'Knighting, homage, and the meaning of ritual: the kings of England and their neighbors in the thirteenth century', *Viator*, 37 (2006), 275–99; M. Pollock, *The Lion, the Lily, and the Leopard: The Crown and Nobility of Scotland, France, and England and the Struggle for Power (1100–1204)* (Turnhout, 2015); A. Taylor, *The Shape of the State in Medieval Scotland, 1124–1290* (Oxford, 2016), esp. 438–55 and 'Formalising aristocratic power in royal *acta* in late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century France and Scotland', *TRHS*, 28 (2018), 33–64.

[63] N. Vincent, 'Twelfth and thirteenth-century kingship: an essay in Anglo-French misunderstanding', in J.-P. Genet and F.-J. Ruggiu (eds.), *Les idées passent-elles la Manche? Savoirs, représentations, pratiques (France–Angleterre, X^e–XX^e siècles)* (Paris, 2007), 21–36; J.-P. Genet, 'The government of later medieval France and England: a plea for comparative history', in C. Fletcher, J.-P. Genet and J. Watts (eds.), *Government and Political Life in England and France, c. 1300–c. 1500* (Cambridge, 2015), 1–23.

[64] J. A. Green, 'Anglo-Scottish relations, 1066–1174', in M. Jones and M. Vale (eds.), *England and Her Neighbours, 1066–1453: Essays in Honour of Pierre Chaplais* (London, 1989), 53–72; A. A. M. Duncan, 'John king of England and the kings of Scots', in S. Church (ed.), *King John: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 1999), 247–71; D. A. Carpenter, 'Scottish royal government in the thirteenth century from an English perspective', in M. Hammond (ed.), *New Perspectives on Medieval Scotland, 1093–1286* (Woodbridge, 2013), 117–60.

[65] See especially J. Dale, *Inauguration and Liturgical Kingship in the Long Twelfth Century: Male and Female Accession Rituals in England, France and the Empire* (Woodbridge, 2019) and 'Royal inauguration and the liturgical calendar in England, France, and the Empire, *c.* 1050–*c.* 1250', *ANS*, 37 (2015), 83–98. I would like to thank Johanna Dale for her generosity in sharing copies of her work prior to publication.

shedding light on geographical and chronological specificities in children's experiences and in representations of child kingship. Initial points of cross-cultural comparison between child rulers have already attracted some attention, although these have been analysed on a case-by-case basis rather than through a more integrally thematic methodology.[66] We can occasionally move beyond stating 'strange parallels' to make a case for moments where children inspired political exchanges between kingdoms or where actions in one realm directly influenced another's approach to a child's rule.[67] Cross-kingdom awareness of the intersections between childhood and kingship appears especially relevant in comparisons between Henry IV's early reign and that of his direct contemporary in France, Philip I. Henry's experience more properly belongs in its contemporary eleventh-century European context rather than being understood as something of an afterthought to a longer history of Frankish-Germanic child kingship.[68] Similar moments where overlapping or near-contemporary examples of child rulership provided spurs to action or sources of inspiration include the English response to Louis IX's succession or Alexander III's displays of personal authority using epistolary formulae familiar to the English royal court (see Chapter 10). Comparison is methodologically instrumental in uncovering parallels and differences in children's experiences of rule across north-western Europe, and in contesting kingship's association primarily and almost exclusively with adult men.

Comparison reveals difference, but it also makes a more important point about the significance of change over time, since neither notions of kingship nor concepts of childhood were static over the central Middle Ages. Diachronic analysis therefore forms a conspicuous recurring theme to expose how wider societal changes altered children's lived experiences of royal rule and modified how or what people thought about child kingship. As noted above, chronological change has two principal facets. The first reveals how children's encounters with royal authority differed over the central medieval period from earlier centuries. One crucial transformation which diverged significantly from the earlier Middle Ages was more widespread acceptance that children were no longer the dynastic option of last resort (see Chapter 2). Prominent positive cultural representations of child kingship and further attention

[66] Vogtherr, 'Könige'; C. Hillen, 'The minority governments of Henry III, Henry (VII) and Louis IX compared', *TCE*, 11 (2007), 46–60; C. Hillen and F. Wiswall, 'The minority of Henry III in the context of Europe', in Beem (ed.), *Minorities*, 17–66.

