- National accounts for the middle ages: Are they possible? (Anne Harrison, emeritus national accountant and University of Edinburgh)

One way of producing long time series of macro-economic aggregates is to work back from existing data making suitable assumptions about how far existing institutional arrangements and basic definitions can be applied to the past. This paper takes a different approach. Is it possible, starting from an understanding of how the medieval economy worked, to consider whether an economic accounting system broadly consistent with the SNA can be applied? What sort of institutional units is it sensible to identify in a world before corporations producing for the market were widely established? Are the SNA rules on imputing values for non-monetary transactions satisfactory when these form the majority of transactions? Do any adjustments need to be made to the various income concepts we are familiar with? What constituted fixed capital? In the absence of financial markets how can flows in one period be reconciled with those in the next? This enquiry is carried out against the background of the known data sources for England from shortly after the conquest by William of Normandy in 1066.