

EXILE AND EXILES

PRACTICES, TRAJECTORIES AND DISCOURSES OF EXILE IN THE NORMAN AND NORDIC WORLDS (9TH – 12TH C.)

With the exception of several contributions, there is no recent overview study of exile for the area and period under consideration. The aim of this work is to provide one, using a comparative approach to study exile in the European context of Norman expansions. The purpose is to give a better understanding of the political, legal, social and cultural aspects of this form of forced mobility.



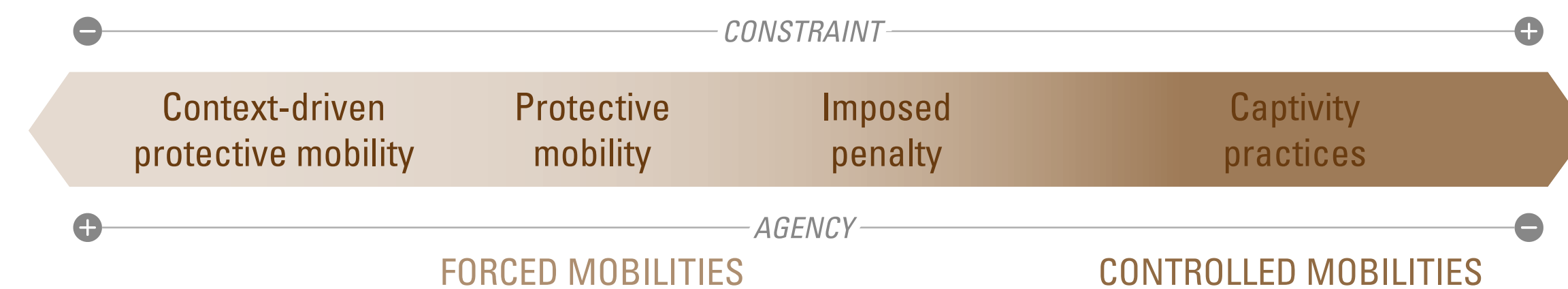
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SOURCES AND ANALYTICAL TOOLS

The primary sources consist mainly of narrative accounts (chronicles, histories), complemented by normative texts and practical records (charters, cartularies). These materials form the basis of a prosopographical database of exiled individuals within the Norman worlds. A secondary, comparative corpus, including Scandinavian and late Anglo-Saxon cases, supplements the data set. The database is analysed using a common analysis framework, and the entries are encoded in XML-TEI format. Additionally, the study incorporates tools and concepts from geography and sociology to enhance comprehension of both spatial and social dynamics of exile.

WHAT IS EXILE ?

Exile is defined as a set of movements resulting from a forced departure, imposed on somebody by someone else – often, an authority – or by the circumstances – hence it could sometimes be seen as a personal choice – to leave a territory.



Practices of Exile, Practices of Power

- Exile as domination : used by rulers as a tool of socio-spatial control, exile functioned as a severe and feared sanction.
- Choosing exile ? Sometimes a strategic escape, exile could be voluntary or even negotiated with authorities (push factors).
- Origins and contexts : these practices must be considered in the broader context of forced mobility patterns in medieval Europe, beyond a (potential) Scandinavian origin and/or specificity.
- Diplomacy and power : movements and harbouring of exiles could lead to significant issues in diplomatic negotiations.

Trajectories and Strategies in Exile

- Where to go ? Exiles often sought refuge in socially and geographically familiar areas (pull factors).
- Seeking support : survival in exile relied on mobilising social capital and social ties (kinship, allies) ; though hospitality could carry risks.
- How to return ? Spatial (and social) return involved intermediaries through social networks ; some exiles used predation tactics as negotiation strategies.

Representations : Discourses on Exile

- What crimes deserved exile according to legal discourses ? What differences existed between norms and actual practices ? Exile fluctuated between punishment, clemency and compromise.
- Was exile a condemnation, a way to spare, or a respite aiming at reconciliation ? Reflecting different moral and political perspectives, it could be perceived as appropriate or excessive by authors.
- Narrative constructions : chronicles could idealize this form of mobility, as in the case of Rollo, an exile becoming a new Aeneas.
- Representations : though associated with misfortune, isolation, or fear, exiles were not always powerless ; narratives could depict them surrounded by loyal followers.

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Perspectives

- Produce a comprehensive study of exile practices and trajectories within the medieval Norman worlds, situated within their broader contemporary European context.
- Analyse exile as a political tool of domination through its socio-spatial dimensions, while also examining the agency of exiles through their paths and strategies.
- Develop a digital prosopographical corpus, accessible and searchable online, enabling comparative, statistical analyses, and cartographic visualisations.

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