[67] V. Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800–1830*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 2003–9).

[68] Offergeld, *Reges pueri*, 785–97. See also Chapter 5.

to royal children's education and upbringing accompanied greater political investment in child rulers (see Chapter 3).

The second facet of change over time exposes differences between the mid-eleventh and mid-thirteenth centuries. As rule itself changed, so too did children's experiences of ruling. The two centuries between 1050 and 1250 witnessed significant shifts in the practices and performances of rulership as well as changing attitudes to children and childhood in doctrine, law, culture and society. Contemporary perspectives on royal childhood and adolescence adjusted to accommodate new emphasis on children within certain sections of medieval society, especially the Church and, to a lesser extent, shifting pedagogical environments. These changes reinforced the formative influence of children's education and upbringing and likely influenced the gradual development of more formalised and programmatic structures for royal children's learning. The increasing separation of royal children's households altered practicalities relating to their upbringing, especially their proximity to court life. There were also tangible changes in how boys experienced their early introduction to royal authority. Shifting administrative practices within chanceries and writing offices modified processes of assent, testimony and attestation which had systematically acquainted young boys with royal actions throughout infancy and childhood. Even less intentional changes – such as the fact that young boys were less frequently at their fathers' deathbeds in the thirteenth century (see Chapter 6) – still contributed to making the shift from heir to king a very different experience for these royal children than for their predecessors two centuries earlier. Other changes were far more deliberate. The increasingly prominent papal role in the guardianship of boy kings and their kingdoms, for example, had much to do with the aspirations and intentions of individual popes but may also have been part of a royal response to changing legal ideas around children and childhood. Although the experiences of royal youths continued to differ from many of their aristocratic peers, shifting legal cultures around elite minors and the formalisation of components of aristocratic wardship directly influenced aspects of a young ruler's progression to maturity. Overall, both overt structural changes and subtler, more coincidental deviations between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries transformed various aspects of how royal children and boy kings engaged with rulership throughout the early stages of their life cycle.

Focusing on the complexities of comparison and change moves away from perceptions of boy kings as anachronisms or contradictions, pushing against dominant narratives associating child kingship primarily with absentee rule, political stagnation and violent disruption. At the centre of this book are eight kings whose reigns span more than three centuries, of

which nearly sixty years could be described as years of child rulership.[69] These boy kings were *not* absent rulers. The earlier parts of their reigns cannot be disregarded entirely, nor should they be construed in similar terms to an interregnum. Even when a child succeeded to the royal dignity, the king's reign commenced at coronation or at the death of the preceding monarch.[70] Royal authority continued, and children embodied that authority. More balanced interpretations of periods of child kingship have revealed how children catalyse experimentation with governmental forms. Boy kings in England have been discussed within a historical context of the 'triumph of primogeniture, the growth of conciliar government, and rapid bursts of increasing legitimacy for parliament as a representative and administrative force'.[71] Child monarchs have similarly been seen as the force for parliamentary development in Scotland.[72] Yet such correctives to the more common assumptions of constitutional crisis, administrative conservatism and political stagnancy under a boy king have tended to focus on a later period from the fourteenth century onwards. For example, historians have moved away from perceiving Henry VI of England's minority as the underlying cause of the decline of Lancastrian fortunes, instead accentuating the competent management of the kingdom, the preservation of the king's estate and the extension of conquest in France.[73] A similar shift in attitude is still needed for the central medieval period. Child kingship must be contextualised within a wider comparative framework which accounts for chronological change

[69] A rough calculation based on a *terminus ad quem* of childhood as either the king's fifteenth birthday or, where relevant, contemporary notions of the ruler's *aetas legitima*. See Chapter 10.

[70] For regnal dating more generally see: H. Bresslau, *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien*, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1912–60), II, ch. 6 (esp. 416–27); A. Giry, *Manuel de diplomatique*, new edn (Paris, 1925), chs 1 and 7; G. Tessier, *Diplomatique royale française* (Paris, 1962), esp. 223–7. In England, coronation, rather than the king's death, usually marked a new reign: *English Coronation Records*, ed. L. G. Wickham Legg (London, 1901), xv–xvi; S. Church, *King John: England, Magna Carta and the Making of a Tyrant* (London, 2015), 67–9. In France, Philip II dated his reign from his coronation in 1179. See L. Delisle, 'Sur la date de l'association de Philippe, fils de Louis le Gros, au gouvernement du royaume', *Journal des savants* (1898), 736–40 (737). By contrast see N. H. Reid, 'The political role of the monarchy in Scotland, 1249–1329', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh (1984), 5, 468–9, for the dating of Alexander III's regnal year from Alexander II's death.

