



# Robert `Curthose', Duke of Normandy (c. 1050-1134)

*William M. Aird*

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## **Robert `Curthose', Duke of Normandy (c. 1050-1134)** William M. Aird

This detailed biography offers a reappraisal of the career of Robert Curthose, William the Conqueror's eldest son and duke of Normandy from 1087 to 1106, locating the duke's career in the social, cultural and political context of the period. Robert's relationship with members of his family shaped the political landscape of England and Normandy for much of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries: indeed, even after his incarceration, from 1106 to 1134, his son William Clito (d. 1128) continued the fight against Robert's brother, Henry I. Twice driven into exile, Robert defeated his father in battle and eventually succeeded to the duchy of Normandy, although the throne of England was seized by William Rufus and then Henry I. For twenty years Robert successfully defended Normandy, developing policies to counter the vastly superior English resources at the disposal of his brothers. Robert's leading role in the success of the First Crusade (1095-99) also made him one of the most famous warriors of his age. He returned to Western Europe in 1100, a chivalric hero with a reputation that stretched from Scotland to Palestine. This book returns Robert Curthose to centre stage in the bloody drama of this period, a drama so often dominated by accounts from a royal and English perspective. Dr William M. Aird is Lecturer in History, School of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh.

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