England and *The Making of Europe*: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change

*John Hudson*

England's position in *The Making of Europe* is a complex one: it appears both as a region that was conquered and colonized and as one from which conquest and colonization was launched, it sometimes illustrates characteristics of Europe’s periphery, sometimes those of its core. Within the book, such a duality is peculiar to England. The present essay first briefly illustrates the book's analytical and evidentiary use of England; second, it considers how England, particularly in the period c. 950–1100, fits within the book's picture of European development; third, it examines law and lawbooks in England, to discover how their history further illuminates the issues raised in the previous two sections; finally it suggests some explanations of the characteristics that produced England's complex position in *The Making of Europe*.

1 **England in *The Making of Europe***

The conquest of 1066 and the subsequent settlement were carried out by men who saw themselves as Franks – primarily but not entirely Normans – and it is the deeds of the Franks that form the pulsing heart of *The Making of Europe*. Here England has the position of the conquered and the colonized. English examples are used to illustrate the expansionary activities of the Franks, for example, the transplantation *en bloc* of lords and vassals from their home to a new area of settlement, and expropriation, where “the native aristocracy is killed, exiled or pushed down the social scale and the newcomers take its position.”

---

1 A different chronological range might have allowed Normandy a similar position, and, for example, areas of Spain may have played similarly mixed roles – note esp. *Making of Europe*, pp. 178–179. I would like to thank Bill Miller and Elina Screen for their comments on drafts of this essay.

2 See *Making of Europe*, e.g. pp. 20, 30, 40, 43, 51, 54, 70, 101–105.

3 *Making of Europe*, p. 54.

4 *Making of Europe*, p. 303.
In addition, there are hints in the book that political developments in England in the mid-eleventh century might make a particularly interesting test case for many of its themes, through a comparison of the initial Frankish/Norman intrusion under Edward the Confessor (1042–1066) with the cataclysmic takeover of 1066. Developments in England might have been closer to those that Bartlett examines in Scotland, featuring gradual, invited aristocratic settlement, the piecemeal appearance of castles, competition at court between native and foreigner, liturgical reform, and some changes in church dedications.\(^5\) England might have been an example just of Colonization and Cultural Change; instead the Confessor’s failure to produce a child made it also one of Conquest.\(^6\)

Yet if England features significantly in *The Making of Europe* as a realm that was conquered, it appears still more prominently as a base for further expansion, especially into the Celtic world from the second half of the twelfth century.\(^7\) Settlement in Wales and Ireland is used to illustrate the grant of great lordships to magnates and subsequent subinfeudation,\(^8\) the use of castles,\(^9\) the image of the conqueror.\(^10\) The case of Ireland is central to the depiction and analysis of law and race relations.\(^11\) Whereas “Anglo-Saxon” gets eight page-references in the index, “Anglo-Normans” have thirty-three, almost all relating to the Celtic world.\(^12\) Such quantitative evidence, very much in accord with the method of *The Making of Europe*, is significant, although – as in the book – not to the exclusion of other forms of analysis. Gerald of Wales receives only four entries in the index; this does make him one of the more prominent authors yet it is a number far from revealing the omnipresence of his spirit.\(^13\)

---

5. See e.g. *Making of Europe*, p. 29 for “the band of Norman adventurers around Edward the Confessor, king of England”, p. 70 for castles appearing from c. 1050. For Scotland, see e.g. *Making of Europe*, pp. 53–54, 78–82.
7. Note *Making of Europe*, pp. 88, 102, on Norman and English participation in the Lisbon expedition of 1147.
13. *Making of Europe*, p. 422; note that there is e.g. only one page entry for Adam of Bremen (p. 417), four for Helmold of Bosau, author of the *Chronicle of the Slavs* (p. 423), two for the *Song of Roland* (p. 430).