[71] Beem (ed.), *Minorities*, 3–5 (quote at 5).

[72] H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, 'The Scottish parliaments of Edward I', *SHR*, 25 (1928), 300–17; A. A. B. McQueen, 'Parliament, the Guardians and John Balliol, 1284–1296', in K. M. Brown and R. Tanner (eds.), *Parliaments and Politics in Scotland, 1235–1560* (Edinburgh, 2004), 29–49 (esp. 29–31).

[73] J. L. Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge, 1996), esp. 111–12; B. P. Wolffe, 'The personal rule of Henry VI', in S. B. Chrimes, C. D. Ross and R. A. Griffiths (eds.), *Fifteenth Century England, 1399–1509: Studies in Politics and Society* (Manchester, 1972), 29–48 (29). Similarly, A. Blakeway, *Regency in Sixteenth-Century Scotland* (Woodbridge, 2015).

while examining how royal children compelled adaptation, encouraged innovation and fostered collaboration.[74]

Using the full range of source material available, in conjunction with the more traditional corpus – charters and chronicles – is crucial to understanding how medieval rulership functioned and how contemporaries perceived their boy rulers. Historians most commonly approach kingship in the central Middle Ages through the examination and analysis of royal documents or Latin chronicles. The diversity of the surviving evidence, differing scholarly approaches to source criticism and divergent historiographical habits have traditionally led historians educated in central and north-western Europe to incline towards one genre of material over the other. This may, in part, account for the lack of comparative studies of royal childhood and child kingship. It is impossible to balance representation and reality, compare across cultures or analyse change over time if we restrict ourselves solely to royal acts or chronicle narratives. Recent comparative studies of medieval rulership have reinforced the substantial benefits of broadening the traditional corpus of source materials.[75]

The narrative treatment of children and childhood in chronicles varies widely. It was not children's age alone which determined their interest to medieval writers; it was this combined with their status and gender. Even a five-year-old boy king attracted greater chronicle attention than most adult princesses. These narratives provide valuable insights into societal attitudes, sometimes offering intimate details concerning a child's upbringing and the adjustments a king's childhood inspired, but evidence can still be sparse. Some chroniclers deliberately excluded material regarding a king's childhood, either because it did not further their purpose or was not considered of interest. According to Rigord (d. after 1205), concern to protect his listeners' ears stopped him from including a wealth of information on Philip II's childhood and early reign.[76] Others felt their attention to a king's boyhood required justification. Bruno of Merseburg defended his decision to commence a record

[74] See especially Chapter 8. Previous studies have already contested the overly pessimistic impression of rule early in Alexander III's reign: A. Young, 'Noble families and political factions in the reign of Alexander III', in N. H. Reid (ed.), *Scotland in the Reign of Alexander III, 1249–1286* (Edinburgh, 1990), 1–30 (7) and *Robert the Bruce's Rivals: The Comyns, 1212–1314* (East Linton, 1997), 67; G. G. Simpson, 'Kingship in miniature: a seal of minority of Alexander III, 1249–1257', in A. Grant and K. J. Stringer (eds.), *Medieval Scotland: Crown, Lordship and Community: Essays Presented to G. W. S. Barrow* (Edinburgh, 1993), 131–9 (131). For negative impressions of Alexander's minority see Reid, 'Political role'.

[75] Dale, *Liturgical Kingship*, for liturgical sources; Kemp, 'Kingship', for political biographies.

[76] Rigord, *Histoire de Philippe Auguste*, ed. and trans. E. Charpentier, G. Pon and Y. Chauvin (Paris, 2006), 128.

of Henry IV's conflicts with the Saxons (1073–81) with details of the king's *pueritia uel adolescentia* by claiming that insight into this period of the ruler's life would aid the audience's understanding of how the war came about.[77] Like many modern scholars, Bruno's interest in and scrutiny of child kingship stemmed primarily from a desire to understand the ruler's later, adult actions.

Caution is required to situate royal childhood and child kingship firmly within a contemporary context as much as is possible with the sources available. Later events in a king's reign – whether warfare, marital disputes, clashes with the papacy or baronial rebellions – influenced a writer's perception of a given period of child kingship and shaped portrayals of child rulers.[78] This is particularly clear from the large hagiographical corpus narrating Louis IX's saintly behaviour. Some writers presented idealised portrayals of the French ruler's childhood to suit the appeal to the papacy to secure his canonisation.[79] Others, such as William of Saint-Pathus, confessor to Louis's wife Margaret of Provence, and John of Joinville (at least for part of his work) wrote in full knowledge of the king's recognition as a saint by Boniface VIII in 1297.[80] These royal clerics, many of whom knew the king and queen intimately, are sometimes our sole authority for events during Louis's early reign, but their accounts need to be balanced with more contemporary evidence. Textual analysis can lead to new findings which entirely alter our perspective of a narrative's chronology, and thus its reliability as an account of child kingship, as is evident from the shifting understanding of the Scottish annals known as *Gesta Annalia I* (*GA I*). When, formerly, historians regarded the annals as an addition to John of Fordun's fourteenth-century chronicle, their representation of Alexander III's early kingship was deemed a moral commentary on the minority of

[77] Bruno of Merseburg, *Buch vom Sachsenkrieg*, ed. H.-E. Lohmann, *MGH Dt. MA* 2 (Leipzig, 1937), 13.

[78] William of Malmesbury, for example, only provides a few error-ridden details regarding Philip I's early reign but devotes far greater attention to the adult king's scandalous sexual exploits. See *Gesta regum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford, 1998–9), I, 438–9 and 730–1.

[79] Especially Geoffrey of Beaulieu and William of Chartres, for whom see M. C. Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis: Kingship, Sanctity, and Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 2008), esp. 21–47; Le Goff, *Louis*, 328–44.

[80] L. Carolus-Barré, 'Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, confesseur de la reine Marguerite et biographe de Saint Louis', *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 79 (1986), 142–52. For the construction and reliability of Joinville's work see Gaposchkin, *Making of Saint Louis*, 181–3; C. Lucken, 'L'évangile du roi: Joinville, témoin et auteur de *La vie de Saint Louis*', *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 56 (2001), 445–67; J. Le Goff, 'Mon ami le saint roi: Joinville et Saint Louis (réponse)', *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 56 (2001), 469–77.

David II (1324–71).[81] Dauvit Broun's redating of *GA I*'s completion to the mid-1280s situates the text as a more contemporaneous account of Alexander's reign.[82]

Evaluations of the roles which mothers could, or should, play alongside their young sons must also be handled with particular care. Many medieval authors looked at the secular world through a prism of Christian morality, and their writings are products of the patriarchal society in which they were produced. Chroniclers across the kingdoms of north-western Europe therefore propagate gendered stereotypes, especially tropes regarding the suitability and competency of female power. When a boy's rule is equated with the queen mother's involvement in royal government, child kingship can be typecast along similarly gendered lines.[83]

Royal documents provide a different perspective of events as first-hand evidence from royal households or from people approaching the king. The quantity (and quality) of acts surviving from a boy king's childhood varies greatly. For the eleventh century, the numbers are relatively small. Taking the king's fifteenth birthday as a terminus, approximately 160 diplomas survive issued in Henry IV's name (1056–65) and 28 for his near-contemporary Philip I (1060–7).[84] Just under two centuries later, Henry III's minority in England provides the most prolific documentary output from a period of child kingship in the central Middle Ages. Despite the lack of charter rolls for the first decade of Henry's reign, surviving royal orders in the patent and close rolls – enrolled copies of letters either issued open ('patent') or sealed closed ('close') – as well as other royal documents and correspondence provide a more systematic account of daily political life under a boy king.[85] Practices of record-keeping, the survival rate of documents, differing academic trends and discrepancies in the publication of modern printed editions

[81] N. H. Reid, 'Alexander III: the historiography of a myth', in Reid (ed.), *Scotland*, 181–213 (190–1).

[82] D. Broun, 'A new look at the *Gesta Annalia* attributed to John of Fordun', in B. E. Crawford (ed.), *Church, Chronicle and Learning in Medieval and Early Renaissance Scotland: Essays Presented to Donald Watt on the Occasion of the Completion of the Publication of Bower's 'Scotichronicon'* (Edinburgh, 1999), 9–30 and *Scottish Independence and the Idea of Britain: From the Picts to Alexander III* (Edinburgh, 2007), 171–83; M. A. L. Tod, 'The narrative of the Scottish nation and its late-medieval readers: non-textual reader scribal activity in the MSS of Fordun, Bower and their derivatives', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow (2005), 1–12. For the compiler's use of a source dating from the initial decade of Alexander's reign see A. Taylor, 'Historical writing in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Scotland: the Dunfermline Compilation', *HR*, 83 (2010), 228–52 (esp. 249).

[83] *Ex chronico Turonensi*, in *RHF*, XVIII (Paris, 1879), 290–320 (318).

[84] *MGH DD H IV*, I, nos. 1–173, including some documents considered forged or false; Prou, *Recueil*, nos. 1–28.

[85] *RLC*, I, *1204–1224*, 293–656, II, *1224–1227*, 3–215; *PR, 1216–1225*, 1–601; *PR, 1225–1232*, 1–233.

exacerbate disparities in the record evidence.[86] This is particularly apparent in Scotland, where royal acts survive in far fewer numbers, even by the mid-thirteenth century. Many documents were lost or destroyed during, and after, the reign of Edward I of England (r. 1272–1307).[87] To provide another example: although reliable modern editions exist of Philip I's and Philip II's acts, there is currently no critical edition of Louis IX's charters, and many of the acts issued under his name and seal are unpublished. The project to catalogue Louis's acts, begun by Louis Carolus-Barré (d. 1993), remains unfinished.[88]

Royal documents illustrate some of the complexities of studying change over time, such as the shifting visibility of royal children in their fathers' acts and the evolving representations of a boy king's guardians. Chronological disparities emerge, first, in the expansion of different documentary types and, secondly, in the increased standardisation of formats and content.[89] Furthermore, there was a shift between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries from acts prepared by beneficiaries which the king then confirmed to a system in which clerks of the royal chancery were primarily responsible for drawing up all royal documents. This is particularly visible under the Capetian kings, as is the impact of administrative changes on a mother's place in royal documents alongside her son (see Chapters 4 and 8). Practices of documentary attestation and authorisation faced comparable changes over the period, cementing the importance of seals as visual and material symbols of royal authority. Shifts in sealing practices introduced greater adaptation and regulation in cases

[86] See, for example, N. Vincent, 'Why 1199? Bureaucracy and enrolment under John and his contemporaries', in A. Jobson (ed.), *English Government in the Thirteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2004), 17–48 (esp. 44–8).

[87] D. Broun, 'The absence of regnal years from the dating clause of charters of kings of Scots, 1195–1222', *ANS*, 25 (2003), 47–63 (50). However, the *PoMS* and *MoA* databases provide invaluable resources for analysing Scottish charters.

[88] Le Goff, *Louis*, 320, 533; Grant, *Blanche*, 23. Jean-François Moufflet is now continuing this undertaking, building on his earlier work on Louis's itinerary: 'Autour de l'hôtel de Saint Louis (1226–1270): le cadre, les hommes, les itinéraires d'un pouvoir', unpublished thesis, École des Chartes (2007). I would like to thank Moufflet for graciously sharing a copy of his thesis. A grant from the British Academy (SRG1819\190794) allowed me to study many of Louis's original documents in Paris.

[89] Select, but important, studies in charter scholarship include M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066–1307* (London, 1979; 2nd edn: Oxford, 1993; 3rd edn: Chichester, 2013); J. Bistrický (ed.), *Typologie der Königsurkunden: Kolloquium der Commission Internationale de Diplomatique in Olmütz 30.8.–3.9.1992* (Olomouc, 1998); M. T. Flanagan and J. A. Green (eds.), *Charters and Charter Scholarship in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2005); D. Broun (ed.), *The Reality Behind Charter Diplomatic in Anglo-Norman Britain: Studies by Dauvit Broun, John Reuben Davies, Richard Sharpe and Alice Taylor* (Glasgow, 2011), esp. D. Broun, 'The presence of witnesses and the making of charters', 235–90.

of child kingship (see Chapter 10). Further documentary sources consulted on occasion include royal testaments, financial records such as the English pipe rolls, and coronation memoranda (primarily one written by Gervais, archbishop of Reims (1055–67), after Philip I's coronation).[90]

By necessity, research into children and childhood needs to cast a far wider net to gather pertinent evidence than is the case when focusing exclusively on adult actors. In addition to chronicle narratives and royal documents, then, there exist many other sources that provide valuable evidence for the study of royal children and boy kings. First and foremost, any examination of royal childhood would be remiss if it did not consider the advice literature and 'mirrors for princes' texts written to instruct and guide the conduct of young men and women in a courtly environment. Although Carolingian mirrors, such as those written by Sedulius Scottus, Jonas of Orléans and Hincmar of Reims, can be linked to child rulers, there is less evidence that child kingship was the explicit catalyst for producing such literature in the central medieval period. If the kings discussed here received advice manuals during their boyhood they have not survived, and it is rare for didactic texts to refer to child rulership directly.[91] Nonetheless, 'mirrors for princes' are a benchmark for the ideals and expectations surrounding the political and moral education of royal sons. Some of these texts were commissioned by adult rulers who had come to the throne during childhood. Those circulating at the French court during Louis IX's reign are especially relevant in this context, namely Vincent of Beauvais' *De eruditione filiorum nobilium*, a Latin treatise on the education of the royal children, and the *Enseignemenz*, a didactic letter Louis addressed to his eldest son and heir, Philip.[92]

Alongside educational advice literature, royal, papal and episcopal letters allow further insights into conversations occurring in and around the royal court while a boy was king.[93] Legal texts and vernacular literature similarly offer distinctive accounts of child kingship, as three examples will suffice to demonstrate. First, discussions concerning the guardianship of aristocratic orphans in the Norman *Très ancien coutumier* – the initial part of which dates from *c.* 1200 – suggest increasing maligning

[90] *OCF*, I, 217–32. [91] Le Goff, 'Roi enfant', 232.

[92] Louis IX, *Enseignemenz a Phelippe* (trans. K. Ashley, in *Medieval Conduct Literature: An Anthology of Vernacular Guides to Behaviour for Youths, with English Translations*, ed. M. D. Johnston, introduction by R. L. Krueger (Toronto, 2009), 7–16). See also C. Föller, *Königskinder: Erziehung am Hof Ludwigs IX. des Heiligen von Frankreich* (Vienna, 2018).

[93] *Briefsammlungen*; *ROHL*, I; *Foedera*; *Epistolae: Medieval Women's Latin Letters*.

of the involvement of mothers and close kin in wardship as this became an extension of lordship.[94] The Norman *coutumier* never mentions child kings, but understanding shifting legal ideas within an aristocratic context is central to analysing changing practices in the guardianship of royal children over the same period. Second, the secular, vernacular verse biography of William Marshal is an invaluable source for illuminating details of magnate collaboration, the contemporary dependence on paternal oversight in arranging a boy's care and the contrasts between representation and reality when a child was king.[95] A third pertinent example is *Le couronnement de Louis*, a *chanson de geste* which provides a valuable lens through which to consider aspects of a child's coronation (see Chapter 5).[96]

The discussion that follows is divided into three parts: 'Models and History', 'Preparation for the Throne' and 'Guardianship and Royal Rule'. Part I shows the problematic nature of working from the assumption that kingship was equivalent to adult power. Chapter 2 reflects on children's roles in rulership across Europe before 1050 to illustrate how structural developments in society, culture, politics and law brought greater political stability to a child's rule during the central Middle Ages. Chapter 3 concerns cultural representations of rulership, especially venerable narrative and artistic traditions of models of kingship. Scholars have almost exclusively assessed these models from the perspective of an adult king, but this chapter illustrates a parallel range of models of child kingship which authors used to contextualise and legitimise a boy's succession and rule. Interrogating the circulation of positive biblical models challenges the dominant narrative of disruption, political disorder and 'woe to the land' when a child was king.

[94] *The Earliest Treatise within the Materials Comprising the So-Called Très ancien coutumier of Normandy, as Found in Vatican Library MS Ott. Lat. 2964*, transcribed by W. Eves, in *Civil Law, Common Law, Customary Law Project Publications*, Saint Andrews (2018), accessed online; *Coutumiers de Normandie*, ed. E.-J. Tardif, 2 vols (Rouen, 1881–1903), I, for the manuscript tradition (10–12, xii–xxx) and dating (lxv–lxxvii); J. Yver, 'Le *Très ancien coutumier* de Normandie, miroir de la législation ducale?', *Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis*, 39 (1971), 333–74; F. Neveux, 'Le contexte historique de la rédaction des coutumiers normands', *Annales de Normandie*, 61 (2011), 11–22. I follow the dating of the text's two most recent editors, Will Eves and Ernest-Joseph Tardif. For an alternative position on the *coutumier*'s dating see N. Vincent, 'Magna carta (1215) and the Charte aux Normands (1315): some Anglo-Norman connections and correspondences', *The Jersey and Guernsey Law Review*, 2 (2015), 189–97.

[95] *History of William Marshal*, ed. A. J. Holden and D. Crouch, trans. S. Gregory, 3 vols (London, 2002–6).

[96] *Le couronnement de Louis: chanson de geste du XII^e siècle*, ed. E. Langlois, 2nd edn (Paris, 1984) (ed. and trans. G. Price, L. Muir and D. Hoggan, *William, Count of Orange: Four Old French Epics* [London, 1975]).

Centring on royal childhood, Part II emphasises how the upbringing and education boys received – especially eldest sons – not only equipped them for kingship but also prepared the wider political community to accept and support child rulers. Chapter 4 foregrounds children's involvement in documentary culture as a crucial element of their early political, spiritual and social education within the royal family. Mothers and fathers used charters to celebrate young boys and associate their fates with the kingdom's prosperity. Children's participation, political assent and testimony were important facets of the day-to-day activities of rule. Chapter 5 complements this discussion by turning to more ceremonial, less habitual actions in which a young heir's active participation could also be vital. This chapter stresses the political community's wider investment in children as political actors through acts of loyalty, diplomacy and kingship. Chapter 6 moves forward in time to the king's deathbed. Even when it became apparent an infant or child would succeed, kings eschewed entrusting their sons and kingdoms to the care of individual magnates, preferring collaborative arrangements in which the queen often took a prominent role. Together, these three chapters centre the child's experience and incorporate insights from interdisciplinary research on childhood to shed new light on traditionally political and constitutional topics such as association, diplomatic practices and royal succession.

Part III shifts the focus to the years after a child's succession; its four chapters blend aspects of children's experiences with conceptual ideas about childhood. A reassessment of guardianship terminology in Chapter 7 lays the foundations for what follows by interrogating how medieval writers described the administrative, governmental, tutorial and emotional responsibilities of a boy king's guardians. Both the attention paid to maintaining hierarchies of rulership and the consistent reliance on explicitly legal vocabulary show the political and legal harmony of childhood and kingship. Building on these ideas, Chapter 8 presents an alternative narrative of child rulership which stresses aspects of innovation, adaptation and co-operation. Considering shifts in documentary culture, royal government and *consilium*, the chapter further argues that the practical solutions adopted during a period of child kingship differed much more profoundly across time than they did geographically. Chapter 9 turns to accounts of dynastic challenge, opportunistic conflict and kidnap to address the problematic association between child kingship and magnate violence. Contextualising conflict provides further testimony of children's legitimacy as rulers. The final chapter, Chapter 10, acknowledges how kingship could alter a child's progression from boyhood to manhood. Change over time once again proves more substantial than differences between kingdoms, as shifting markers of elite

maturity altered how young rulers experienced rites of passage such as knighting and sealing.

Entwining social–, cultural– and political–historical methodologies and incorporating changing theorisations of childhood in other disciplines is essential to assessing children's place in both the conception and practice of medieval rulership. This study of royal childhood and child kingship adopts a flexible thematic approach which balances representation and reality, explores cross-kingdom comparisons, considers change over time and introduces a more integral approach to the evidence. It is only by uniting these themes and methodologies that we can refine resolutely adult-focused perspectives and appreciate children's centrality to medieval rulership in all its complexity.